

## Rein Him In

PRESIDENT Jacob Zuma has recently had no qualms about appointing unsuitable allies to top jobs, so it is highly unlikely that he will act against one who is already proving to be problematic.

But could we urge him to have a quiet word with his old friend, Police Commissioner Bheki Cele?

This week the police chief was once again attracting headlines for all the wrong reasons.

In one case, opposition parties have called for his head after reports about his role in the allegedly irregular R500 million deal to relocate the police headquarters.

According to reports, Cele's deal – he apparently intervened personally to make it happen – with businessman Roux Shabangu was illegal and should have been cancelled.

The public protector is now probing the whole messy affair.

Cele also attracted international attention for his comment that Shrien Dewani was a “monkey” who came from London to have his wife killed in South Africa.

This week, as Dewani's extradition hearing loomed in London, it was revealed that the Briton's barrister would turn to that comment as evidence that he would not receive a fair trial in South Africa.

Surely it is not too much to ask that the commissioner of police applies his mind to the niceties of the law before effectively declaring on somebody's guilt?

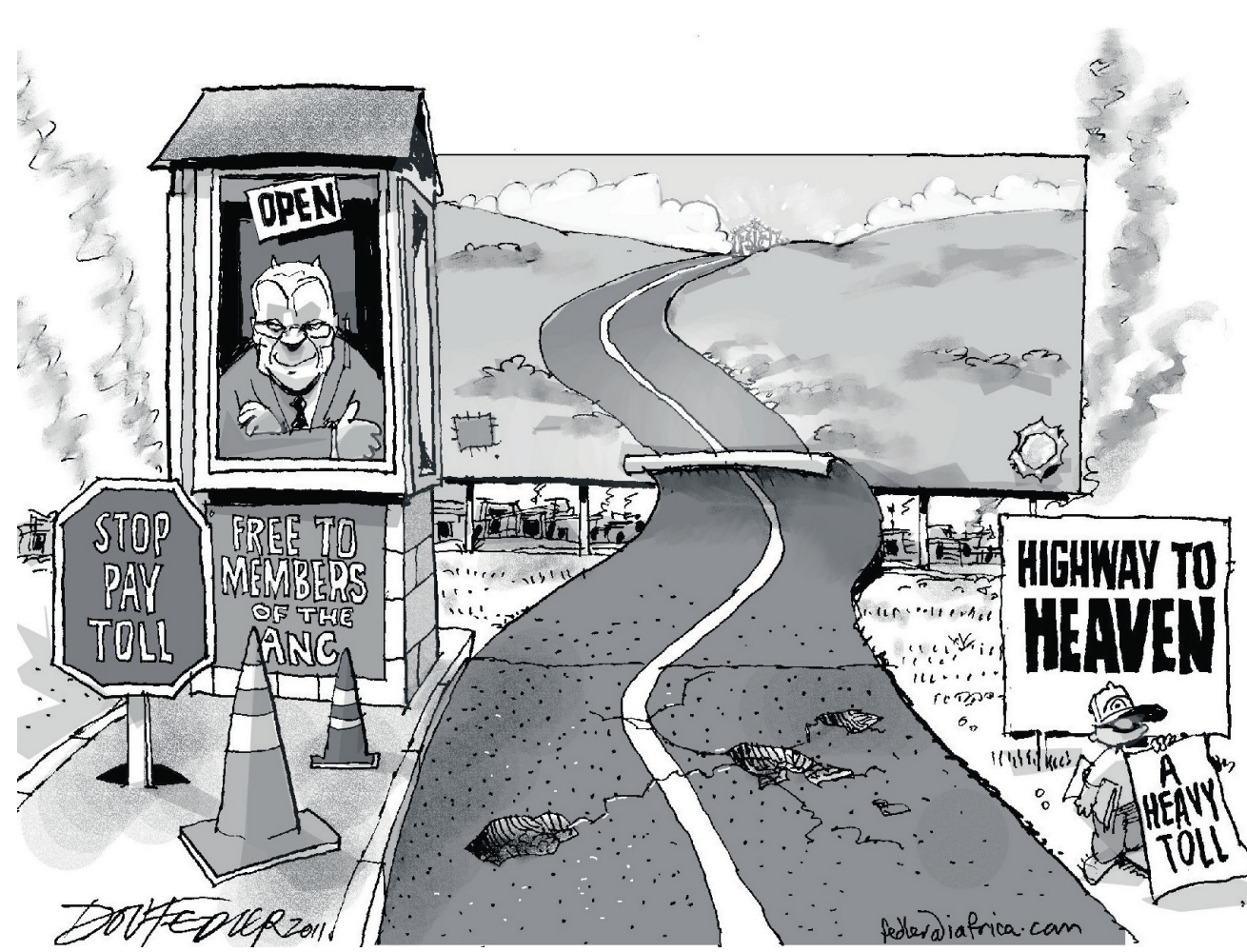
Might it not be reasonable to expect him to watch his words a little more closely on a range of issues?

His “shoot to kill” comments, for example, must have been seen by some in the service he commands as encouragement to a gung-ho approach.

There will be some who argue that policing in South Africa needs Cele's toughness right now, and it is true that he is genuinely supportive of the men and women under his command.

But the country does not need a police chief whose public utterances are often embarrassing and who has become mired in serious controversy.

It would be in all our interests if the president could, at least, persuade his friend to stop firing from the hip.



You & Me  
ROD SMITH

DAY 3 OF 5: Insight without action is useless – if it is growth you want...

You (we) are designed to love and be loved, to be intimate with a few people, to be known, and to know a few people deeply and well for an enduring amount of time.

This is the profound desire you (we) have for intimacy.

You (we) are also designed, at the same time as you desire intimacy, to be unique and separate from others (even from loved ones) and to be distinct from all other people. You have an independent streak, a lone-ranger urge.

This desire for autonomy is a human gift. If you lose your self to intimacy you will also lose your uniqueness and become less yourself, less unique.

We have all met men and women who have lost themselves in a relationship. Running is not an act of autonomy.

If you only feed your independent streak and lose contact with others then you will find yourself isolated and craving intimacy.

We have all met men and women who are trying to be islands. The wise person simultaneously desires intimacy and autonomy.

He or she favours neither over the other, but serves both.

**Action/Challenge:** Increase your independence (follow your solo dreams, personal interests, private ambitions) and, at the same time, intensify your intimate relationships by intentionally becoming more open, equal, more transparent with your closest friends.

□ Rod Smith is a family therapist who lives in the US. E-mail questions to [Rod@DifficultRelationships.com](mailto:Rod@DifficultRelationships.com)

## The people will rise up

South Africa needs to take development seriously so that the poor begin to see real change in their lives



IMRAAN BUCCUS

IT IS far too early to say whether or not the political earthquake that began in Tunisia, exploded into Egypt and then rippled out to Yemen and Jordan will be defeated or will leave lasting changes in its wake. But one thing is for sure – this is the greatest moment in the global struggle for human freedom since 1989; when the Soviet Union and its satellite states across Eastern Europe fell. Movements like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the An Nahda in Tunisia, that have been suppressed for decades, now have a renewed existence and enjoy significant support.

The protests in Tahrir Square began as a carnival of freedom. Men and women, Muslims, Christians and secular people, old and young and rich and poor, were all united in their excited opposition to the Mubarak dictatorship. In the best spirit of internationalism, busloads of experi-

enced activists made their way to Cairo from Greece and Turkey to stand with their Egyptian brothers and sisters. After Mubarak sent in his thugs to try to break the demonstrators' spirit, the carnival turned into a pitched battle. The Mubarak dictatorship has had the solid backing of the US for three decades.

It controlled the budget, the army and a terrifying apparatus of torture. Yet despite all of this the Egyptian people rose against a cruel and brutal state with breathtaking courage. The people don't always win these struggles. The democracy movement was crushed in China when Li Peng sent the tanks into Tiananmen Square in 1989, Mugabe's brutal onslaught against the democratic movement in Zimbabwe has been well documented and the democracy movement that rocked Iran in 2009 and 2010 was also defeated in the end.

But as we know from our

own experience with the United Democratic Front, people power can be victorious against even the most depraved regimes.

The hopes of democrats around the world are with the Egyptian people and the fortitude that they have shown is truly inspirational.

One of the most worrying outcomes of the story thus far is the proposal to install the notorious torturer Omar Suleiman as Mubarak's replacement. This is the equivalent of the US telling the United Democratic Front in 1984 that PW Botha should be replaced with Pik Botha. It is a grotesque insult to the Egyptian people.

Those of us who stand in solidarity with the heroic re-

bellion of the Egyptian people must insist that they and they alone decide what government replaces the Mubarak regime. Recent engagement with the Muslim Brotherhood, that has the support of masses of people in Egypt, should be welcomed.

One striking aspect of the revolutionary movement in Egypt is that it has been self organised by ordinary people and that it is not under the control of any authoritarian vanguard. The Russian Revolution bequeathed the international Left with the dangerous idea that the real political debates were between competing authoritarianisms. Here in South Africa, Left debate has often been between the Stalinists in

the SACP and the Trotskyists outside of it.

But beginning from the emergence of the Zapatistas in 1990 the global Left has taken a giant step away from this authoritarian legacy and towards a real understanding that a genuine confidence in the people, a genuine commitment to radicalising democracy, is an essential foundation for any Left project that has any chance of being genuinely emancipatory.

Even when revolutions succeed in overthrowing oppressive regimes, they are often, as happened with the Russian Revolution of 1917 or the Iranian Revolution of 1979, stolen from the people by forces within the broad revolutionary movement. If the Egyptian people do succeed in dislodging Mubarak, as the Tunisians succeeded in chasing Ben Ali from their country, and if they do succeed in defeating the attempt to replace one compliant dictator

with another, then they will also have to defend their revolution against those who could usurp it from within.

Irrespective of the ultimate fate of the Egyptian Revolution, a loud and clear message has been sent to dictators around the world, that while it is possible to oppress a people for a long time, even generations, the people will reach a point at which they decide to rise. In our own neighbourhood, Mugabe and Mswatini must be taking stock of their situation. And here in SA, where we have the highest rate of popular protests in the world, we need to start taking the developmental project seriously so poor people begin to see real changes in their lives.

● Imraan Buccus is Research Fellow at the School of Politics at UKZN and the Democracy Development Programme. Buccus is contributing co-author to *Government and Politics in SA*.

## Useful Or Worrying?

AT LAST, a smart parking garage. The Santa Monica Place mall has installed the nation's first camera-based “Find Your Car” technology in its garages to help shoppers who can't remember where they parked.

Punch your licence plate number into a kiosk touch screen and a photo of your car and its location will appear.

But could that data be abused by marketing companies, retailers, repo folks and divorce lawyers, all searching for more information on you than where you parked? Santa Monica Place officials should make certain that they do not share the garage data with anyone other than the police. This technology should be relieving harried shoppers of one worry, not adding another. – The Los Angeles Times

E-mail [merletter@im.co.za](mailto:merletter@im.co.za), fax 031 308 2715, or post letters to: The Editor, PO Box 47549, Greyville 4023. Letters must carry the author's signature, name and address.

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E-mailed letters should also include a physical address and telephone number. The editor reserves the right to edit or shorten letters. Letters with pseudonyms will only be published in exceptional circumstances.

## LEADERSHIP, FREE MEDIA KEY TO EGYPT'S REVOLUTION

FOR MORE than a week now I have been watching the unforgettable scenes in Egypt unfold. It has gripped me, as I believe it has millions all over the world. It has been like a round-the-clock rolling revolution, a real uprising of the people.

But it has got me thinking on two fronts: the importance of media and the free flow of information, and the importance of leadership.

Though the two countries are not the same, what I've been watching in Egypt reminds me of our own struggle here against apartheid not so long ago.

Back then, the media helped us disseminate the core message of our fight. They spread our words around the world at a time when we didn't have freedom of expression ourselves, or the technical means to speak

to the world.

And while there were millions of us, both as activists and general members of the public, pounding the streets of our country protesting against the regime, we also had the good fortune of leadership to guide us in our fight.

Our struggle was notable because it was led by a string of strong men and women, people of moral strength and

enormous integrity, in whom we vested our hopes for a brighter future. We had a strong civil society who fearlessly marched towards that goal, young and old, day and night. And we had the even bigger and better fortune of being led by Nelson Mandela when he was released in 1990.

Madiba encountered a very divided country on his release, tense and teetering

on the brink of civil war: But we didn't go there. With his leadership and the guidance of our elders in the struggle, we chose to avoid a destructive, bloody, racial civil war. We opted to negotiate a peace that ushered in a democracy and Madiba as our first democratically elected president.

It is my wish that the people of Egypt will find the

same leadership to guide them through these difficult times. And that the media, both here and there, will enjoy the freedom to record these complex issues. Both are critical for the survival of democracy.

JAY NAIDOO

Former trade unionist, a former minister in Nelson Mandela's cabinet, and the author of *Fighting for Justice*

## Malawi's quest to outlaw flatulence a lot of hot air

THE REPORT on the front page (The Mercury, February 7) on the forthcoming debate in Malawi seeking to outlaw flatulent emissions – and blaming the increase in public of such as a result of replacing dictatorship with democracy and multipartyism (multifartyism?) and the increased freedom of expression (?) it has spurred – refers.

Contemplating the infrastructure required to police such a law is mind boggling. In a crowded elevator, the person with the most

nonchalant and innocent look is probably the guilty party, but what sort of evidence would be necessary to make an arrest? Fart police with sniffer dogs?

It might be possible to fit panties and underpants with fart detectors, and could one earn brownie points if one installs a rectal catalytic convertor?

Please forward my questions to the smart fellers of the Malawian Ministry of Mankind Emissions.

LYNN AMBLER

Durban

## Metro police are an embarrassment to Durban

I TOTALLY agree with Vish Govindasamy (“Police must enforce rules of the road”).

The Durban metro police are generally not effective and are an embarrassment to the City of Durban.

When will the powers that be give them a brief to change their general attitude? This would help them to regain the respect they should have from the public, resulting in them being more effective. But first I guess they would have to want to change.

Maybe worse than the metro police are the metro bus drivers. In the morning I

regularly travel from La Lucia through Durban North to Springfield Park. The metro bus drivers are a nightmare. They have absolutely no respect for other road users, stopping wherever it suits them.

They rarely use pull-off zones and, when they do, they simply pull out into the traffic.

Is the problem within the city management?

If we don't learn to respect each other, we will never create a peaceful place in which to work and live.

KEN TAYLOR

La Lucia

## Loss of rebates hurts pensioners

I HAVE just read the eThekweni rates policy and once again pensioners are between a rock and a hard place.

The new policy doesn't help by lowering the rebate cap from R3 million to R2m.

First, eThekweni properties were revalued at inflated market values in a boom time and rates went through the roof.

The market values of properties have dropped drastically since the market went south – but no downward adjustment to rateable values has been considered.

Now the cap on pensioner-

owned properties is to be reduced from R3m to R2m from end June 2011, so the rebate of R210 a month will be lost for those owning properties valued above R2m.

Lastly, we can expect another rates increase of about 10 percent from July 2011.

A comparison of my eThekweni rates and sewage costs from January 2007 to July 2011 (when the new rates policy kicks in) – and assuming a 10 percent increase in general rates – reveals that my monthly costs for general rates and sewage will have increased from R650.46 in 2007 to around R1 927.18 a month as at July 2011.

A whopping increase of R1 276.72 per month, and an increase of 196 percent over four years. Stated another way, the loss of the rebate and a 10 percent increase results in an effective 23.15 percent rates increase for this year.

Talk about milking pensioners. And all this to live in a street where the potholes outnumber the residents, sewage leaks from the manholes when it rains and our verges grow 3 feet tall.

Where will it all end? How can this be justified? I say leave the rebates in place.

La Lucia

FLYING DUK

## New rates policy for senior citizens needs rethink

ASA senior citizen, I am greatly concerned to read the eThekweni municipality's rates policy for 2011/12 insofar as it impacts on senior citizens.

Paragraph 7.2 of the policy states that no rates rebates will be given to senior citizens whose properties are valued at over R2 million.

This new policy is grossly unfair and fails to take into account the plight of most senior citizens. I bought my property over 25 years ago.

Its current value, which is probably in excess of R2m, does not constitute my wealth, nor indicate how well off I am.

My property is my only home. I live off a modest, fixed income. I am poorer now than four years ago, as interest rates have dropped significantly.

The rates rebate I received these past two years has been essential to me. I urge the eThekweni municipality to rethink the senior citizens' rebate and maintain the status quo, namely all senior citizens, irrespective of the value of their properties, receive the full rebate they received in the past. Senior citizens unite!

Umhlanga Rocks

C HOPPER

## Zuma seems to know scripture...

RECENTLY President Jacob Zuma told a rally at Mthatha that God supported the ANC.

I assume this to be the God of the Bible, bearing in mind his relationship and support of Ray McCauley. I think Zuma knows his scripture far better than most of us thought, because Daniel 4:17 states “... to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men”. Although this deals with the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, the principle remains.

ROSEMARY MICHELL  
Winston Park