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# voices

## DA PLANS TO KEEP APARTHEID PRIVILEGE

The exceptionalism of the party is about using every trick in the book to divide the African majority



It's not often that one reads an assessment of the DA provincial government in the Western Cape. As we start the new year, it is important to share a perspective from the opposition benches.

A central theme to examine is the notion of "Western Cape exceptionalism" and its impact on the people of our province.

The word 'exceptionalism', as per various websites, is defined as "the perception or belief that a species, country, society, institution, movement, individual or period is 'exceptional' (unusual or extraordinary)" with the implication that "whether or not specified, that the referent is superior in some way".

I would argue that the almost deliberate attempt by the DA in our province to paint themselves as exceptional has negative consequences for our province.

When it comes to the issue of community safety, the DA, following on the Helen Zille tradition of "blame and complain" politics, has not only adopted a combative approach to national government, but has specifically ignored national legislative provisions and undermined community police forums. Instead, they have funded selected neighbourhood watches. Budget allocations are clear evidence of this. In doing so, and while failing to implement an integrated approach to gangsterism and drugs, the DA has effectively ceded power in many communities to gangs and extortionists.

More sinister is that the DA City of Cape Town has awarded tenders to the spouse of a well-known gang boss. At the same time, the DA city has refused to release a forensic report into serious allegations of corruption in the city housing maintenance department. The Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (commonly known as the Hawks) is currently investigating.

Secondly, the DA has introduced the stated aim of "fit for purpose" regarding employment in the provincial government. This has in fact been a smokescreen to actively undermine the national imperatives of redress and employment equity. So much so that, in the office of the

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premier, there are only three African senior managers out of 65. Coloured managers are under-represented.

In effect, the behaviour of Premier Alan Winde, a race denialist of note, has given carte blanche to other provincial departments to follow suit.

Despite the amendment to the Labour Relations Act, providing that regional demographics be taken into account when employing workers in the province, a provision that would benefit both coloured and African people, the DA beats the drums of racial fear and swart gevaar by falsely claiming this would negatively affect coloured employees. This "provincial exceptionalism" is nothing but racism.

Thirdly, the DA's own formal policy against the minimum wage legislation driven by President Cyril Ramaphosa, agreed and proclaimed by economic

development council Nedlac, speaks volumes. They propose an "opt out" clause, allowing for a national minimum wage of R1 800. This is in stark contrast to the determination of between R4 000 and R4 500 as the minimum wage. This DA policy emboldens some employers in our province to ignore the national determination.

Fourthly, the DA's lack of commitment to economic redress, clearly stipulated in the national Constitution, has seen ownership patterns in the provincial economy remain largely unchanged. The DA is actively opposed to broad-based BEE and simply ignores calls to create investment funds that would support African business to gain access to the tourism, agriculture and property sectors, to use three examples.

Less than 3% of agricultural land in the province is owned by black people (including coloured and Indian people). Yet the provincial MEC for agriculture, DA federal chairperson Ivan Meyer, says that is a matter for the deeds office and not his concern (in reply to a written question).

The party has an aversion to public employment, despite slow economic growth, which impacts negatively on young African and coloured people.

While the DA claims the lowest unemployment in the country for the province, this has always been the case. When the ANC governed the Western Cape, the

unemployment rate was lower than it is now under the DA.

The only public employment comes from national government's expanded public works programme, community work programme and the presidential employment stimulus.

Lastly, the DA's fight back for devolution of powers to the province is an indication of their attempt to show those wanting to secede (CapeXit and Freedom Front Plus) that "DA devolution" is the "path to Cape independence". The DA leader is alleged to have promised a referendum on Cape independence.

The bill on devolution, which they have now tabled in the legislature, has been declared by three lawyers in the provincial legislature to be unconstitutional.

Yet, they insist on wasting taxpayers money through public hearings.

Despite the expression of support for the National Health Insurance bill by the majority of those who attended the public hearings about it in our province, the DA voted against it in the national council of provinces.

The Western Cape is part of South Africa. Its citizens will benefit more from a cooperative approach, as per our Constitution, with national government. By refusing to support the national district development model, they are excluding the people of our province from opportunities and much-needed development.

The DA lit up the legislature in the colours of Ukraine. It refused to light up the building in Palestinian colours. In fact, they refused a snap debate on Palestine.

The exceptionalism of the DA is about using every trick in the book to divide the African majority (coloured versus African) while they protect and preserve the privileges of the beneficiaries of colonialism and apartheid.

Recent by-elections show that the DA is losing support across the province as voters begin to understand their agenda of preserving apartheid privileges for a minority.

Dugmore is an ANC member and leader of the opposition in the Western Cape legislature



The Cape Town DA awarded tenders to the spouse of a well-known gang boss ... and refuses to release a forensic report into allegations of corruption