

No, we won't take our nap now

Citizens are not children who need to be told when to do what – and we didn't agree to a kindergarten government when we signed up to the constitution either, writes Alison Tilley

WHY HAVE the people lost the confidence of the government? What have we done, or left undone, that leads the state to feel that we are no longer competent to participate in matters relating to our own governance?

That is what denying people access to information is. It is stating the belief that people cannot and should not participate in matters relating to them, and that they should go quietly, and fold their hands, and wait for the government to come and save them.

It's one kind of government. The kind that we usually relegate to kindergarten, where we understand that children need to be told when to eat, and when to nap, because they can't regulate these matters on their own.

It isn't the kind of government we agreed to when we signed up to the constitution. Perhaps we shouldn't have called it a constitution at all – perhaps we should have called it a contract, or a deed of settlement. It is the document on which our state is founded, and it is the basis on which we have agreed to be governed, because we believe that it is in the best interests of us all. And in that deed of settlement, we agreed that the best kind of government is one that is participatory and one in which we share in the burdens of the state. We precisely don't sit and fold our hands, but rather think, write, contribute and complain, in the best way we know how, to help build a democracy.

“ Some party hack
decreed that the people
had lost the government's
confidence and could only
regain it with redoubled
effort. If that is the case,
would it not be simpler if
the government simply
dissolved the people and
elected another? ”
– Bertolt Brecht



