

Interview with Barbara Hogan

1st question: What is your understanding of the historical roots of non-racialism pre 1994 with relation to things such as the freedom charter and ANC in exile, its emergences.

I've been talking to a friend of mine who's a historian. Do you know him? Professor Rudendorf. He's been doing a lot of research into the origins of the concept of non-racialism. And he claims that the concept of non racialism emerges quite early in the 20th century almost as a missionary school kind of statement about liberal values. The inclusivity, the universality. My understanding of where it becomes a political force is really when the congress alliance starts to be formed: the Indian congress, the Coloured people's congress, the ANC, the democrats. I would associate it with the era of mass mobilisation. Culminating in the join up with the freedom charter. It emerges in that period.

The ANC leadership in exile was at pains to stress its non racialism. It was punted a solution to South Africa. Internationally the ANC promoted that notion of non racialism although whites were only allowed after the Morogoro Conference to sit in the ANC. Internally there was a battle that emerged. You had the PAC breaking away in '59 one of the reasons being anti communism and also black nationalism being one of their breakaway points. Those ideological battles were already raging prior to the ANC going into exile and then the UDF period. What was its non racial stance and it was deliberately done to associate itself, to give a signal that the UDF was ANC inclined.

The ANC ideological repertoire that distinguished it from many black nationalist groups in Africa which made it difficult for the ANC to operate. Mandela himself would cause of how difficult it was to engage in Africa coz people saw it as a sell out position. One of the critical criteria of the that nomination's position is a statement which is saying anyone who is born in a country belongs here whether they are an oppressor or not in a future SA. A statement about colonial relationships which is saying that SA doesn't have a colonial occupation. People who are here have been here for centuries, they don't have another country to go back to. But equally important what its also saying is that SA belongs to blacks. That's one of the fundamental things. Because they have been excluded by apartheid through a whole series of laws and marginalised from the economy and the land, etc. SA belongs to everyone. It deals with white, mainly minority fears about marginalisation but it also deals with black aspirations about being full citizens in their own country. Those are the defining features against which they fight the apartheid government. Non racialism emerges as a fight against racism. A way of defining yourself legally as a point of view in all sorts of ways against racism so non racialism becomes a way to say we will not be the law. In terms of what our opportunities are on the basis of race will be defined on other issues. Post '94 an important strand of thought that starts to emerge is obviously the issue of whites belonging to the country the important way of that we did not break out into a civil war. Post '94 the debate about non racialism goes essentially restoring the black people the right to force participating citizens of the country. For young people growing up non racialism it becomes a statement that the dignities and opportunities and benefits of SA society

must be restored blacks. It can then slither. What starts to emerge out of that is an exclusivist non racialism that starts to create to the agenda. A nationalist debate starts to emerge post '94 as to whether all SAs really belong to the country. We've had these cycles of non racialism, exclusivist nationalism continues to be that debate a refrain forces in this country.

Question 2:

starts to emerge in post SA with quite a force. Mandela being very careful that the ANC not be designated. There was a sensitivity to the ethnic factor. Our constitution has always ethnic boundaries, (she mentions the different types and regions). Ethnic identity. Multiplicity of identities in any country. non racialism is saying no matter what your ethnic identity or race is there is still a universal citizenship that and everyone must have access and opportunity. The debate has to do with the challenge of how the unjust relegation of SA citizens in economy and political. Affirmative action becomes part of the debate of non racialism. BEE becomes incorporated how do you set the balance right while maintaining a non racialist. It leads to a sense of minority groups becoming 2nd class citizens and becoming marginalised. How do you address historical inequality without creating a sense of marginalisation as one. How do you manage that essential tension?

its an ambiguous statement that you are sending out. Certain groups will have to get less. Instead of the cake growing bigger we are ... certain people will have to be moved out of that cake or are not allowed access. How do we create a society where everyone can participate to their full degree. How do we create an economy that meets the needs of everyone? BEE has become a mechanism for the establishment of the black middle class. Has it admitted being a vehicle for ordinary SAs who will never be middle class in their lifetime? BBBEE also a part of the non racialism debate. If we admit that in equality, * the tools are the mechanisms that we use to effect that redress. Is it gonna be thorough growing enough that it will reach a grass roots level or will it simply result in an elite? non racialism debate can never be about class and to what extent are the policies and tools allowing us to arrive at the end that we'd like to arrive at.

non racial identity is an aspiration. Its a good reflex and id defend the notion of a rainbow nation. For that to be achieved we've got to look at how apartheid has divided us in such fundamental ways. The architecture of it the geographical location of the black people outside the cities *. A civic life where a whole lot of things are taking place where white people are divorced from the black reality. White people should be fluently speaking at least one African language but or children should not just be suburban children. Whites should not be suburban anymore. Their children should get into townships. Whites still live very cocooned. We live in divided societies, language and location. The middle class has interaction in schools. But until SAs understand the mutual experience and the idiom of being a black SA we are not getting any close to that non racial aspiration. Coming from a white community at a very young age, I'm still astonished at how much goodwill there is from white SA in wanting it to succeed. Even though there might be difference from certain quarters. We don't have a white community that is up in arms and resisting everything that happens. Its a great blessing.

Me: the idea that economic liberation seems to be the next agenda post political liberation is something that has come out very prominently. Would you say that the two coincide together with the idea of non racialism? Do you think we need to address the issues of economic issues primarily before we head towards the idea of non racialism?

Barb: I might come off controversial or a tad old fashioned but we have to face the reality that we live in a 3rd world country and that out of all of these countries in emerging markets, we have the lowest growth rate. We are not doing as well as Brazil, India and other countries. Part of that economic liberation must be liberation from unemployment. It must presume that we are growing an economy in a way that produces jobs and what does worry me about the debates about economic liberation now is that unlike in a lot of developing countries who are pursuing an *intelligencia*, a middle class and trying to get them to come back home. India has this massive program of conferring non resident Indian status on Indians who are living in the United States just because they need them to come back and build that economy. We at the moment are almost wilfully saying, well because this person is this colour etc we can afford to let them go of them and whilst I am saying that that we have to fully recognise the extent to which blacks were marginalised from the economy and from society through poor education which we still continue to see, that has to be redressed. If we do not grow that the part of the economy and we do not use every resource available to us to actually get things moving we are not going to have economic liberation, we might have a certain elite that has access to a share that can allow them to become rich and powerful and whatever but we're not going to make a fundamental impact on poverty in this country. An economic liberation must essentially deal with poverty; it can't simply be that a creation of a black middle class is necessary, so I don't have the answers to these very complexed debates, I really dont! I am reminded and find it quite fascinating; in the late 60s I was invited to go to a church camp that consisted of Afrikaaner church people, you know ...people of my age. There I was told emphatically that Afrikaaner saw that now that they have got political power (1960's), their next job is to gain economic power and that is a frame that reemerges in the discourse and we know what Afrikaaners did, they set up their own banks, agriculture unions, we know the extent to which Afrikaaner went to fully participate in the economy. The Afrikaaners actually had it easier because they could set up parallel institutions, that paralled white banks and things like that. I don't know what we do here in this question of economic liberalisation and maybe we need to work out what we mean by economic liberation? Does economic liberation mean that whites no longer have ownership in the economy? Does it mean that whites have too much ownership and should be reduced and if so what is an acceptable %, if those are our understandings then and we choose to adapt such policies, what does that mean for the growth potential of our economy and the ability to combat unemployment? It was those kind of issues that aroused in the early 1990's, the questions of do we need a white middle class, a white business community?

The ANC was very much seized with, I remember during the 1991 Durban conference, this debate came up, and Thabo Mbeki late in the night got up and made an incredible speech that you can say what you like that whites should be driven out of the economy but let's remember what happened

in Zimbabwe. This was pre- Mugabe falling off the rails, in as much as you need to change the balance forces and powers and the ownership of means of production, if you do it in such a way that you actually throw off the economy off balance, no one will benefit. I don't know how we manage these issues towards proper economic empowerment, without getting rid of the some of important forces that in our economy that can contribute to the growth of our country.

Me: In order to carrying or convey what do you think is the role of institutions such as religion(ious) ,media and basic education in conveying the idea of a future non racial society?

Barb: It needs to be embedded in our values system as a value not just as a political expedient .For me the concept of non-racialism wasn't just a struggle concept that was used to fight against apartheid, once it addressed black aspirations and white fears. For me, it was something more fundamental as our universality as people. If in South African we can't get it right, what hope is there elsewhere? The 2nd world war was riddled with persecutions of minorities, not only Jews but minority groups just being shunted from one end of Europe to another. People taking advantage of the chaos of that war. It's the universality of our humanity. What defines us as people? Is our racial identity so important that it can afford to let go of a notion that we are all in essence very similar. I think that it's a statement of human rights, of equality of how we all belong in one earth and that to me is an important factor of Non-racialism. It's part of a human rights culture, not just political aspiration. No matter what race or culture you are you have a right to participate in your country and not be discriminated against on the basis of how you speak or how you look.

Me: Issues like the media?

Barb: Media is really a reflection of what is going on in our society. You know what I am really against, is these castle adverts (ads) that create this false sense that we are all one. When you saw the world cup we saw what the media did to create this South Africaness, it responded to this genuineness impulse in the country. This was not just some superficial phenomenon. This was a real impulse that South Africans were feeling. The media plays a very important role in that sense that when those spaces emerge in which we affirm our common identities as South African people. The media can play a powerfully mobilising role.

Johnny: Media has to account for certain interest groups. Unless we have a very non-biased media it is difficult to get that idea forward. If you had to define idea non racialist society what would it consist of?

Barb: it is not everyone being reduced to the same identity. I love the richness of our cultural heterogeneity of our country. Every South African should be comfortable in a far flung rural area e.g. (in KZN, Limpopo) as they are comfortable in the city. We need to be comfortable with each other's identities. We need to understand them and appreciate them. I think non-racialism is really an acceptance of people as they are. Not using superficial cultural or physical characteristics to separate us. The 2nd thing that is very important is that non racialism and a Non racial society should promote inclusivity. No one is marginalised, no one is a 2nd class citizen, everyone belongs and has a role to

play in our country and so it is inclusivist. It expands our boundaries to foreign Africans at the moment who are trying to make a home for themselves because their countries are just imploded .we need to be a country that expands our boundaries to absorbing people obviously there are financial constraints there but we need to be inclusive/ open. That's how America survived and grew.

Me: the issue of Xenophobia in relations to issues of national identity in comparison and reference to Non racialism. Do you feel that they (such things) are hindering towards a Non racial society?

Barb: You don't want to stretch the concept of Non racialism to mean everything, but I do believe that our extremely intolerant response to foreigners creates a grounds for creating the other, and a very negative perception of what the other is. So I think that at the heart of Non racialism, There's a concept that you do not look upon another with a prejudiced eye, you get rid of prejudece (e.g. You see a muslim with a little cap on his head and a long Kourter) you don't start a series of assumption about what that person's politics is likely to be. Indeed any way a person presents themselves, you don't automatically trigger a series of assumptions that prejudice that person. The whole 'makwerekwere thing' it triggers a set of assumptions of what these people are very hostile to a people's dignity. In that way, Xenophobia is very hostile to a non racial agenda. Realistically though, when you are a developing country and you don't even have enough jobs for your own people what are you resources to be able to absorb an never ending flows of people into your country. Tensions are going to rise in impoverished communities coz its a desperate fight over resources. One understands it but we need more leadership on that.

Me: ANC then and ANC now. Do you still think that non racialism is playing a role?

Barb: Not in the the same way. The ANC at the moment is caught up in this cornel of the problem: how do you restore or bring about equality when you've been such an unequal society ?, without one side losing(without their being losers)? Is it ever possible that there aren't losers somewhere along the line? And maybe we should just accept that we have losers in society and move on with things. Where I get very worried when its starts to manifest itself in issues like deployment. Where only people who are politically connected are considered to be people who can do the job and I think that this is where we are starting to veer off! We know how when the municipalities decided to get getting rid of all the white engineers, was a total disaster. We should have had a program of how we bring up young black engineers to be able to take up those jobs. We just decided that these people are DA or this and they must go. The ANC has not understood the damage that can be done if you too ruthlessly drive an agenda that firstly only powers are certain black elites and does not empower an impoverished mass and secondly marginalises minority groups. Those are the kind of tensions that are beginning to emerge. The populous movements among young people, are a consequence of the ANC not extending BEE and not understanding broad based and how you do bring people into the economy through better education and skills training through opening opportunities for young people. There we have failed very badly in our non racial agenda.

Me: What more do you think the foundation can do towards advancing the cause or the idea of Non racialism

Barb: Firstly, it needs to keep the debate alive but interrogate that debate. We are no longer dealing with non racialism to fight apartheid. We dealing with it so that it promotes inclusivity, at once, it must promote the (restoration) settling of the unequal resources, to promote equality and how is that achieved, where are we going wrong? In the way that we are trying to tackle these kind of aspirations in our society. There needs to be a huge amount of intellectual policy discussion. We need to scrutinise our policies to see to what extent we have succeeded because we have made some strides and to what extent we have not succeeded. What is at the heart of that problem? There is an intellectual, philosophical debate with a political aspect to it. History is being re-written dramatically. There is no notion in people's mind that there was ever a Non-racial struggle. That record alone, just a record of what it actually meant during apartheid years to go through a non-racial struggle. It is also important to explore ways in which you create a value system of a universal humanity e.g. (whether it is problems at schools, through media etc). How do we generate a culture that respects human rights and to fight racism? There is a lot of racism in this society. The hidden assumptions are there and it works throughout a whole country whether you're black or white, people are working with assumptions. How do we fight that kind of racial prejudice? It manifests in the way people treat domestic workers, in a series of other ways. The foundation needs to be more active in dealing with the concrete instances where real racism presents itself and operates, where people are seen as inferior because they look or speak a different language.

Johnny: In your opinion, what more can the foundation do when it comes to projects e.g. Community projects and the likes

Barb: Unless you get to the grassroots, you are getting no where those community projects are extremely important but it is how you communicate those community projects. Basically getting South Africans to talk to each other.

What does it mean it mean to have non-racialism? Crony capitalism is not what Non-racialism is about! We need to focus on addressing issues of unemployment. Government needs to implore strategies that focus on reduction of unemployment rates. Government really needs to prioritise unemployment over economic liberation.

We are producing a large number of BEE, which is due to crony capitalism instead of prioritising things such as skills development. We are facing a real problem in this country where we find that we are not even training welders anymore. We have begun to neglect certain professions at the expense of others and have even done so due to self gratification and personal economic interest. Non-racialism has been side lined to achieve these personal aims and satisfy greed.