



# ANDREW ON WEDNESDAY

# Making news

Some issues that are making the news and others that should:

It's not ok that a **14-year-old** is remanded in custody, whatever the reason. Our support services should have enough resources to cater for these circumstances. It is unfair on the judiciary that they had to make such a drastic call. With all the money we put into social services we should be better placed to ensure that such children do not slip through our welfare net.

Elections have become a leadership popularity contest. Now that Joseph Muscat has confirmed he will see through this legislature following which he will hang his boots (at least when it comes to local politics), it is now an issue of who will take his place. The Labour Party machine, even though desperately trying to play down the matter know well enough that it is 'game on'. Strategically, this is a delicate situation the PL is being faced with. With two important elections coming up, the MEP and the Local Council elections, the Party is trying to contain the situation as much as possible. At some point things will start getting out of hand and I predict that the election of the new leadership will happen way before anticipated.

Robert Abela was reported in the *Times of Malta* as writing in Facebook that, "... he saw no need for the Constitution to be changed for President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca to be allowed to serve a second term. "If it is truly the wish of Her Excellency Coleiro Preca to continue to serve, she deserves to do so,"

(Times on Line 26/2/2018).

However, as Prof. Kevin Aquilina clearly explained during my radio show Ghandi xi Nghid on Radju Malta, Article 48 (3)(a) states that "on the expiration of five years from the date of the appointment to that office... the office of President shall become vacant but in Article 123 (2) it is stated that reappointment "shall not apply to the office of President."

The football world is in a state of shock after the terrible news that Fiorentina captain Astori died of what appears to be a heart failure on Sunday morning. He was just 31 years old. Whilst this might have been a fluke episode, the current pressures that footballers need to go through to keep up the level of athleticism is disquieting.

Marceline Naudi, Senior Lecturer at the Department of Gender Studies, Faculty for Social Wellbeing (UM) has been pivotal in hosting the 'European Observatory on Femicide'. This Observatory located in the University of Malta will serve an important purpose in helping us understand what the issues are and how, through empirical data, we can find solutions to this scourge.

The Faculty for Social Wellbeing will discuss controversial issues during the first edition of the **Dean's Forum** that will pit four teams made up of lecturers and students during this event. This debating society will happen on 15 March at 5pm at Lecture Theatre 2 (UM). The issues that will be debated are; 'Is paedophilia a crime? Is abortion a right? Is paid sex for disabled people a form of prostitution? Is

marijuana a gateway drug? Are there only two genders?' The event will also include a LIVE performance by 'The Busker'. Places are limited so people are being encouraged to register with [marija.grech@um.edu.mt](mailto:marija.grech@um.edu.mt) by 9 March 2018.

As expected MPs voted unanimously to change the Constitution and thus allow **16 and 17 year olds to vote** in the forthcoming elections. Almost 9,000 new voters will be brought to the fold and what a positive change this is going to bring in the political landscape.

*Malta Today* headlines a story stating that; 'Inspections at Valletta food court 'Is-Suq tal-Belt' find **31 workers without permit**'. Why am I not surprised?

Former Prime Minister and cancer survivor, Alfred Sant has called for 'affordable colorectal screening across EU'. This is what the EU should be contending with; improving quality of life, safeguarding welfare, cultivating health care and not suckling a bureaucracy that is dehumanising its citizens, forgetting people who are at the bottom of the heap and ignoring the gap that keeps widening between the rich and the poor.

*L-Orrizont* reports that almost 200 people are currently **living in garages** with the risk of lacking the basic sanitary needs apart from all the rest. This is a country that has always been proud of its phenomenal record of not having homeless people and where 'we' enjoy an abundant welfare programme. It seems that gently, or should I say rather quickly, there seems

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to be a shift in this scenario. We are hearing of stories of people living in cars, squatting and the need for more organised food banks and homeless shelters. This is indeed unfortunate when we are at one of the healthiest economic periods ever.

The civil war in **Syria** is in its seventh consecutive year. The statistics are mind-boggling; almost half a million killed, an estimated over 1 million wounded and some 12 million Syrians displaced, and yet Europe, the EU, the world watches passively as children get burned alive and oppression is the order of the day.

An MP calls another MP 'gbejnna' (goat cheese) - our political dialectic squabbling at its best. Bless them!

Ghandi xi Nghid

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## 7 March 1965

# Police attack Alabama marchers

State troopers and volunteer officers in the southern US state of Alabama have broken up a demonstration of black and white civil rights protesters, injuring at least 50 people. They assaulted a group of about 500 demonstrators using tear gas, whips and sticks after Governor George Wallace ordered the planned march from Selma to the state capital Montgomery to be halted on the grounds of public safety.

At least 10 of the injured have been taken to hospital with skull and limb fractures and suffering the effects of tear gas.

They were stopped by 200 police this morning at the Edmund Pettus Bridge as

they were heading east out of Selma on US Route 80.

When they refused to turn back the state troopers, some on horseback, attacked in full view of photographers and journalists.

As they were pushed back to the Browns Chapel Methodist Church area, some protesters threw bricks and bottles at police but were chased into their homes by troopers wielding sticks, riot guns, pistols and tear gas bombs.

The streets were patrolled for an hour after the violence had subsided.

Among the injured was John Lewis, the chairman of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), who along with Hosea Williams, led the silent marchers from the Browns Chapel Church towards the outskirts of town.

He told the *New York Times*: "Next time we march we may have to keep going when we get to Montgomery. We may have to go to Washington."

One of the doctors at Selma's Good Samaritan Hospital said it looked as if there had been "a moderate disaster".

Another hospital official said most of the

injuries had been sustained by heavy blows.

FBI agents will be interviewing the wounded and other witnesses tomorrow to establish if there are grounds for legal action against the officers involved.

The protest march had been planned to highlight discriminatory practices in the state that prevented black people from registering to vote.

It was also meant to commemorate the death on 17 February of Jimmie Lee Jackson who was shot by a state trooper on a civil rights march in Selma.

There is widespread outrage at events in the city.

Congressman William Ryan of New York said the Federal Government should send marshals, or even troops down to Alabama to protect the marchers.

But Governor Wallace remains steadfast in his views saying: "These folks in Selma have made this a seven-day-a-week job but we can't give one inch. We're going to enforce state laws."

Since 1963 Selma had been the focus of civil rights activists attempting to register black voters in Dallas County, Alabama.

Demonstrations in January and February 1965 tried to highlight violations of existing voting rights laws. On the orders of Sheriff James Clark and with the support of Governor George Wallace, the protests were forcefully broken up - resulting in the death of activist Jimmy Lee Jackson.

The violent scenes in Selma on 7 March, which left 17 people in hospital, came to be known as Bloody Sunday.

Civil rights leader Dr Martin Luther King organised another march there two days later. His group knelt and prayed in front of state troopers who stopped them at the Edmund Pettus Bridge but did not attack them.

Dr King filed a federal lawsuit for the right to march on Montgomery and on 21 March began the third and final march under the protection of federal troops. He and his supporters arrived a week later and held a rally attended by thousands.

President Lyndon B Johnson finally signed a new Voting Rights Act in August 1965 that banned discrimination in voting practices and procedures on the grounds of race or colour.