

FEMINIST VIEW OF POLITICAL PARTIES MAY 2019

Democratic Alliance –Deliberately gender blind

The DA describes itself as a political party with liberal values and principles that supports a market-based economy. Their slogan for this election is One South Africa For All and the manifesto covers three areas: Economic Growth and Jobs, Now; Building a Caring, Opportunity-rich South Africa; and Creating the Capable State. DA dedicates considerable space in the manifesto to the economic section. Striking in the DAs manifesto is the extent to which the ANC is named and blamed. Throughout the manifesto the DA points out what they have identified as the considerable failures of the ruling party.

The notion of two South Africa's are raised a few times in the manifesto in relation to economic opportunities, access to health and education. The DA identifies race redress under economic justice but makes it clear that their plans will never take from the one to give to the other. The DA rejects the idea of race quotas in this manifesto and gender quotas in their constitution. The DA rejects the idea of land expropriation without compensation and proposes that land reform is possible without changing the constitution. They also reject the NHI and proposes an alternative that includes the private health sector. The DA acknowledge the need for a sunset clause to support race redress but is at pains to explain that any sunset clause provisions will be temporary.

The manifesto is written from the perspective of a government in waiting with many of the headings starting with: A DA national government will... This makes the promises and plans come across as unrealistic at times. It would have been useful for the voters if the DA included plans for South Africa in its role as the official opposition. Even though it is accepted that a manifesto cannot provide in depth detail, most of the DAs plans and promises do not have targets, timeframes, fiscal consideration or implementation plans.

A key observation about the DAs manifesto is that it is completely gender blind because it totally disregards gender in its understanding and planning. Womxn are mainly considered in the section dealing with gender-based violence (GBV) and are often mentioned in their normalised role as the carers of children. This indicates a lack of understanding or a refusal to acknowledge womxn as a category deserving full consideration and inclusion in plans and promises throughout the manifesto.