

We must guard against those who use ostensibly noble causes for their own material gain

By Ghaleb Cachalia MP - DA Shadow Minister of Public Enterprises

Everyone sitting in this House will affirm that to presuppose one's own race or nationality is inherently superior to another, and to treat those of other races and nationalities with unfairness or unequal justice, with dismissiveness or with active contempt, is pernicious.

I am old enough to remember encountering, firsthand, the engravings on benches and signs on busses and buildings that read "Europeans Only", to have experienced the group areas act and the economic marginalization of so-called 'non-white' people.

We rejected this institutionally in 1994 and set out, with Nelson Mandela leading the charge, on a programme of redress and reconciliation in our troubled nation.

While global events of late have refocused attention on race, issues fueled by events that trigger crises of one kind or another – that have a kernel of truth embedded in their focus and that has in its genesis a case and a concern that is pertinent and merits attention – have often been hijacked, aggressively funded and sloganized beyond their noble original purpose and intent.

Yes, we must be vigilant but also be alive to the efforts by the ANC and the EFF to echo the documented goals of the International Black Lives Matter movement to call, as the cornerstone of their demands, for the curtailing of property rights, the cutting of military budgets in half, the defunding of the police, the disbanding of private schools, the abolition of private hospitals, the creation of government-funded sacred sites for black worship and extra tax rebates depending on how black you are. Look it up – it's there and it's here.

It diminishes the Mandela Project. It usurps the nobility of racial reconciliation and seeks to milk a grievance for eternity while an elite benefits and 'pie in the sky when you die' is dangled before a populace whose grievances are molded as part of an echo chamber of the past. Once racist, always racist and the institutions bear witness, is the mantra.

Let's be clear, racism is pernicious and lives matter – in the US, here, in South Sudan, in Burma and Belorussia. It's not colour of corruption and dispossession that is the measure – it's the actions that fly in the face of freedom and opportunity.

We must guard against those who use ostensibly noble causes for their own material gain at the expense of the very people they seek to champion and who are perversely incentivized to do so.

By comparison, I am not minimizing racism – I am maximizing reconciliation and responsible redress. I will not bend the knee in the service of an agenda that patently serves certain puppet masters. Instead, I will stand tall in the service of all, to build a just society for every South African, regardless of race, religion, circumstance of birth, sexual orientation, and more.

It is apposite in closing to recall Nietzsche's warning that we must "beware that when fighting monsters, you do not become a monster...for when you gaze long into the abyss, the abyss also gazes at you."