

Magie Moonsamy Interview

MM – Magie Moonsamy

JS – Jonny Selemani

JS: Yes, we're going to go through the questions. Basically, I'm going to ask 4 general questions, to get your understanding of non-racialism. What is your understanding on non-racialism, question one. After 17 years of democracy, what direction do you think non-racialism is going in, three what are the key features of non-racialism and number 4, what are the challenges you see to building a non-racial society? Those are basically the questions, and we'll just flow with it. I understand you're very busy so I won't take up too much of your time. So first question, what is your understanding of non-racialism.

MM: My understanding of non-racialism is first, what characterizes race. Is it the physical features, in terms of the cultural, individual and the background in terms of politically, or where an individual comes from. Whether it is in a context of society that has been infused, whether forcefully or voluntarily, by differences as people come from different environments, different continents, or whether it is really just the settling of people from their backgrounds in terms of their physical differences in one place, the challenge being the issue of humanity over and above the issue of race. Now the challenge of race is that it allocates to an individual an unqualified, in my opinion, attribute of class consciousness as a consequence of race. Of course having understood that you have the colonizer that comes in to an environment and assuming full control of the environment, like the South African experience, and here we are speaking about the Dutch and the British. And what that meant was that you had a society that was characterized by its own form and means of engagement which was then stepped on by an imposed form of society and so called civilization, an imposed form of how society must operate. Whether it was through philanthropy, whether it was through religion, principally it was through race, and that really takes me to my understanding of non-racialism. Non-racialism is allowing people to exist within their own understanding of their cultural, physical attributes, to continue as members of society, notwithstanding the fact that all people are equal. Within the context of non-racialism in South Africa, the issue is based on the past, a highly unequal society based on race, which meant that the minority, the white minority had assumed the upper hand, as a consequence of being white, over the black majority. The intention in South African society is to have an environment in which all people are equal, equality on race. And of course non-racialism therefore means that all people must be equal. Whether we can achieve equality without addressing the inequalities of the past remains the biggest issue and the biggest quandary. Therefore for me, non-racialism means that we need to address issues of the past, of the assumption of power, class and race of a minority, being white, it means that we need to reaffirm the inequalities of the past, African in particular, and we need to ensure that after we have achieved that society, we will be able to have a non-racial society.

JS: Now you mentioned the idea, post-1994, it is said to have shifted from the idea of non-racialism based on unity in the past, how does this concept of non-racialism get achieved today?

MM: I believe that a non-racialism is a very big part of understanding the social cohesion in society. I think politically we managed to achieve it in terms of policy and institution in government, as the ruling

party, the ANC. In terms of our consolidation of our ideas, of ideological society, in terms of economic equality based on race, we have been able to advance by asking what are the inequalities in society. The challenge remains in the broader society, whether those minorities, in terms of white minorities, whether they have been able to understand what their role must be in creating a non-racial society. You will agree with me when I am talking about a rainbow nation, the compromises that came through CODESA on the issues of race, transformation, in particularly in ensuring that there were white cabinet ministers, if you want to call it that. I don't believe that anyone in this world is white – I believe there are pink people, that there are brown people, but I don't think anybody is white, white automatically gives, has the intention of assuming that white is right. I don't believe that those things have not been done in terms of wanting to secure the society. Firstly to address the issue of non-racialism, this white minority capital that contributes to all the means of economic productivity in society, that continues to own land, and continues to own vast amounts of land, continues to control the public discourse in terms of media propaganda, they must be able to appreciate the political agenda of the ANC, the political understanding of democracy and what freedom meant. If they are not going to release their control of these sectors of South African society, we are never going to be able to realize the full integration of society. You and I might have been fortunate to some extent of being young after democracy, and to appreciate that non everybody looks at each other in that same way, at each other's differences. The reality is that racism is entrenched in this society by the white minority. This is not about whether we sit together in a pub or a restaurant, sit on benches together, this is about bread and butter issues about the majority of people who remain marginalized, and on the outside of society.

JS: hold on, so post-1994, now that the ruling party, the ANC, is now the ruling power or the ruling force in government, how do you think the ruling party is doing to advance the cause of non-racialism? Because you are saying, obviously there is still white minority control, but post 1994 I would assume that moving towards a more black majority who are now in control, what do you think our government is doing towards fostering an idea of non-racialism?

MM: It is something we are striving to attain. I don't believe that the ANC is not doing enough, I believe that the role the ANC has played in its commitment towards a non-racial society can never be questioned, because it has done so much. Remember non-racialism is not about having more black people in numbers at the level of cabinet or government, because having achieved political freedom, this kind of political posture and progress, does not qualify that we are in a society where we can all access the same opportunities. And this is where the issue around who is it, who really must shift, who is responsible for shifting our society from being a racial one, to a non-racial one. And that can only be done by those individuals who still continue to perpetuate. If you take the education system in SA for example, we still have vast inequalities. You still have your schools where Bantu education still remains, even though we are striving towards an equal, quality, free education system, you still have a situation where kids in African schools only get access to English at sometimes standard one. At that point the level of understanding has already progressed outside of this understanding of the English language. And this really is an issue of race. This is an issue of who has imposed the kind of language barrier, in terms of the media of our teaching, on our system. I am saying yes, the ANC has done enough, but I am saying that we must be able to find a mechanism of releasing the real power around the full

understanding of diversity in society, of non-racialism in society, from those who still own the economic power in the country, who still own the administrative power, even though we can say yes as the ruling party we are there, if you take government, it is a system that is highly beurocraticised, and is highly unfriendly to some extent at meeting the needs of the poorest of the poor. Yes we have made the strides towards BEE, in trying to address to some extent quantitative tokenism. The reality is that we haven't made it broad enough, we haven't extended issues of equal ownership, and the reality is that it is not a lockjam on the side of the government, it is on the side of those who can then control the media and say these are the realities of south African society, as the Ruperts, the Oppenheims, Breytenbach's, we are committed towards ensuring that we are able to really commit to this diverse society, how do we do that. And start to implement a clear agenda on a non-racial society, not just wanting to use opportunities to hold at ransom lack of progress on the side of the ANC, but really to honestly take back the power from those who don't want to let go of it.

JS: Now we are talking about non-racialist societies and equality for all, regardless of race. We are talking about 17 years after democracy, the ANC said to be able to do something about, finding a case where people are being, the wealth isn't trickling to everybody. The finding is a new class emersion of black elite who are enriching themselves. Now the idea of African nationalism or a sense of cultural identity, how do you feel that plays a part towards building non-racialism or taking away from non-racialism?

MM: I don't believe that any society, if you take for example communist China, where you have the state in control largely of the economy, you are still having a situation where a few have to be able to co-ordinate. Not only in terms of government, whether it is through foreign investment, through developing partnerships outside of the country. Of course you don't want to have a situation where such an exercise compromises the prosperity of an entire nation. Particularly the majority black. The intention should never be that wanting to achieve a society where this wealth trickles down to the poorest of the poor, you create some kind of a pool of wealth circulating around a few. And that is why we have proposed a broad black economic empowerment system, where you are able to reach out. However the reality must be that where you have a situation where power, economically still remains in the hands of the minority, you have to balance out firstly and strategically, that economic power. The reality must be, the ideal must be, if it's about utopia that we are speaking about, that it must then shift power, economic power must shift from the minority to the majority. I don't believe it would be ideal to create a situation whereby a few represent that majority. That is not ideal.

JS: But that is currently the situation we are facing.

MM: We must find a way, means of how to address a situation where there is a conspicuous demonstrtation by a few. Now there will always be those elements in society, you will always have a society, of course because of exposure to that kind of, but let's not focus on it, let it not be at the detriment of society. If it is the case, we must be able to qualitatively justify, what is the impact and the inroad that is being made on the majority. I will never agree with a situation where you want to condemn a few, because ultimately you want in society, and for example – when you are young and you are growing up, and you come from a hopeless environment. Whether it is that your parents are unable

to give you – when I was growing up, everybody had to have a pair of Levi's, and I just never thought the day would come where I would be able to own a pair of Levi's. So what happened was, because I was in politics, I would wear cargo pants and a T-shirt of a revolutionary, because people did not know who this revolutionary was. The realities that need to give young people hope, we need to give all our people hope, we need to give them an ideal to look up to, we need to give them an example in society to say, this is what I want to be. I want to be an overachiever. If you take, you know, South African society, if you take the Western culture, the Kim Kardashian culture, every young woman wants to aspire towards this kind of role model. And where is the South African role model. Let's now take it away from there, let's not take it away from those who have been able to make inroads in the mining environment, in the JSE, who have managed to make inroads as bankers, in the economy in South Africa. But what we must always remember is that they are accountable to the majority of our people. That they must be able to be accountable.

JS: Now you talk about the youth, let us not forget, you're actually speaking on behalf of the youth, you are their representative in this case. Now what do you think, the idea of, its said the ideal of non-racialism is very much a pre-1994 concept, its something that those who are considered as youth today don't understand the concept of non-racialism. What do you think the youth is doing, if you say they are striving towards a system of equality for all, what do you think the youth is doing towards achieving a non-racial society?

MM: I think in their individual roles, what we refer to those post-94 are the born frees, the beneficiaries of freedom. I believe that for most of them, they take it for granted. Simply because you are going to a school with white people does not necessarily mean that we are in a non-racial society. We've had experiences of racism in South Africa that have lead to the extreme, death, murder, or farm workers, of young people, of people in South Africa on the basis of race, I mean the incident in Waterkloof where you had a situation of young Afrikaner boys, who would see a beggar on the side of the road and decide to kill him. An African man being killed, just because individuals assume that this person is not useful to society. As young people, I believe that we believe that we understand that, or appreciate non-racialism. The reality is that we can never take for granted, that in an urban setting, non-racialism means one thing. In a rural setting, it means something else. To those who are working on farms, those who are in villages, who don't have basic services. Ours must be that our constant contribution to a society that is diverse, the is equal, a society that advances the rights of the poorest of the poor, it must be to know our history, to never want to go back politically, socially and economically. In as much as we can appreciate the freedom that we have, the post-apartheid dispensation does not qualify a non-racial society by its very nature of democracy. It means that every day, as we interact with each other, we must be able to continuously engage with and educate each other. Educating the majority of young people is critical. One of the challenges that I believe that South African society has, as controversial as it sounds, is that minority groups have not committed themselves in general to this democracy.

JS: This is I think where I wanted to get to. You've brought up the issue of – you mentioned the fact that non-racialism obviously means different things to those in different areas. On a national level, it is said that the youth league, is the party itself is seeming to be driving an agenda of racial division in the country. Which contradicts the idea of non-racialism. What is your opinion of that? We are trying to

build a non-racial society, but now it seems that we are moving towards a situation where race I put forward over issues of poverty and inequality and the likes.

MM: Ok. Let me dismiss that. Race is a very big part of the dynamics, the discourse, the economics, the social standing of South Africans. African in particular, black in general. But I want to focus on that in particular. The ANC youth league has at no point raised the issue of race with the intention of advocating racism. The ANC youth league has gone back to the drawing board, and looked at how far we have come in achieving the strategic objectives of the national democratic revolution.

Now you will know that when the ANC was formed in 1912, even prior, right up to 1969, race was, the representation of race in the ANC was not at the level of membership of the ANC. You had had prior to that relationships with other democrats, but you needed to have situation where you embraced that there were progressive thinking individuals who had advanced through their party politics. Remember initially the Indian congress was nationalist Indian, there were no black people there. There never have been. And when it moved towards becoming a party of allowing even individuals of different races sitting at its various structures, it had to appreciate that the African people in particular were the most oppressed through the system of apartheid. Now we come out of an induction with various members of the ANC, and the question still remains – have we achieved those strategic objectives, do we have a non-racial society, do we have a prosperous society. Do we have a united democratic, non-sexist society. If we have a prosperous society, and if we measure prosperity on GDP and on growth, why is unemployment rising so phenomenally, why does it still continue to impact on the African in particular, why is education improving, on the strength of model C school, it's not improving in your rural schools, in your peri-urban suburbs, its not improving there, it's improving in your historically model C schools. Does that prosperity translate to the non-racial society we want to approve? Those who are not benefitting, who do they remain to be? They still remain the black majority.

JS: I was basically asking, we are talking about nationally, we hear advocacy of our people, the black people, at the same time we're seeing out of our black people, a small minority that are getting wealthy, that are prospering, whereas the majority, those that you've mentioned are suffering. So the idea of non-racialism within the youth, is that an agenda being pushed as it was in the early 1990s? is it being pushed in a similar way? And when you are talking about the nationalization debate, bringing that out, we are talking about nationalizing, about talking away, or redressing from one group to giving to another. In order to create a sense of equality, we are trying to get equality despite of race. What do you think, we are moving towards that, what do you think that'd doing to the idea of non-racialism? Basically we are advocating the issue of race, the ANC youth league. How does that translate into the non-racialist debate?

MM: The issue of race is really at the heart of the lack of prosperity of the majority. We can't run away from that, we can't pretend as if we have been able to remove our people from poverty in a heartbeat. Yes, it was impossible, but 17 years later something should be done, basic services at least should have been there. Unemployment, I mean here I'm not speaking about, we've done lots in terms of building housing, water, electricity, we've really made huge inroads. However there are some who still draw water from rivers. Not the issue of race, it is critical part of addressing the fact that, remember if the

ANC categorised the prime enemy of the democratic revolution to be white minority capital, people who own the means of production in South Africa, who continue to remain at the blockage of transforming this wealth. Now are we advocating a racial –yes, it is in inverse, it might come across as if it is a racial debate, but it's not, we've never said that we are not an organisation that does not acknowledge that race remains behind power relations. We've never said that. We've always maintained that race and class remain embedded in the inequalities of society. So yes we are saying that the majority of our people benefit, how? Nationalisation. Why nationalization? What is our biggest capital producing resource in the country? Its our minerals. Why is it that it does become such a magnet of interest by capital, particularly simply because of the very same reason, the high profit instruction, at the expense of the country's broader growth. Not high economic driven growth which is focusing on saying that we have remained stable throughout a global economic crisis, we've been able to stabilize the economy based on the growth of a few. Unemployment, poverty, two critical issues that remain outstanding and unresolved in South Africa, and it is growing. We looked as the youth league, and we thought about what is it we can do to drive the major sector of the economy towards benefitting the majority. So we said fine, let's look at the Freedom Charter, and we looked at it and calculated. Just yesterday, there was the issue of the strike that was resolved , and gold reserves still produced high profits of 170 million odd, even though the workers, the slice lost just from not working was 70 million. So it tells you the amount of contribution that is made by a very small contribution that is made by themselves, it will tell you the interests of capital. Capital is not going to walk away from South Africa without ensuring their pockets are full. Yes, we can resolve issues of poverty, if we take our resources and allow them to directly benefit our communities, whether it is through royalties. I mean you've got Norway, where oil is highly nationalized. Most of the funds that come from the project, because of their high economy, they are able to expand their social basket. Most of all, their skills transfer in the country is much higher. And I think, we've got a basic resource that is lying under our ground that does not belong to anyone except this government. But this has become the biggest debate of interest that the average South African has not been able to see how it would translate to alleviating poverty, where your first communities in those areas are going to benefit. Now it goes back to the few who are seen as the cream of the crop, as the beneficiaries of this economy. And I'm going to re-emphasise the point that I don't believe that we must be a nation that isolates individuals for progress. If there are a few benefitting, we must be able to empower our people, if those few who are benefitting continue to hold on and not want to empower out people, then there will be a fundamental issue that I think we can raise, and say really what is their contribution?

JS: And you don't think that 17 years later it's not worth mentioning something? As you said, it is the natural wealth that belongs to the people, but it seems as if we've gone from a form of elitist capitalism to a form of crony capitalism, where only a few are still benefitting. Now tying that into the non-racialist debate, we are advocating to create wealth for the majority, yet we are seeming to find a new minority is being created within the majority. The issue here I am trying to get to is, in order to do that, the issue of race is being brought forward. And the youth does not unfortunately have the historical understanding of the concept of non-racialsim. So we are currently faced with the idea of the race card ,let's take away from this minority to get this. But the majority are still not benefitting. Now how can we advocate for a free society irrespective of race when our youth are seeing those in power, gaining

wealth, and they are not benefitting at all from the wealth of the country? The issue of race is playing a lot into that idea, so my question to you is more, how is that debate countering, if not playing against the idea of non-racialism.

MM: The first thing is that there is no sidelining of the white minority. We must be confident enough in acknowledging the truth of South Africa – white minority still controls the economy. The only difference is that maybe cameras are not on them. And that is why I raise the point that we continue to control the influence of ideas in society. You won't see, maybe because they have holiday houses in Italy, you won't see the wealth, the Rupert wealth is phenomenal. The Broederbond wealth of Somerset West, phenomenal. But, and I'm not running away from the issue, but I want us to lay the basics down. That wealth that is held onto in the Western Cape, and for me the Western Cape is a very interesting project because it would remind us of why the DA is so supported. If people continue to go hungry in the Western Cape, let's forget about this black elite for the moment, let's go to the WC. You have a majority of people living in townships, they don't have services, they don't have basic lavatories, they don't have basic service, you know the conditions. You know the conditions of the housing project, which people were living in and houses were falling apart. And yet you have a party that is in power, supported by the wealth of a few. Now that wealth doesn't have to be openly demonstrated, and this is something that I believe we must go back ideologically and start to raise the ideological debate around how we don't wish success for the African in particular people, simply because of the divide and rule efforts of white minority capital. White people in the Western Cape, I mean I've never seen houses that costs 100s of millions of rands, that has never been lived in, everything is owned by foreign ownership, extreme extreme wealth. I've been to the Hout Bay situation, where there was the challenge of access to land, or not wanting to be thrown out. The Western Cape. Next door you've got a person who owns a garden where he's got horses running in his garden, so imagine the size of that garden. And you've got the humble fisherman who goes out everyday and goes back, and the next thing they are told they don't own a fishing licence. To suppress the economic participation of those people. I am saying, white minorities continue to rule and exploit through any means, the wealth of this country. That's the first thing. The second thing is they do this through advancing an agenda to discredit, with the project of 1996, the class project, was to create or raise and give benefit of this wealth. Whether it is to discredit the gains made by the ANC, simply because you wear a suit and go to parliament does not make you a rich person. Simply because you drive, and this is one of the examples, a BMW does not make you a rich person. You know how BMW makes offers. Ours is to say, mine is to say that we must remain unapologetic, if there are a few, yes, I don't disagree that there might be a few who demonstrate excessive wealth. Elitism, I don't know, that term is giving some kind of royal status to a few. Whether it is demonstration of that wealth that might not be welcomed, that's a different moral and ethical issue. But if there are African people who are succeeding and progressing in this South African discourse, we must be unapologetic about it. You are correct when you say the majority still remains outside of access. The question is how do we build the bridge, from where we come from, that white minority capital. I can tell you with absolute confidence, there is no black African person in South Africa, not even Shanduka, who can claim to own the means of production, in the actual reins of economic power in South Africa. I can tell you that with confidence, you can quote me. There was research that was done, he went and he studied the JSE listings, he looked at all of those companies that can make a dent on the

economy. Mvela and Shanduka can't do that. Mvela has 10 people who are employed, these are the people who are managing Mvela. They are not a force to be reckoned with. Let us give space to Africans to grow themselves, to grow and to give back to their people, to grow and allow space for creating opportunities. The bridge must be built.

JS: The issue here, though, you seem to have very strong sentiments towards redressing the economic inequality between the minority and the majority, but in your understanding is there still room for the concept of non-racialism in all of this. Because it seems that we are very much pushing towards taking from the minority, and when we are talking about minority we are talking about a white minority, and majority, we are talking about African. Is there still room for non-racialism, seeing that we are trying to redress an issue, 17 years later, we are still talking about taking from a white minority to a black majority.

MM: Of course this is what the debate is about. I just think, sometimes I get so frustrated, because I ask myself. There's a few, you know, just a few. And as a whole majority, we can't resolve the question of the few. How powerless?

JS: not only that, do we need to, we are focusing on that few at the expense of that majority.

MM: Yes, but not at the expense, at the interest. I completely hear where you are coming from, I don't disagree with you at all, and I've thought about it. How do we interact in a space where you have got no power? How do you resolve the issues around the majority, let's ask ourselves, in practical terms.

JS: I need an answer from you. Is there still room for non-racialism?

MM: Of course. That is the intention. We cannot resolve the issue of economy, economic inequalities in South Africa if we don't resolve the issue of race. That is core. It is about saying that in order to achieve this non-racial society, you must let go and give back. Let the state own, the people who are not committed to this non-racialism that you are raising, is white minority capital. If they were committed, they were going to say in the interest of the majority, of this democracy, in our commitment towards ensuring that all people are equal in South Africa, all people have access, we are releasing this to the state. We are giving this to the state, we are giving 80% to the state. You know what happened in South Korea, in China, Cuba – people were saying take – take them. The only people who are not committed to non-racialism is white minority capital. And when they give back to the state, then we would have resolved. And this is what we are pushing –let everybody bring their commitment to the table. Our commitment is not to divide society, we have struggled too hard.

JS: Would you say that our new African minority is giving back to our people? Similarly you say the control should be given to the people, but have our new minority given back to the people?

MM: Of course I do believe that. I think a lot of efforts are made that are not given the platform they need to be given. I will give you an example. When you sit in this institution and you hear, and everybody outside will complain, their's no visibility, what are they doing, they are just having festivals or whatever. And when I arrived, I've always been very radical about how things must be done, I want

them to be done now. That's how I am. When I arrived here, people were talking about programs, programs, and I was saying where are these programs? This goes back to the influence of the media on society. I literally went around at some point, trying to follow up on what's going on. They build houses in Ivory Park, fully donated by young people, for young people, huge project, barely heard about. There are projects running all over the country. It's there. Mine is what is the influence of ideas, of the media on our society. Why does our media incline itself towards discrediting, as opposed to saying this is what is available in terms of opportunities, go and access them. I believe that our society must become radical in what it demands, in terms of the information it is given. It must be allowed to participate in what kind of information it is given. It is fed with information that allows it to naturally bring down , I'm not saying that it's right if there are people who are benefitting, I'm saying there is no problem. There will always be people who need to ensure, every individual, maybe it's just that we don't see it, maybe because the way these things are done is without wanting to show what they have done. And such commitment, I mean the president of the Youth league, there's a school, a church, a house, uniforms –this comes out of his contribution back to society. Going back to society and saying, I mean I got a call from the Western Cape to say just say thank you to the president for donating wheelchairs.

JS: You see this is where the issue – I mean, it can be argued that the white minority has given back. The issue here that come sup unfortunately is that it seems like we are looking at a bias. We focus more on you know, this regime didn't do, and this regime is doing. But unfortunately it is still not as evident as it is claimed to be. I wanted to bring it down more to a personal level, and the idea of non-racialism for you. What do you do, how relative is non-racialism to you, what do you do in your everyday life to promote the idea of non-racialism.

MM: I was very fortunate, because when I grew up I didn't take on the instruction of my parents as they would have wanted me to. And I said to myself, if I'm, I was very young. Of course we didn't have much exposure to white people. You were curious to see what a white person looked like, it was almost as if you were going to museum and you can't touch the diplays. And one of the things that I believed, because of the influence I had around me, the first point of understanding your relations with others is understanding how you relate to yourself. Whether you want to see differences in others, and for which reason. If for example I wanted to see a difference with a person who needed to be white, and could only be a doctor or engineer because they were white, it meant that it was not possible for me, because I was not white. And I chose that all people are equal, until proven different. And on that basis, understanding and appreciating –the settlement of Indians in South Africa was on the basis of slavery. And slave trade was throughout Africa. And for me it means that oppression remains a European import, that's what racism means to. It means that a person would remind you of what you are, and what you are not. And I believe that in my everyday life, I have to appreciate that all people are equal. I have to appreciate the realities under which South African society was born.

JS: How does that translate to your everday action, that is what I am trying to get to.

MM: Well, every day we have to ensure that how we relate, in terms of policy, or program, that we understand the agenda of Africans, that when we create a draft policy, that those are critical features. When we look at programs, whether it on youth development or maco-economic policy of the country,

that we know that if we advocate for the re-industrialisation of South Africa, that there needs to be high levels of skill transfer to the black majority, so that they can understand what it means to control this society operationally, instead of just being a labourer. It means that when you interact with young people on a careers day, wanting advice, that they are able to appreciate that their struggles are different from an advantaged young person who comes from a suburb. And they need to appreciate that every opportunity they have must be shared, and must be used for the development of others. When we speak about education, we must be able to remove a mud school in a community, develop that community, develop and give education also to the elders in that community, and not say to them we want you to live in an urban area. It means that every time you interact with a white person who is at the forefront of business, you are able to express that their intention should be not purely for capital gain, it must also be towards consolidating the social impact in South Africa.

JS: Ok. When I walked in here, I didn't see a white face. We are talking about equality for all, but yet there wasn't a white face in sight. Some would argue that something like that is, it is having an impact on the fact that we are talking about equality for all, yet it seems that we are moving towards a society where even those who aren't controlling the means of productions, because not all whites are on top, there are those who are at lower ends of the economy, it is argued that in sites like this, they are also getting the brunt of discrimination against them. So how do you think that impacts on the idea of non-racialism?

MM: To date in South Africa, a white male engineer earns 4 times more than an African male engineer who has qualified with 3 masters. 4 times more. Today in South Africa, an average black woman, white woman, or a white woman earns 3 times more than a black woman in South Africa, without a qualification. A white woman who is at home, a housewife, is able to survive 3 times more on whatever income, basically her husbands income, that a black woman is able to. Currently, white women and men, and this is a report that has been released by the Dept of Labour, still occupy more of the seats in governments, in terms of the proportion.

JS: This is on a higher scale. I'm talking about the struggling whites, versus the struggling blacks. Where do they fit in?

MM: Ok, but I'm starting there. And of course that translates into your average person on the ground, at whichever level of society. I mean 4 is to 1 is a huge discrepancy. That is the inequality in South Africa. In the public sector, many have left it, many don't find it attractive. The public sector has become a recruitment agency for black people who are still activists at heart. There are very few who want to remain in the public sector. The public sector in South Africa, absorbed 180 000 people into the system. The private sector kicked out the same number, in terms of retrenchment. There is lack of commitment, there is lack of commitment to the public infrastructure by the white minority. How does that translate to an average white person, an average black person? I believe that the question is very central, around there not being a need to have a society that discriminates, there is no society that discriminates. There is a need for a national identity. If we are speaking about it socially, and we are speaking of isolated issues, it is about national identity. I have met people who are disgruntled, I am Indian, I have not been given a job. And I ask myself, if we are honest with each other, could it possibly be true? Of course. Of

course it is. Of course it should be something that we must not say that, theoretically, ideally, we want a society that is equal, without ensuring that the balances and checks have been done, with enough consideration. When we want to start to interact with the issue of race, it is going to address, and it must be an issue that is translated, but that is why we speak about poverty and unemployment, it still remains an African problem. So for me, if we don't start becoming honest about who is committed to the social compact of South Africa. You know, I'll tell you something, in the Indian community for example, even white people, something happens, there are many who are living outside South Africa. You go to London and you remember ,the vote of 2009 – we had to set up voting stations in embassies, and that was because of people who are leaving the country, because of crime. The reality is that you and I live here every day. When we go to those communities, where we know what the conditions of our people are, you and I know, we come back and we realize that we have achieved little compared to what we need to achieve. We can't say that, you know the question you are asking, and you did not ask, is whether we prioritise non-racialism at the expense of the national democratic revolution. Because then we can be honest with each other, and you'll understand where I'm coming from. That is the political question. Is it qualified that if an ANC wants to achieve this perfect society, can it do so at the expense of the national democratic revolution? Does non-racialism become, which priority above all priorities, how do we prioritise those strategic objectives among each other. We've prioritized democracy, unity was the word before democracy. Non-sexism, we've resolved that issue. It's the same issue that we can say equally on non-racialism, for me. Because have we translated the gender struggles to the poorest women of the poor? We haven't. Prosperity, are we prosperous. Of course we are not. And then it goes back to the heart of saying, the NDR, based on the founding principles of the ANC, because of all the struggles that we chose, we chose the national democratic revolution. Equality remains central in terms of addressing this non-racial society. And my issue would then go back. How do we claim this equality if we are still unable to access from that minority? How powerful is that minority? How powerful is it that it still controls the economy, is still able to circulate and confidently win the hearts and minds of our people, to divide and rule in terms of its influence.

JS: let's put it this way, in the ANC, how many white people are there in the youth league?

MM: In the youth league there are white people at all structure levels. I'm not sure which level you are talking about.

JS: National level.

MM: There are none.

JS: And colored people?

MM: Two.

JS: And Indian?

MM: Two.

JS: Ok. The argument here is being that for the idea of non-racialism, we are not doing enough to attract people of non-African origins, and not to say, I don't think it's fair to say that if the ANC decided to open up its doors, you wouldn't get a response. The issue here is to what extent is the ANC doing something to foster the idea of non-racialism, by attracting non-Africans to the party?

MM: I'm going to tell you this. Politics, social consciousness, it's not marketable. And that is why I said to you, minorities in South Africa must become committed to not only their national identity, but to the core struggles of this country. You can't market social consciousness. Someone could come to me and say, the DA is so and so and so, but I would just think to myself, whatever.

JS: Yes but some people would say that how can we build a non-racial society if everything is side-lined on a racial frontier, to say that the African people, the African people.

MM: not true. That's not true. Let me tell you, there should be no timeline, that South Africans don't realize that what keeps them in their bondage of social and economic restriction, and to a large extent political, is because they have not accepted their social and political consciousness and started to act on it. My growing up, my parents were so afraid. You know at one point there were police, there was no water, fear. You see a problem outside your window, and inside of you, you would rather be a spectator. This is the problem in South Africa. It is not that there is any organisation, particularly not the ANC youth league, that is advocating for a racial society. The problem in South Africa is that people don't want to become participators in realizing what freedom meant. If our people are committed towards understanding the history of the struggle, pre-1994, then they will be committed to this idea of creating a non-racial society. But who still owns the means of production? It means we haven't moved completely into a free society, today the wealth of the country is still controlled by the white minority, that means we haven't achieved anything.

JS: One more question – what do you think the Ahmed Kathrada foundation can do to advance the cause of a non-racial society?

MM: The first thing is that one must not believe that non-racialism, non-racialism is not something that must divide people. It must not be created on the assumption that there are those in society.. The challenge must be clearly conceptualized. The foundation must acknowledge that in South Africa, issues of non-racialism will only be achieved when there are a few in society who allow for full, honest, open reflections both in the economy and other sectors of society. The foundation can call on white minorities to commit themselves towards building a non-racial society. It can call upon and ask for understanding of young people, for the deeper political systems that have not been removed even after democracy, based on the regimen that is maintained by this white minority capital. It should be that the foundation calls upon there to be, and I know there are regular seminars, but there must be a really robust and visible presence in institutions of higher learning, be it FETs, secondary schools, we must go back to the drawing board and educate our young people, we must go back to institutions like the Free State, where racism is clear cut in that institution. Where you have political organisations like the ANC youth league, like SASCO, who are suffocated from participating. And the same institution that needs political direction, you've got a situation where people have done the most inhumane action, the

foundation must intervene. It must intervene at all levels of society, whether it is individuals or groups of people. And these examples could be seen just in the Eastern Cape the other day, when a guy was shot by his white neighbour for belonging to the youth league. That is racism. That's racism. When a young woman was killed standing on the side of the road in the Free State, looking for a job, is picked up by a white farmer, raped, murdered, thrown on the street, driven over, the Ahmed Katharada foundation must stand up. Because you know it's very quick that fingers are pointed at an organisation that is claimed to be racial. And we ask ourselves, who owns the land – the land is owned by white people, they farm our land, they abuse our people. And when we speak about being unable to resolve the question of the land, if we are unable to teach our people how to farm, our people would stop being abused. There is a farm in Limpopo, a hunting farm for foreigners who hunt. To kill a buffalo, it costs R150 000, 2 years ago. The farm workers working on that farm, there's open wild animals, carnivorous animals, that are prowling around. Farm workers, when they are done with their work, they have to walk past those lions to go home. That is racism. You fly in a person from Britain to come here, you give them a shotgun to track down and kill a buffalo, your worker who is worked for you for 20 years, walks along, meets a lion on the pathway at 10 o'clock at night, there's no electricity, they are killed right there, a person who must take bread home to his family. When we speak about non-racism, ANC youth league has never at any point called for a situation where we want to advocate non-racism. We are saying it must relate, it must go down, translate to a real life example, where people continue to be abused, exploited, you know, inhumane conditions. Have we changed the mindsets? The foundation must sit down with Afriforum and Agri-something. Sit down with them, how do they share their property, I mean we have been speaking about the land tenure system for the longest time. To get a white person to treat a black farm worker like anything less than an animal, it is impossible. They are slaves to them. This is what you were meant to be doing, take these things and dig this soil on your own. This is what the Katharada foundation must do. I believe very strongly that in the absence of civil society in South Africa, in the absence of the voices of the people of South Africa, somebody has to speak. How do we join those voices? How do we speak up against the kind of continued embedded racism that exists in our society, in the rural areas, in the urban areas, yet we as people want to assume that there is an open advocate for racism in South Africa, when racism remains entrenched in our communities. We might be comfortable, not myself, I refuse to ever live in a society where there is the same as me, if we come from a society where everybody is white, we feel safe. I have been a victim myself, living in Pretoria, driving on the street in the middle of the night, being stopped by white police, asking where are you going. In this democracy. Where are you going. I'm going home. At this part of the night? Why? Because by chance there is ANC paraphernalia in the backseat of my car. And I must be told that at any point when we speak against white racism, we are not advancing in non-racial agenda. We have to speak against it, we have to say that, have we been, through transformation have we achieved much? No! Has taking white people and putting them in government achieved anything? No. What has Martinus van Schalkwyk done? Nothing. I don't see him creating an environment of a really harmonious society, being a white person. What have other white people done, I don't know. Somebody must tell me. Tokenism cannot work in South Africa. So for me that is what the Katharada Foundation must do.