

The EFF is 5...

...and at sixes and sevens!



The EFF has turned five, but it finds itself at sixes and sevens. The VBS corruption revelations may be shocking, but they are no aberration. This is but the latest example of the EFF's mounting contradictions. The timing could not have been more embarrassing. Having played a major role in determining Zuma's fate, the EFF was still celebrating their latest victory – the resignation of Nhanhla Nene.

Weizmann Hamilton
Executive Committee

The EFF has vigorously denied wrongdoing, threatening legal action against the SA Reserve Bank. But it is possible that second-in-command, deputy president Floyd Shivambu, could be prosecuted. Claims have since followed that Julius Malema, (through his cousin) and the EFF itself may have benefitted. The EFF refused to form coalitions with the ANC because it is corrupt. Yet it entered coalitions for self-enrichment with ANC leaders, turning VBS into an institution for theft from the poor.

The EFF leadership has, unsurprisingly proclaimed its 16 October VBS press conference a success. With the investigations still ongoing and prosecutions still awaited – the evidence is not yet in the public domain. The EFF is thus able to claim it is innocent till proven guilty. But this is a fig leaf to hide its naked embarrassment.

The evidence of looting is so overwhelming that the EFF leadership had no alternative but to echo public sentiment, pretending to share in the revulsion, condemning corruption and calling for prosecutions. Malema even gave an undertaking to act against Shivambu if he were found guilty.

To make matters worse for the EFF, it is suspected that behind its so-far unsuccessful no-confidence motions against Tshwane Mayor, Solly Msimang, are attempts to cover-up corruption amounting to R12 million involving a Tshwane City Manager – an alleged EFF member.

Attempting to rescue its “radical economic transformation” credentials, the EFF has called for VBS to be saved, because it is a “black bank.” This serves merely to expose the EFF's real class ambitions – self-enrichment. It stands firmly beside the ANC, DA, and the radical transformation rabble – Black First Land First, Transform SA, Mazibuye African Congress etc. – to get rich quickly.

The EFF is approaching a cross-road in its political fortunes. Severe damage to its dishonestly constructed anti-corruption image faces it. Simultaneously cracks are widening in the party itself. Chaos erupted at two of its provincial assemblies. In at least one, Malema's bodyguards fired live rounds of ammunition at EFF members storming the fleeing commander-in-chief's car. They had rebelled against the imposition of his preferred provincial structure candidates. Malema's North West EFF allies are desperately fending off sexual harassment and victimization allegations. All this has severely dented many EFF members' confidence.

How did the EFF get here?

The EFF's political and ideological degeneration is surprising not because it has occurred at all – that was always a given. It is the speed with which it is undressing itself that is striking. The leadership's fears are for both their personal fate at the hands of the law, as well as its electoral credibility. It is turning up the volume of its racist noise – condemning all whites as thieves, smearing Indians and coloureds as racists – in a desperate attempt to boost its electoral appeal, stalling since 2014. In the 37 by-elections in 2018, it has not increased its 2014 votes, and regressed in most provinces. Its Gauteng growth is small. Only in Limpopo has it increased support more significantly.

The EFF boasted ahead of the 2016 local elections that it expected to control at least one metro and some municipalities. As the capitalist *Business Day* observed, “Malema predicted 18% (from the 6% in 2014) at the local elections in 2016. It got to 8%, less than 100,000 new votes. ... Now he's projecting 12% in 2019. That's still well over 1-million new voters he needs. Where will they come from? Not from the DA. And with Zuma gone, not from the ANC. Malema will have to register a whole generation of new voters” (*Business Day* 29/03/18).

The EFF's exaggerated expectations were built on a misreading of the 2014 results. Its spectacular 1.3m votes for a party of only 12 months, only matched those of the Congress of the Peoples' in 2009. This despite the far more favourable conditions in 2014 than those under which Cope contested. The EFF failed to capitalise to its full potential the deep post-Marikana anger of the masses against a deeply divided corruption tainted ANC. This pointed to the limits of its electoral appeal particularly amongst organised workers who have a healthy class suspicion towards a party led by a millionaire who has never worked a day in his life.

In 2016, the EFF could have called for fresh elections after 90 days if an administration was not formed. Instead it installed DA mayors. This rescued the DA, enabling it to claim electoral momentum. It became the DA's useful idiots – the cheerleaders of its hypocritical propaganda that it runs corruption-free administrations.

The DA/EFF coalitions confirm that the EFF does not take its own anti-capitalist rhetoric seriously. They are a local government dress rehearsal for a national coalition with the ANC in 2019 – an engagement with the monkey in preparation for marriage with the organ grinder.

The EFF since 2016 – a catalogue of betrayals

The EFF's post-2016 election strategy is driven by two considerations. First, ambition to enter national office in 2019; second, self-preservation to avoid exposure for corruption.

Since 2016 the EFF has:

- Entered into coalitions with DA – a party it denounces as racist agents of “white monopoly capital”.
- Defended Zulu King Zwelithini's rejection of Expropriation of Land Without Compensation (EWC). The King has subsequently roped-in AfriForum pulling the EFF into an anti-EWC alliance with racists claiming white farmer genocide
- Allied with the House of Traditional Leaders colluding with multinationals exploiting mineral resources at mining communities' expense
- Through spokesperson Mbuyiseni Ndlozi's flattering congratulatory birthday tweet to Gatsha Buthelezi, praised the historical role of the IFP leader despite his leading role in the apartheid regime-orchestrated “black-on-black” violence in the 1980s and 1990s

What lies behind the EFF's anti-Indian racism?

Malema insists that SA's main problem in SA today is not class but race. But it is the racism in the Indian community that the EFF leadership has singled out. Racism undoubtedly exists in the Indian community. But racism is found in all communities, including Africans, to different degrees. Racist prejudices are rooted in the poverty and social deprivation that continues today beyond apartheid, preserved by the same capitalist system white minority rule served.

For Marxists, it is not only what is said in politics, but by whom and why. The EFF is targeting Treasury Deputy Director Ishmael Monmoniat because he is implementing legislation threatening to expose looting. Accusing him of “undermining African leadership” insults the black director general and his other deputies.



Pravin Gordhan is similarly race-baited for pursuing corruption in state-owned enterprises. The SA Revenue Service “rogue unit” hysteria deflects attention from the investigation into the illicit activities of tobacco outfit, Carnilex, whose director, Adriano Mazzotti, has confessed to corruption, paid the EFF's IEC registration fee and Malema's R16 million tax arrears.

EFF attempts to undermine the State Capture Commission members are similarly motivated – the fear of exposure of its links to corruption. Under a new NPA leadership Malema could have his corruption charges reinstated.

How do we answer the EFF's racist populism?

The first duty of genuine socialists is to promote working class unity of all races around a common platform and programme of action to dismantle the foundations of all prejudice – racial, ethnic, religious, nationalist and gender – the capitalist system.

Such a programme must:

- Lay bare the class divisions within every racial / ethnic / national / religious group showing how the working class in each have more in common with their class brothers and sisters across these boundaries than with the capitalist elite within them
- Explain that these prejudices are fed by working class poverty in each community
- Explain that economic freedom is unattainable under capitalism and requires the socialist transformation of society
- Explain the negotiated settlement aimed to preserve capitalism and open the road for the black bourgeoisie

The EFF does the exact opposite. Having in reality embraced the preservation of capitalism, the EFF is obliged to promote the racial divisions that capitalism has historically relied on with the aim of stopping the working class from uniting and overthrowing it.

The EFF is unlikely to survive action against Shivambu intact. Equally if Malema fails to act, it will damage it even further. Malema is damned if he does and damned if he doesn't. Those followers hoping the EFF is fundamentally different from the ANC will be more disappointed as it continues taking steps along the path back to the party it came from.

But the EFF's radical rhetoric does not fool the strategists of capital. Former *Business Day* editor Peter Bruce warmly welcomed Shivambu's planned private member's bill to establish a sovereign wealth fund as marking “an important shift in the EFF's approach to, and its attitude to, capitalism and the market”. (*Business Live* 21/05/2018).

The bourgeois is worried Ramaphosa is not up to the job of saving capitalism. Peter Bruce lamented: “Capitalism is our only viable future. But it needs to be bent and shaped to our purposes and I'm not sure he (Ramaphosa) knows how to do it.” (*Sunday Times* 28/10/18). The ANC may not pass the 50% barrier in 2019. A pro-capitalist alliance of some combination is thus possible. The EFF will be a willing partner in exchange for cabinet positions.

Even if the EFF achieves the 11%-12% of the vote that the latest polls suggest, it is no alternative for the working class. The resolutions of the historic Working Class Summit convened by Saftu in July to form a mass workers party on a socialist programme must be implemented urgently.