

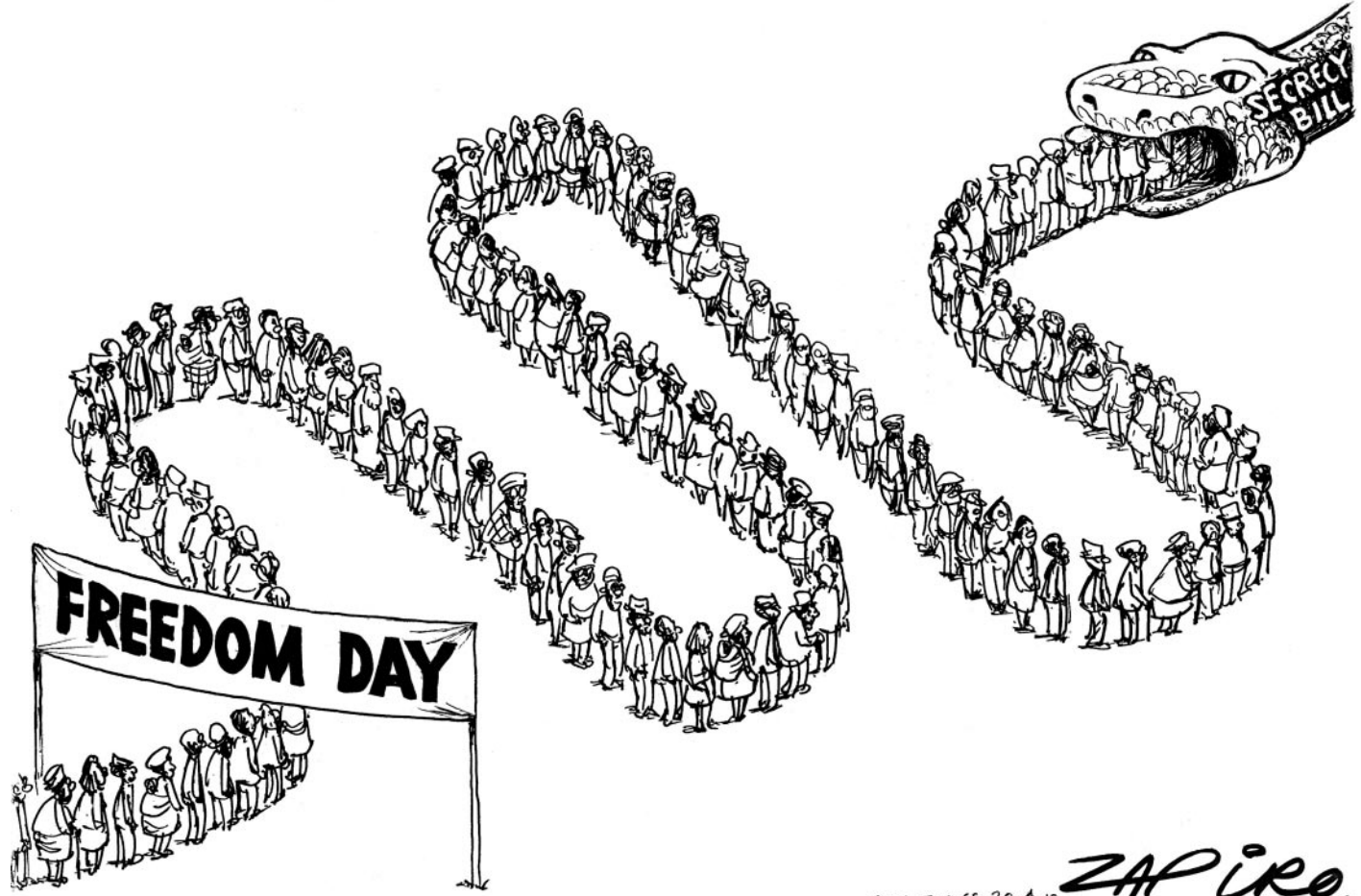
Sunday Times ESTABLISHED 1906

Freedom is a mirage for too many children

SOUTH Africa entered its 19th year as a democracy yesterday. There is clearly much to celebrate, given the massive progress made over the two decades in forging a united and nonracial nation. Despite all the political, economic and social challenges, there is no doubt that South Africa is today a much better place to live in than it was in the early 1990s. However, unless the widening inequality gap is addressed as a matter of urgency, the long-term stability of the country will always be in question. One sure way of reducing the gap is through the provision of quality education to all. As Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first democratically elected president, once put it: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Yet, over the past two decades, the government has failed to use this weapon effectively to change the lives of the poor. Nowhere has this failure been so glaring as in the rural hinterlands of the Eastern Cape, where young children are forced to walk tens of kilometres per day to attend school. Many of the public school buildings are in such a dilapidated state that they are not fit to be used as learning centres. As a team of eminent South Africans discovered during their visit to some of the schools in the province this week, the conditions are just not conducive to proper learning and teaching. This is not because of a shortage of resources. The government has enough in its coffers to ensure that no child studies under a tree or attends school for a whole year without textbooks. What is lacking is political will on the side of the government. Despite the ruling ANC and the government stating that education is one of their "apex priorities", there is still no sense of urgency in dealing with the Eastern Cape schools crisis. On numerous occasions, the national and provincial governments have been taken to court by non-governmental organisations in a bid to force them to fulfil their constitutional obligations to pupils and parents. For South Africa to shake off its current status as the most unequal society in the world, the government would have to play its part actively in ensuring the universal provision of quality education. Failure to do so will render freedom meaningless for millions of poor South Africans who, without education, are condemned to unemployment and poverty. As the country approaches its 20th year of freedom, it is high time President Jacob Zuma's government takes firm steps to fix the public education system in poverty-stricken areas such as the rural Eastern Cape.

Battle for SA soccer's soul

THE gloves are most definitely off in the battle for South African soccer's soul. The chief executive of the South African Football Association, Dennis Mumbule, said as much this week when he accused the country's Olympic committee, Sasoc, of trying to manipulate soccer elections that are due to take place in September. It has long been no secret that a proxy war for control of South African soccer is being fought over money from the 2010 World Cup. The current administration of Sifa has been on the defensive during most of the hostilities, relying on big brother Fifa, the world governing body, to fight its corner. What it all comes down to is that a grouping outside of football — identified this week by Mumbule as Sasoc in general and a senior Sasoc official, Mohamed Mubarak, in particular — is out to topple the Sifa administration. Much of the fighting has been in murky waters, with accusations and denials that the millions from the World Cup are either being wasted or being well spent by Sifa. Until now, it was difficult to believe who was telling the truth. With the Sunday Times's disclosure today of the Sifa financial statements it becomes a little easier to understand. Sifa is insolvent. That this should be investigated as part of a match-fixing probe, however, is dubious. Sifa says it gave Sasoc its financial statements in September. If so, it is hard to understand why the figures should have been kept so secret until now. Sifa clearly believes it can turn around its dire financial situation. Former CEO Robin Petersen has been appointed to a job where his task will be to woo the private sector. We do not envy him the job of selling soccer — with all its recent history of backstabbing and infighting — to corporations, but we wish him luck. At the same time, we believe that soccer should be left to sort out its problems — along with its elections — on its own. Sasoc, and even the minister of sport, are out of line in trying to interfere. Fifa has warned that government interference in football could lead to South Africa's expulsion. We never thought that we would ever be in this position, but for once we agree with Fifa.



ANC's flock of loyal sheep bleats on cue in parliament



Mondli Makhanya

WATCHING the passage of the Protection of State Information Bill through parliament this week, my mind raced back to 2011 when the same piece of legislation came to a vote in the National Assembly. A cross-section of society — from churches to trade unions, universities to shack-dwellers associations — had come out strongly against the bill, warning about the dire implications for South Africa's open democracy. The voices had reached a crescendo by the time the National Assembly was due to vote. The ANC stood alone on the wrong side of the debate, and even its staunchest allies and seasoned stalwarts were telling party leaders that they were betraying their own legacy and the memory of those who had sacrificed their lives for liberation. History records that the ANC ignored all these calls to reason and passed the bill. But it was not just the passing of the bill that was disconcerting. It was the unthinking manner in which it was done. As interested parties, members of the South African National Editors' Forum and organisations such as Right2Know sat in on some deliberations of the committee that dealt with the bill. It was clear throughout the process that most of the ANC members of the committee had only a passing acquaintance with its contents. Only a few senior members seemed to have actually read it and were able to engage with it. The rest of the governing party members either just sat there, or made comical comments during public hearings.

Most of the real work of interrogating the bill and improving it was left to opposition MPs and fewer than a handful of senior ANC members. When voting day came, the rest of the ANC caucus members — most of whom had even less knowledge of the bill than their dozy committee colleagues — simply obeyed party instructions to press the green button. Very few bothered to familiarise themselves with what was going to be one of the most crucial and course-changing pieces of legislation in South African history. The Luthuli House and Pretoria *makhulubaases* to whom they owed their political careers had said it was good. So those who said it was bad had to be wrong. Simple. In the house they behaved like yobbos, screaming and yelling at opposition MPs who were appealing to their consciences and good sense. Loudest was Deputy Communications Minister Stella Ndabeni.

Do they fully respect the responsibilities of being MPs, or is parliament just a place where they collect pay cheques?

who would be a better fit as the chief plate-breaker at a rowdy, grappa-fuelled Greek wedding than on the parliamentary benches. (Just pop into a parliamentary debate one day to see for yourself. She is really good value.) So with those yells and howls and the press of a button the ANC caucus gave the nation the middle finger. Fast forward to 2013. Due to sustained pressure from the rest of society, opposition parties and sensible members of the ANC, the bill underwent massive improvements while it was being debated in the National Council of Provinces. Many of the things that the howling National Assembly members rejected in 2011 because they had been told to do so have now been included in the updated bill.

Although there are still some fundamental problems with the legislation, it is a tribute to South Africa's democracy that a party as powerful as the ANC was compelled to move as far as it did. So what did the ANC herd do when the updated bill came before the National Assembly on Thursday? They again voted as they were told. And very few would have known the difference between the 2011 and the 2013 versions of the bill. The *makhulubaases* told them to vote this way and that's what they did. The vote came in the week of yet another shameful display of contempt for the solemn duties of parliament when ANC MPs dutifully accepted the government's explanations for the Central African Republic troop deployment fiasco. When Defence Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula (whom Hogarth once unfairly called a beach ball) threw stink bombs at critics of the deployment, ANC MPs cheered unthinkingly. This week, as was the case earlier this month when she appeared before parliament's defence committee, the message was that it is impolite to question the wisdom of our esteemed government leaders.

With South Africa having marked 19 years of freedom and democracy yesterday, we have to ask if we have built the type of parliament worthy of our great constitution. It is a question that South Africans as a whole must ask, but which MPs in particular must ask themselves. Are we fielding the best team in the institution that, according to the constitution, is the voice of the people? Do those who sit on those benches take their oaths seriously? Do they fully understand and respect the duties and responsibilities of being MPs, or is parliament just a place where they collect pay cheques? This week, of all weeks, they gave us their answers to the above questions.

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HOGARTH

Ghost in the machine stands up to be counted

HOGARTH was pleasantly surprised to hear the news that Mathole Motshekga, the ANC's chief whip and the Singing President's parliamentary chief *imbongi*, had defied his party and voted to oppose the Secrecy Bill. Motshekga, whose main job is to ensure that ANC MPs toe Luthuli House's line, voting on the same side as the DA's Lindiwe Mazibuko? History was being made in parliament. But alas, Hogarth's excitement was short-lived. The story was too good to be true. It turns out it was only the voting machine, rather than Motshekga, that developed a conscience and changed his to a "no" vote. Seeing that Motshekga also moonlights as an African religion guru, perhaps the machine's malfunction was a message from the gods.

Eskom in hot-water bottle

WINTER has a way of bringing out strange behaviour in people. Take ANC MP Connie September, for example. At a briefing on Tuesday by Eskom on the electricity and coal supply, the utility suggested that people switch off their geysers, electric pumps, heaters and unnecessary lights between 5pm and 9pm to save electricity. Instead of an electric heater, wrap yourself in a blanket or invest in a gas heater. Instead of electric blankets to warm up the beds, Eskom suggested that people place hot-water bottles in their beds. September disagreed with the latter suggestion — a passion killer, she said. "Doesn't that cause problems for couples when you want to put something in between them, like a water bottle?" the perplexed MP asked.

Making love, not war

SPEAKING of passion, the National Assembly had its X-rated share when Defence Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula delivered a statement on the doomed deployment of troops to the Central African Republic. As the debate heated up, COPE MP Mlindi Nhanha told Mapisa-Nqakula that South Africans would not be "blowing kisses at her" for what happened in Bangui, to which the minister objected, saying Nhanha's lips were not desirable enough for her to kiss. Speaker Max Sisulu wittily interjected: "Honourable minister, that's not a point of order, it's a point of affection."

Flirting with danger

THE heat had hardly cooled on this episode when, a day later, Public Service and Administration Minister Lindiwe Sisulu complained to the speaker that her namesake and the DA's parliamentary leader, Lindiwe Mazibuko, was blowing kisses at Blade Nzimande, the higher education and training minister. Nzimande, said Sisulu, couldn't take the heat and left the National Assembly because of the attention Mazibuko was giving him.

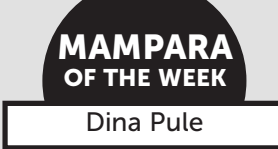
Revolution to be accessorised

HIS trademark acerbic rhetoric against all things capitalist has earned him a reputation as the labour movement's own Julius Malema, but Irvin Jim is not your usual revolutionary. Yes, he may protest against capitalist Trevor Manuel's National Development Plan, but the Numsa boss has no qualms with showing up at meetings wearing expensive designer labels. If Tony Yengeni was the face of Gucci socialists in the 1990s, Jim should be now be known as an Armani communist.

Jim goes to gym to learn

HOGARTH hears that Jim has been training very hard these days for the "impending revolution" against capitalism. So much so that he had become a regular gym fanatic. One would think that a workers' leader would have a gym membership in one of those health clubs without air conditioning and only basic training equipment. Not our Jim. The man tipped to succeed Zwelinzima Vavi as Cosatu's general secretary is a member at the exclusive Virgin Active Classic club in Melrose Arch — open only to the super-rich and high earners. Is this his way of conducting reconnaissance on the class enemy?

Write to hogarth@sundaytimes.co.za



One woman, one cry

THE good women of South Africa rarely present themselves as obvious Mamparas. Instead, their male counterparts have an unflinching ability to suffer from foot-in-mouth disease and other cringe-inducing ailments. But Communications Minister Dina Pule defied her gender at her hysterical news conference on Monday when she "outed" three journalists of this newspaper. Enthused by the idea of five-star hotel snacks and a faint hope that Pule might finally make sense of her hapless communications ministry — and it being a quiet news day — all the major media houses were in attendance. The honourable Mampara managed to avoid all the important issues, of course — such as the delay in vital decisions in her department. But this is what Mamparas usually do: they hide their incompetence behind bluster and accusations. Well done, Madam Mampara.



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twitterati

@chestermissing Chester Missing THE problem with the secrecy bill being passed is now we will never know what's that funny bump on the president's head. @Engumbhini2 Mbnazima Shilowa THOSE of you who will use Edward Zuma's airline should not complain when things go wrong as happened with Khulubuse. @GarethCliff2 Gareth Cliff NOSIWIWE Mapisa-Nqakula said something in the news about "baring our plans so nakedly". Please Minister, some of us have just had breakfast.



"Ever since my wife started using an electric toothbrush, she's been going for checkups at the electrician."

Act against violence and ring that doorbell

YESTERDAY was Freedom Day. This year, the government invited us to reflect on "the strides we have made in achieving the vision of a better life for all". It is easy enough to respond by listing frustrations and disappointments. But focusing on concrete steps to consolidate freedom for everyone is far more constructive. And so today I want to write about Ringing the Bell, an international initiative to halt domestic violence. Launched in South Africa last month, it calls on everyone, especially men, to help to stop the abuse of women through the simple act of ringing the doorbell. It is a brilliant idea, especially because it is simple and easy and something anyone can do. This is such an encouragement, because the flood of bad news in the media often leaves us feeling at a loss, even powerless. After Anene Booysen's horrendous murder, thousands of people took part in marches or stands of witness, all the while recognising that these were likely to have limited impact without further concrete action. For the situation we face is

Another view Thabo Makgoba



Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town very bad news indeed. A Medical Research Council study indicates that in South Africa, on average, three women a day are killed by their husbands, boyfriends or long-term partners. According to the police, more than 64 000 sex crimes were reported last year, including an average of 144 rapes every day. This is only the tip of the iceberg. The vast majority of rapes go unreported owing to, among other things, the fear of stigmatisation, a lack of faith in the justice system and threats of further violence from perpetrators. Whatever the reasons, it seems only one rape in 25 is reported, which means the real figure is more likely to be about 3 600 a day. This is to say nothing of other forms of violence across our society, of which men are also victims in shocking numbers. What can we do? Well, when it comes to domestic violence, we should be "ringing the bell". If you or I hear a disturbance at our neighbour's place, we should not be afraid literally to ring their bell, knock on their door, or phone them. This does two things. First, it interrupts the violence that is taking place. Second, it lets the perpetrator know that the community is watching — particularly other men, who are especially encouraged to act. For we know that men listen to other men. Men care about their reputation among other men. And ringing the bell gets the message across that men who are violent are not socially acceptable. This is the experience of India, where the

initiative — *Bell Bajao* in Hindi — started in 2008.

Earlier this year, it went global. The plan is to get one million men to make the commitment to act to end violence against women and girls by the end of 2013. Too often, men are only portrayed as the perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence — whereas we can and should be partners with women in working for true equality, fairness and justice. This means not just stopping violence, but changing attitudes that make it acceptable. Opinion-formers, including parents and teachers, politicians and pop stars, journalists and those who write the story lines for soaps, should all be more intentional. As archbishop, I'm

It is a brilliant idea, because it is simple and easy

particularly calling on religious leaders to do more to overturn the erroneous message we have too often given: that men are somehow superior to women, or are allowed (even expected) to lord it over them. All our religious traditions sometimes fall into superficial engagement with scriptures rooted in patriarchal cultures and fail to see that none condones oppressive dominance. All promote women's true flourishing and dignity in a context of safety,

free of fear. Let me just give one example from Christianity. People may cite the Bible verse "Wives, be subject to your husbands", but fail either to read on — "as you are to the Lord" — or to put it in the context of the preceding verse: "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ."

Only mutual, reciprocal partnership and the desire to love one another as God loves us are an acceptable basis for relationships and marriage — and no woman should be expected to put up with anything less. We must teach clearly from the best of our traditions, denouncing violence in the home, congregation and community. We must make our worship places safe for all, havens where women can speak out without condemnation and find support where necessary. I invite all faith leaders to stand up with me and provide positive role models. In all we do and say, we must promote inclusivity, value diversity and advance equality and justice. Let us demonstrate concrete leadership and partner constructively with others across society. For more information on action by faith communities, see genderjustice.org.za, and on Ringing the Bell, see bellbajao.org

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