



ANDREW ON WEDNESDAY

It's complicated

The meme on Facebook showing a super-imposition of the face of person with down's syndrome on that of the Prime Minister was not only of bad taste but has embodied this election campaign.

This is only the icing on the cake after four years of non-stop deleterious campaigning focused on mud-slinging, backbiting and slander rather than converging a debate on the issues that matter most to the people. For these four years most of us stood looking at this stream of ill-treatment and toxic actions between the political parties, with none of the sides even remotely considering a truce that would give some respite to the public.

For these last four years I have repeatedly drawn the attention to how our political debate has floundered and lost all sense of decency and equilibrium, how our political class has degenerated and sank to the lowest possible level, how our democracy is slowly being pulled apart (because, democracy is not shatterproof as some would think). I have repeatedly called for garbed and noble dialectic rather than a plethora of the 'us' and 'them' game.

The worse thing about all of this is that we are starting to believe that this is an acceptable way of doing politics. This whole mess drove us into a Bermuda triangle missing out on values, ethical behaviour and principled discourses. The irony of all of this is that these 70 odd (apologies for the pun) MPs' behaviour is anomalous and incongruous to the way politics should be designed. Let it be known that our Republic is faltering, our institutions are wobbling, our social fabric is in dire straits - no, things are not honourable at all.

And as they say, it takes two to tango.

Yes, the Government is primarily responsible to do what is right, to call the shots, to set the bar as high as possible. It is

the Government's role to make sure that the civil service is allowed to operate in serenity and to offer the tools so that all institutions can operate composedly and unperturbed.

The Government's responsibility is to give the direction and stand away, to legislate after listening to the public outcry and the experts and stand away, to provide the right ambience for good business operations and stand away, to set the rules and stand away.

On the other hand, the Opposition is almost equally important.

It is there to flag the abuses not only toss allegations and contentions, to offer alternatives, to provide solutions, to reach out to Government, to represent the unrepresented and to advise the Administration.

It has been for over 50 years led by a Constitution that really gives us the necessary structures to make the system operate well and here we are seeing it all disband before us.

And what do we get?

We get a dialectic of loathe and a split between the blues and the reds that is as wide as we know it. It is enough to see the leaders speaking during the mass meetings and you can almost expect their jugular to pop with all the effort that they are putting into it, as if the doomsday clock depends on what they are saying!

You get leaders almost challenging for a fight, calling each other liars, threatening with prison, referring to key roles in our Government set-up as Puppazzi and the latest is all about body language and chickening - my oh my, scandalous.

Both leaders should really be uncomfortable with themselves.

They are the ones representing us, but I and most of the electorate have never approved this vernacular.

'You embarrass yourselves and if people are undecided and not intending to vote, it's no one's fault but yours. If the people are looking at politics in this way, it is nothing short of your behaviour'.

I do understand and appreciate the pressures but this has gone beyond any soundness.

A number of reasons were touted why this situation came to be;

Some said its Parliament TV and the drive to be seen tough and threatening.

Some said that it was the strategy that the PN needed to use to start re-grouping, that is, by throwing one jab after another.

Some ascertained it was the knee-jerk decision-taking that characterised this Government.

Some said it was the shady deals.

Some said it was the corrupt practices of people in high Government positions.

Some said that the personal rivalry between Joseph and Simon, which seems to have a root we know nothing about (at least I don't).

Some pointed their fingers to the bloggers and social media. Well, the bloggers did not help, that's for sure. The daphnecaruanagalizia.com versus glennbedingfield.com were simply adding fuel to the fire. Not that they didn't have the right to express themselves but there is a way and a way to do so. In the case of these two bloggers the boundaries were taken down and it became all out collision.

Some said it is the way Panama papers and the dappled contracts that have thrown

a spanner in the works of the Government.

Some said it was the kick-backs and the people allegedly dipping their fingers in the honey pot.

Some blamed the party financing, the way business keeps political parties at ransom. Very soon, some will also blame the Marines!

This is a situation that will take us to the 3rd of June.

In no way will the situation change on the 4th June.

If the PN/PD coalition wins it will be a head-on attack on the labour party to bring down the people involved in the Panama scandal and the other claims. If it is the PL who win, it would be a continuation of this retributive style of politics.

I believe the scars that have been created and the scab have left an indelible mark. If I had to suggest something to the new Government it would be to put everything on hold and invest, at least the first year, in healing the fissure that has been created, to revamp the institutions with more resources, better people to lead these establishments, a clear delineation between the different roles and a review of the Constitution.

If people have done wrong the only way is straight to jail or that they pay their dues. We cannot expect people to have respect for the rule of law if it's ok to mess up - and the message that is coming across from our political class is that, 'it is OK to mess up!'

The damage that is being sewn in the social fabric is immense. If the political parties cannot understand this basic notion, I think we are better off living in caves (where the survival simply rests with the fittest).

Ghandi ngħid xi

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Letter

Mr Matrenza's message to the hoi polloi

Richard Matrenza's phoney propaganda article "Day of reckoning" (29 May) cannot be allowed to pass without comment.

The opening paragraphs of his article were infested with no fewer than two dozen first person singular pronouns ('I', 'me') which must surely set the record for self-indulgent published scribbling.

Having duly impressed us with copious introductory references to James Joyce's 'Ulysses' (a book which only clever people read), Mr Matrenza then lands read-

ers with a thud in electioneering territory with a sermon about his 'political principles' and 'core of philosophy', to which 'he has stuck' unwaveringly for sixty years.

He makes reference to the 'pedigree' of 'the party' which, surprise, surprise, 'is very important' and leaves readers (nudge, nudge, wink, wink) to guess which party this is. The 'party', he tells us portentously, is a 'ship of state... steered by a captain... who has his sights on the best interests of the land'. This has helped

the writer to 'sleep peacefully' at night. And so on, and so on; it would be tiresome to continue describing all of Mr Matrenza's childish political circumambulations; they are certainly worth reading for their most amazing crassness.

Please, Mr Matrenza, give readers of *The Malta Independent* a break; they are more intelligent than you imagine and don't take kindly to being treated like ignorant misguided hoi polloi who may not intend voting the way you wish them to. Your

tired clichés might be impressive to the super-gullible who vote blindly for the same party year after year but, rest assured, readers of this newspaper know how to think for themselves and weigh up the odds and reaching the right decision in the coming election.

Also note, Mr Matrenza, the pivotal word "corruption" is missing from your futile patronising message.

G-Debono
Siema