

Political Power

THE MOST famous chapter in diplomat and political theorist Niccolò Machiavelli's 16th-century political treatise *The Prince* considers whether it is better to be loved than feared – if you cannot be both.

The conclusion appears to be that, as fear is more predictable, it doesn't hold the same fickleness as love. With fear, you can remain the same, never mind the circumstances raging around you.

Of repeated, Machiavelli writes: "The answer is that one would like to be both the one and the other; but because it is difficult to combine them, it is far safer to be feared than loved."

As we listened to ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe at Luthuli House on Tuesday afternoon, there was a disconcerting reminder of this classic work, as it seems President Jacob Zuma might indeed fit the Machiavellian accusation which some of his enemies have levelled at him. Indeed, our long-serving liberation movement seems to be well within his clutches.

When Mantashe effective-

ly told the nation to get over the president's scandals, as "we accept (his) apology", and showed his own lack of theoretical capacity in saying that the ANC's "good work" should be rated by the rating agencies, a chill might have run down the collective spine.

Certainly, we take into account that Mantashe warned ANC structures not to fall into contempt of court by assisting Zuma to pay what he owes on Nkandla, but for much of the rest, it is clear that his party boss has the current national executive committee under his control.

We'd almost prefer to believe this is because the party is under considerable pressure around the coming municipal elections, and that it must present a picture of unity in order to maintain its dominance. In the interests of political power, it must seem to be rallying behind a man who many find repugnant.

But it could also be true that there are still far too many secrets lurking within the Zuma circle which need to be preserved, even at the nation's expense.

Second take

Puff-free day

IT IS laudable that the world has marked World No Tobacco Day, putting the spotlight firmly on one of the most deadly man-made scourges of our time – smoking.

The World Health Organisation-sanctioned day is aimed at promoting a 24-hour period of abstinence from all forms of tobacco consumption and to remind ourselves of its negative health effects.

The UN has thrown its considerable weight behind the campaign and is advocating the use of plain packaging in an effort to save lives by reducing demand for tobacco products.

"Tobacco use is one of the largest causes of preventable non-communicable diseases, including cancers, heart and lung disease," UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon said in his message.

While the pendulum is swinging in the right direc-

tion elsewhere, in developing countries smoking is prevalent – nearly 80% of the world's 1 billion smokers live in low- and middle-income countries.

Which is a pity, because tobacco is still a serious foe. It kills about 6 million people each year – and more than 600,000 of these are non-smokers who are exposed to second-hand smoke.

In 2004, children accounted for 28% of the deaths attributable to second-hand smoke.

Tobacco is one of the leading preventable risk factors for non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, diabetes and low birth weight.

What is encouraging is that more and more countries are seriously considering joining countries such as Australia regulating for plain packaging on cigarette packs and other tobacco products.

Long may they succeed.

Take action against tenders mafia

THE actions of groups such as the so called Delangokubona Business Forum are a direct threat to the very fabric of our constitutional society in South Africa.

I am extremely concerned, not only at the brazen and wanton violent nature of this group and its bullying tactics, but also at the apparent unwillingness or inability of the security establishment to take the necessary decisive action to stop what is a violent crime.

Fear is clearly a huge factor and victims are reluctant to take a stand, fearing for their lives. This can only be described as a form of industrial terrorism and no citizen of eThekweni is unaffected by this. It is a matter of national importance.

Action must be taken to establish a SAPS special task team working in conjunction with National Intelligence and, if necessary, the SANDF, to tackle this head on.

Some may view this proposal as an overreaction. I believe it to be appropriate because the situation is more serious than many may perceive.

If these activities continue without any real attempt to stop this crime and arrest the perpetrators, we are on a slippery slope to anarchy and none of us can afford to ignore this.

The Durban Chamber of Commerce is willing to assist the authorities where it can to tackle this scourge and we condemn these actions in the strongest of terms.

PETER FEUILHERADE
Chairman: Safety and Justice Committee
Durban Chamber of Commerce

What's been going on at Eskom?

LOOKING through some old files, I am reminded that it is just about a year since we had all the concern about Eskom and load shedding.

Since then things seemed to have improved until we realise that a large number of companies have closed down and others have reduced their power demands because of lower production levels consequent of the reduced demand for their products.

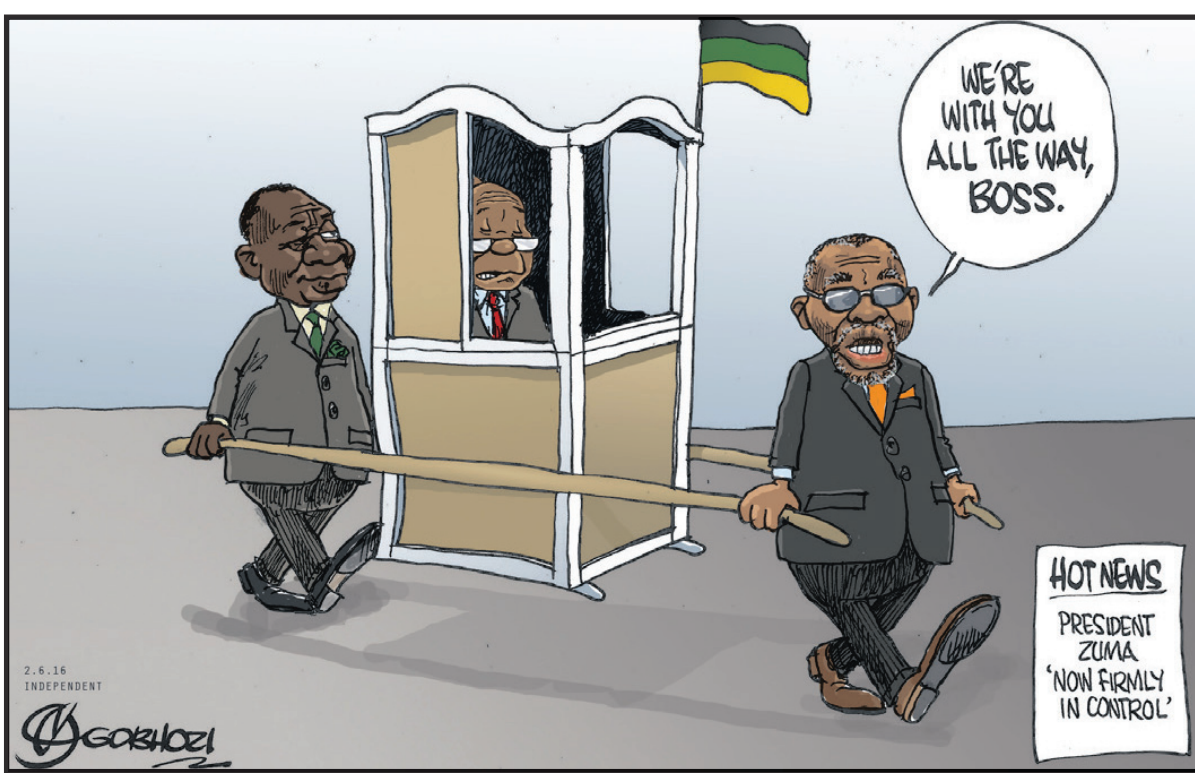
The recent news regarding the economy explains all this. Thus Eskom "appears" to have upped its game by better maintenance and improved generation capacity. This really counters the perceptions.

These reflections have made me wonder what has been going on at Eskom.

Last year the media seemed to report on little else but the delays and inefficiencies of the power

Your views

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generation authority. This year we have had no news at all.

My queries were answered to a large extent when I read the letter sent to your Business Report section ("Eskom still Lacks Credibility", May 30), by Roger Toms of Hout Bay. Toms is well informed and knowledgeable.

The Eskom situation has, if anything, worsened.

Toms reports: "The progress on the extraordinarily expensive Medupi and Kusile power stations is less than glacial; at the present rate the first units commissioned will have expired before the last unit is on line."

Huge loans were no doubt raised by Eskom to cover the cost of purchase and installation of the turbines, boilers and other ancillaries which by now ought to be starting to "earn their keep".

Interest on these loans has to be paid for an extra four years (the current overrun) and are having to be borne by the consumers. This is of course additional to salaries, and other expenses are also additional and have had to be borne by the overburdened taxpayers.

Surely this indicates clearly that Eskom is not capable of handling the task of power generation. When will the government wake up?

CPD OGILVY
Berea

Facts show Cape Town delivers

DOES Cape Town mayor Patricia de Lille close the roads around the Cape Town civic centre when she makes her budget speech?

I think not. Nor does she even wear a gold (colonial) chain or glide up a red (colonial) carpet.

But she delivers. To the ratepayers of Cape Town. No matter what the ANC, or anybody else claims, the facts show that Cape Town delivers.

But not so here in Durban. Here we have to close off all the streets

around the CBD and inconvenience what little business comes to the city.

Here we get out the metro police – that same police force who are always on strike and hardly ever show up when there's real trouble.

Here we roll out red carpets and don golden mayoral chains and arrive in big mayoral cars. How quaint. How colonial. Spot the irony.

All to make a budget speech in the city hall.

How delusional are the mayor and the ANC? Such hypocritical delusions of pumped-up colonial grandeur:

MARKLOWE
Durban

Judgment in murder case welcomed

THE judgment in the Durban High Court last month that led to two ANC councillors and a "hit man" being found guilty of murdering one of our own, Thuli Ndlovu, who was a member of Abahlali baseMjondolo national council and chairwoman of the KwaNdegezi branch, is welcomed.

The two councillors were also found guilty of conspiring in this murder. All three accused were sentenced to life imprisonment. The hit man was further sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment.

I had the pleasure of working with Thuli. She was a brave woman who was not afraid to speak out about corruption and the wrong allocation of houses in KwaNdegezi which eventually led to her being killed.

Even when she was receiving death threats she did not keep quiet. She knew about the danger of her speaking out about corruption, but she was prepared to lay her life on the liner rather than watch the rights of the poor and the marginalised being violated.

Given the history of the movement, more especially in 2009 dur-

The gospel of Star Wars?

Cass Sunstein

COMMENT

THIRTY-nine years ago, a movie was released with a somewhat ridiculous name: *Star Wars*. (It's now called *Episode IV: A New Hope*.) Almost no one thought that it would do well, and nobody could have predicted it would become the defining saga of our era. How did it do it?

One answer is that like a great novel or poem, *Star Wars* doesn't tell you what to think. You can understand it in different, even contradictory ways. Here are some.

Christianity: Anakin Skywalker is the product of a virgin birth. He has no human father. He turns out to be a Christ-like figure, dying for humanity's sins, which he incarnates and symbolises. *Star Wars* is an imaginative reconstruction of Jesus' life, in which the Jesus figure is the sinner – unable to resist Satan until the very end, when he sacrifices everything for his child, and symbolically for all children.

In *Star Wars*, it is the promise of immortality (for his loved ones) that turns out to be Satan's apple.

That's how Emperor Palpatine, the saga's serpent, seduces Anakin, convincing him to give up his very soul. So there's a Faustian bargain here as well. But in sacrificing his own life, Anakin defeats the great tempter – and gets his soul back in the process. Loving his son and killing Satan, he restores peace on earth.

Feminism: No one can doubt that *The Force Awakens* strikes a strong blow for sex equality: Rey

“The series could easily be seen as profoundly political, showing how republics turn into empires”

is the unambiguous hero (the new Luke), and she gets to kick some Dark Side butt.

Also: Leia is the leader of the rebellion. She's a terrific fighter, and knows what she's doing. She's brave, tough, and good with a gun.

By contrast, the men are a bit clueless. She does wear a skimpy costume, and she gets enslaved, kind of, by Jabba the Hutt. But isn't everything redeemed, because she gets to strangle her captor with the very chain with which he bound her?

Thomas Jefferson, Jedi Knight: The series could easily be seen as profoundly political, meant to show how republics turn into empires, and to emphasise the need for rebellion, or at least for maintaining the potential for one. In this view, the need for political freedom is the central message of *Star Wars*.

The whole tale poses a conflict between an authoritarian Empire and the rebels seeking to restore a Republic. The Empire is more than a little reminiscent of Nazi Germany, and the goal of the Rebellion is to restore peace and justice to the galaxy. Luke Skywalker is initially unwilling to take political action; he hates the Empire, but wants to stay on the farm with his aunt and uncle. (The Empire murders them, which persuades him to act.)

The Force Awakens continues the basic story with a conflict between the First Order, inspired by the Empire, and the Resistance.

There's more than a mild echo here of Thomas Jefferson, who thought that turbulence itself was productive of good. He said: "It prevents the degeneracy of government, and nourishes a general attention to the public affairs. I hold it that a little rebellion now and then is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical."

● This article is excerpted from Sunstein's book *The World According to Star Wars* (HarperCollins). Sunstein, the former administrator of the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, is the Robert Walmsley university professor at Harvard Law School.

Thought for the day

We are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful about what we pretend to be.
– US author Kurt Vonnegut (1922-2007)

When is a relationship not a relationship?

Rod Smith

YOU & ME

● When the relationship feels like a game of chess. You have to constantly think ahead to outsmart your opponent, or be outsmarted.

● When it's conditional and the conditions include a list of who you may or may not phone or meet.

● When what you choose to wear (clothing, make-up) becomes a source of friction.

● When it involves dominance, control, and your natural resistance to being controlled results in conflict, and your commitment and love is questioned.

● When your whereabouts and activities are monitored. You have to account for the use of time, money, and mileage.

● When you have to lie

about visiting your family or friends, or have to deny that you want to spend time with people "outside" the "relationship".

● When he or she just happens to show up, and your degree of joy and surprise is evaluated. What is actually happening is your ability to be trusted is being assessed.

● When you have to anticipate your partner's needs, read his or her mind, anticipate his or her moods, and respond in a manner that makes him or her happy or feel loved.

● When no matter how much you try to love, forgive, have fun, be serious, be carefree, be intimate, be unconditional in your love – it is never enough.

● Smith is a family therapist in the US. He can be e-mailed at FamilyTherapist@iCloud.com.

South Africa in flux as youth gear up

The order put together after apartheid seems to be breaking apart, in informal settlements, mines and universities

Imraan Buccus

COMMENT

THERE is a major shift under way in South African society. The order put together after apartheid seems to be breaking apart.

The aura of liberation is fading and people are increasingly less interested in romanticised recollections of the struggle. The first break came in the informal settlements. After that it was the mines and communities, and this year, and last, dissent spread to the universities.

In recent years, with the exception of the mines, much of this dissent has been driven by young people. It's become clear the ruling party cannot assume it will enjoy the youth's support.

The new student politics and the formation of the EFF are the two most dramatic examples of the way in which support trends are changing. But in the often hidden domain of subaltern politics in places such as informal settlements, it is also mostly the youth that are leading the construction of new organisations outside formal politics.

As has been suggested before, we have the ingredients for an "African Spring". Fifty percent of South Africans are under 30 and most are unemployed and desperately poor. The liberation dividend is fading, but holding for now.

Young people feel trapped by poverty and unemployment. And recent research shows that they believe they have missed post-liberation opportunities.

Much-needed recent work by political scientist Susan Booysen suggests that the second cohort of born-frees (those aged 18 to 24) believe that the cohort of born-frees before them (those over 24) have

taken up available employment opportunities. (We take born-frees to be those born after 1990).

In this context of unemployment, we know that political participation also occurs outside electoral processes, especially through protest, as we have seen in recent years. No doubt South Africa remains the most protest-rich society in the world.

But many people are also wondering how the "youthquake" will affect the coming local elections and the national elections of 2019.

In previous elections, a large proportion of the youth have either not registered to vote or have not voted at all. But now that the "youthquake" has excited so many young people about politics, that may change. Those commentators who assume that the EFF will necessarily be the beneficiary of this are being a little too glib.

All the evidence from elections and by-elections so far shows that the EFF's support is regionally concentrated, in Gauteng and parts of the north, and that it has a clear ethnic character. The EFF has minimal support in cities such as Durban and Cape Town. And at universities such as Port Hare in the Eastern Cape and the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan in Port Elizabeth, both with a largely black and working-class student population,

students have stunned many by choosing to vote for the DA.

It's too early to offer predictions as to how the "youthquake" will affect the next election. But at the moment it seems likely that some young people will not vote, that the ANC may lose its overall share of the youth vote and that the DA and the EFF will pick up votes – with the DA doing well in the Eastern Cape and the EFF doing well in parts of Gauteng and the north of the country.

Ramifications

All indications are that the ANC will retain its hold on the electorate in rural areas but it will continue to lose support in urban areas. But the election of new provincial ANC leaders in KwaZulu-Natal may have some ramifications for ANC support in deep rural areas – but this is a subject for another day.

South Africa is an overwhelmingly urbanised country and this means that the party's hold on power will not be sustainable if it doesn't find a way to win back urban support.

Our country is also overwhelmingly youthful and if the ANC does haemorrhage youth support, a major rethink will be required if it wishes to still hold power in 10 years' time.

Land and housing are the major factors driving protest in informal settlements. In universities, the major factor has been the cost of fees. If the ruling party has enough money, it could buy its way out of its problems by massively increasing funding to universities and investing in massive urban reform.

But money is running out. Debt is now the largest item on the national budget, and with rating agencies driving our investment status ever closer towards junk, borrowing more money is becoming increasingly difficult.

The huge amounts of money spent on parastatals, VIP protection, a grossly bloated diplomatic service, as well as all the money lost to corruption and mismanagement, makes the situation even worse.

Young people have certainly benefited from liberation, but overwhelming unemployment and poverty remain. This will inform the dynamics of youth political participation. We must remember they have what it takes to alter the course of history.

● Buccus is a senior research associate at ASRI, research fellow in the school of social sciences at UKZN and academic director of a university study abroad programme on political transformation.

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