

SA is on a knife's edge



Charisse Zeifert

Have you heard the joke where a Jew, an Afrikaner and an Indian walk into a shebeen?

It sounds like the kind of "witty" yarn that EFF leader Julius Malema would spin. Oh, wait, actually, he has already told tales about different minorities – singling them out for abuse.

Most recently, he "cleverly" managed to insult two minority groups at the same time, when he said: "There's a group of white right-wingers (read Afrikaners) who are being trained by Jews in Pretoria to be snipers." (sic)

South Africa is on a knife's edge when it comes to racial tensions. The anger and outrage that followed Adam Catevelos' racist rant is indicative of the fact that South Africans are no longer going to tolerate this kind of talk in the country. And rightly so.

Yet, singling out minorities for special opprobrium still seems to be acceptable. It is as if there is an unwritten rule for politicians in which minorities are considered to be fair game for attack, when political acumen is no longer an option.

The less able you are to attract support using good governance and policies, the more likely your bigotry will show. And, the closer we get to elections, the more bizarre the comments.

It would seem that extra points are awarded if you are able to pit one minority against another.

Who can forget Marius Fransman's pathetic and useless attempts to garner votes for the ANC in the Western Cape when he set in opposition Muslims against Jews through falsely asserting that Jewish businessmen were unfairly benefiting at the expense of their Muslim counterparts because of the policies of the DA?

More recently, ANC MPP in the Western Cape Sharon Davids outrageously claimed that the drought crisis had been orchestrated by the DA to benefit what she called "the Jewish mafia".

The Indian community has similarly been defamed by EFF spokespeople, including accusations that they are economically exploiting black people, of being anti-black racists and of having their very identity as South Africans called into question.

Just as Catevelos' revolting racial slurs are unacceptable, so is rhetoric like this not okay.

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