



# ja-nee

## Considered response

What's in a name? A reply to a *Democracy in Action* readership survey suggests an answer. Sent out in August last year, the survey was all but forgotten when a last response arrived 11 months later – from one Slowly Mhlongo.

– *Speed kills!*

## Sweet Pete

Ageing ANC Youth League enfant terrible Peter Mokaba has been crossed off another Christmas card list. A rural NGO worker who phoned Mokaba's office to request his presence at a meeting was not pleased to hear the great man saying loudly to his secretary "tell them I'm not here".

– *Engaging signal.*

## Pallotive measures?

A refreshing informality is blowing through the Department of Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting. Television coverage of the recent strike by workers in the sector showed one and all to be on first-name terms with their minister. "Pallo must attend to this" and "Pallo must fix that" they said.

– *A Pallo to one is a Pallo to all.*

# Idasa survey to reveal voters' thinking

By Moira Levy

**V**OTING records of the April election showed a resounding ANC victory in terms of tallies, percentage polls and majorities. But what did it really reveal of the South African electorate and the mandate it gave the ruling coalition?

The figures tell us something, but they don't tell us what we really need to know as we move into a period of post-apartheid reconstruction. We know what the electorate voted, but we don't know why.

With these questions in mind, Idasa commissioned a nation-wide post-election survey, conducted by a Cape Town research company, Market and Opinion Surveys. Between August and September, 2 507 people were interviewed – male and female, from all races and regions, representing all political opinions. The results are due this month.

## Star turn

"What do you think about equality?" and "What do you think about dagga?" were among questions from an earnest SABC reporter that had visiting reggae stars UB40 in stitches. Participating in a press conference before the group's first concert, the reporter's final question was "What is the funniest thing that happened to you in your 15-month tour?" Their answer: "You are!"

– *UR?*

## Acronym city

The UB40 concert was clearly the occasion for a particular kind of abbreviated hilarity. Grooving quietly away all by himself in Green Point Stadium was a fan waving a placard that said "IB40-2".

– *Do UC the point?*

## Womb with a view

According to a *Weekly Mail & Guardian* report, Idasa's new executive director, Wilmot James, has been active in politics since the 1950s. Idasa prides itself on employing people who excel but this was stretching a point – James was born in 1953.

## Cellular view

Rejoice in the far-sightedness of the Department of Correctional Services! Hot on the track of drug-taking athletes, no doubt, the department has requested permission from the Cape Town City Council to put up a prison opposite land earmarked for Cape Town's Olympic stadium.

– *Keeping their sites on a progressive approach to perks for prisoners, perhaps.*

## Trick of the trade

The struggle for human rights has a long way to go in Africa, according to a delegate to a workshop on the topic held in Durban recently. The delegate told workshop participants that he had been consulting widely in the process of setting up a human rights institute in his country. Among those consulted was a government bureaucrat whose view was that "the objective of your human rights institute is obscure".

– *A blind spot?*

Can a national election really reveal what the people want of their government? Can it give a clear indication of majority opinion on the issues of the day? How do we account for the poor showing of parties like the Pan Africanist Congress?

Now that the dust has settled on the post-election euphoria, and the government of national unity is getting down to the task of delivering on its election promises, these and other questions must arise.

A view currently gaining ground in South Africa is that the election was not a "normal" poll in that it did not represent a choice of policy so much as a symbolic break with the past. In terms of this thinking, voters reacted emotionally, placing their cross beside the party they most strongly identified with. The Idasa survey sets out to investigate whether South Africans made rational decisions on 26 April that accurately reflected the mood and demands of the population.