

The politics of humility

In response to your front page “Spin Doctor in fight for job”, (Friday June 22), I recall a conversation between Jonathan Hulley a former Councillor for Constantia and myself about a decade ago. Jonathan informed me that he was perturbed by telephone calls which he had received from some of Tony Leon’s side-kicks. According to Jonathan, he was advised to stand down and not oppose Robin Carlisle at a selection meeting which was scheduled to fill a vacant parliamentary seat. Although I regarded Jonathan as a role model in Council, he believed that he was better suited for parliamentary work as a legal graduate with research experience. Months later, after his Portuguese wife was denied permission to live in S-Africa; Jonathans packed his bag and migrated to Britain.

With all the criticism regularly directed at Transport MEC Robin Carlisle, I continue to believe his role in regional politics is beneficial. Unlike many other Transport MEC’s before him, Carlisle has managed to bring some discipline to the chaotic public transport industry. His hounding attitude and continues bluster may not always be appreciated but it sometimes gets the job done. His frequent acrimonious style in my opinion is perhaps a reflection on his desire to be remembered. As an elder person who has spent most of his life in business, politics is clearly where he wants to leave his legacy. In contrast to, for example, Bishop Tutu, who will be remembered for his graceful humility, Carlisle will be remembered for his obtuse indifference to cordiality. However, he is the only white politician in the country who can give the “proverbial finger” to the white middle class in and the black taxi owners and survive. That I can appreciate.

His current run-in with Steven Otter is a classic Shakespearean comedy of errors. While Carlisle works in Edgar’s suits, I have seen Steven wear shorts and sandals to work. In my many interactions with Steven over the years, I remember him as a sincere and exceptional South African who happens to be white. Unlike some whites who happen to be South African, Steven genuinely cares about others. It is a pity that the trio cannot resolve their differences amicably. Hector Elliot who described himself as a “South African –American” in his article “Obamas should be most welcome in our city” (Cape points May 23) should explain why he swore at Steven. Perhaps the American attitude of “universal domination” may have played a role.

In conclusion, what the trio need to understand is that they are paid massive salaries by local taxpayers to perform specific tasks. This personal politics will now sway attention. This is unfair to those who were promised a better quality service. Also remember, others forfeited so that you must succeed. Perhaps Premier Zille should request MEC Alan Winde to intercede. In my opinion, Alan has the necessary level of chutzpa and mellifluousness to manage this extravaganza of personalities.

Yagyah Adams

Cape Muslim Congress