

# FREEDOM DAY 2019

The statue of Liberty is an emblem. It was built in France after the French Revolution as a gift to America's revolutionaries who came across to France to help its people shake off tyranny. Both these countries have become stalwarts of democracy and citizen participation.

When the statue of Liberty was erected, its inaugural speech ended with these words:

*"There is room in America and brotherhood for all who will support our institutions and aid in our development. But those who come to disturb our peace and to dethrone our laws are aliens and enemies forever."*

Freedom is a very popular word in South Africa too. A number of political parties have entrenched it in their name. For example, Inkatha Freedom Party, Freedom Front and Economic Freedom Fighters. While ideologically different, parties like these share a hankering for Freedom.

This year Freedom Day falls in the midst of an election campaign. In 1994, twenty-five years ago, the first free and democratic elections were held – on April 27<sup>th</sup>. This holiday is now our statue of Liberty.

But the ship capsized. Democracy did not sink, but it was captured. Our peace has been disturbed and our laws have been dethroned. Listening to the testimony of Angelo Agrizzi before the election campaign started at the Zondo Commission was bad enough. But listening to Robert McBride's testimony at the same Commission during the election campaign is shameful.

Those who feathered their own nests with public resources are indeed aliens and enemies forever. They have betrayed the sacrifices that so many of our forbears made to foment our revolution.

It is time to lead captivity away captive.

We do not just need a new government – we need a new way of governing.

We need to put aside the vanguardism of a liberation-movement-turned-political-party. There is no other party that can hold a candle to the ANC. In spite of the fact that it has deteriorated into a Patronage Party, it is still the big brother to the 47 other parties registered in the 2019 elections.

The contender is not another party. The challenger is a Clean Coalition.

The Chair of the EFF, Dali Mpofu, put it this way: "Coalitions are not necessarily about policy convergence. In fact, it's the opposite because there's no need to have coalitions with people that you agree with."

This was echoed by DA leader Maimane: "There must be shared principles and agenda that all parties agree to when they enter a coalition."

After the municipal elections in 2016, the EFF took a "hands-off role" to the DA-led Coalitions in the major metros. Dali Mpofu's recent remarks seem to signal a policy shift, as the ten-week long election campaign enters its last four weeks. The polls are sinking in. No other party can beat the ANC's pork-barrel politics. The only alternative is a Clean Coalition.

On Freedom Day, South African's are once again dreaming dreams of freedom:

- Freedom from unemployment
- Freedom from poverty
- Freedom from landlessness
- Freedom from inequality
- Freedom from femicide
- Freedom from hunger
- Freedom from water shortages
- Freedom from the energy crisis

Twenty-five years after the first free and democratic elections, the Economy is still shedding jobs. Load-shedding is bad enough, but job-shedding is horrific.

Meanwhile the population has exploded from 40 million to 55 million. Many of these are about to enter the work force, the job market, during the next five years of the Sixth Parliament. Will voters re-elect a party that has allowed job shrinkage to continue during five consecutive Parliaments? While so many of those MPs had their fingers in the till, so to speak?

There are mechanisms that can make Coalitions work. For example, indicative voting, which helps all coalition partners to reach "tolerable compromises".

And also rank-system voting, where you attach a score to your preferences. When the results are tabulated, the convergence of opinion can be found.

A Clean Coalition would not be moribund with dozens of cadres who the Integrity Commission has asked to stand down. It would be younger overall, and thus more representative of the Electorate. But it would still be able to tap credible, experienced leaders like Holomisa, Lekota, Ramphela and de Lille.

Those who have replaced the good of the people with self-preservation do not deserve to be re-elected. Not all are like that in the ruling party, only some. But if you want to vote for Ramaphosa, you will also be voting for David Mabuza and Ace Magashule.

And if push comes to shove internally starting on May 9<sup>th</sup>, there is no guarantee that the "vindictive triumphalists" won't make a comeback. That scenario is not as far-fetched as Tiger Woods coming back to win the prestigious Masters golf tournament again. Two presidents have been recalled. What guarantee is there that it won't happen to Ramaphosa as well?

That guarantee could only come if the PR system is abandoned or mixed with constituency-based voting, as recommended by the Van Zyl / Slabbert Commission. But the vanguard party knows better. It ignores the advice of Commissions as non-binding. Is there even any guarantee that those exposed by the Zondo Commission will be brought to book? Maybe after the elections, they will just be offered amnesty? That all depends on who wins the internal struggle within the ANC.

South Africa needs more than a new party or a new government. It needs *a new way of governing*. Coalitions are going to be the new approach for the next decade or two. Voters need not fear this prospect. In fact, they need to embrace it, and support it with their vote.