

The DA is beginning to reflect ANC attitudes.

In response to the article “De Lille gags Smith in Stadium dispute” by Babalo Ndenze, I am not entirely surprised that JP Smith has been “gagged”. I have noticed these undemocratic tendencies slowly but surely creeping into the city led DA. This attitude was recently confirmed by the fact that the newly appointed Chairperson of the Energy and Climate Change Committee was sent to a international climate change conference hosted in Brazil. When I arrived at the inaugural Committee meeting, the first to be held in two years, on the 14th of June 2012 the Chairpersons absence was announced. As members of the Energy and climate Change Committee, the ANC and some DA councillors including myself were not informed or consulted about the delegates to the Conference. Even the appointment of the Chairperson is a “painful issue” amongst DA Councillors.

According to my many conversations with fellow Councillors, it does appear as if the Obama award was a fate accompli as many DA Councillors may also feel that the matter was thrust upon them without any genuine consultation.

I have also been informed by Councillors that they had been questioned by senior Councillors to ascertain if they had provided me with information with regards to their portfolio committee. The fact that the Cape Muslim Congress is fulfilling its constitutional obligation by attempting to provide a positive oversight role is irritating some people.

As an insignificant and miniscule political entity with no delusions of grandeur I find it uncharacteristic that a party that personifies the purest of democratic ideals and hopes to lead the South African government by 2016 should be this petty.

Although I do not always agree with or even like JP Smith as a person, I am obligated to support his right and duty to be able to speak freely. If JP Smith, an unlikely “hero of free speech” is gagged, then I, as the leader of a minority party have many reasons to fear.

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