

Gumede: M&G is playing the man, not the ball

I have never in the history of the *Mail & Guardian* seen such biased and gutter journalism as that splashed in last week's edition, accompanied by a cartoon and a one-sided editorial about Robert Gumede.

Following the apology to Gumede the *M&G* was ordered to publish by the press council, I conclude the *M&G* has a beef against Gumede, not because it suspects he made his millions illegitimately, but because he's black. After failing to produce a shred of evidence that he got millions in tenders using underhand tactics, the *M&G* goes on the warpath — using his ex-wife.

This transaction happened in 2007 and for his ex-wife to "spill the beans" now smacks of sour grapes. You failed to mention that, after the acrimonious divorce, Zongi Gumede said she had transferred the money in 2005. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.

Sam Sole has been pursuing the story from his days at *Noseweek* and failed to unearth any dirt. So he brought his baggage to the *M&G* and, with Adriaan Basson, he has failed to find any evidence against Gumede. Instead they resort to playing the man not the ball.

Sole has dirty hands. He is an embedded journalist who has been



With its reports about Robert Gumede's dealings, together with a cartoon and editorial, a reader complains that the paper has lost it

used by Gumede's business-partner-turned-enemy John Sterenberg. The fact that Sole's flight to Durban to interview Sterenberg was paid for by Sterenberg posed an ethical dilemma. He never mentioned it until Gumede's revelations on the SABC, where Gumede exposed him for the charlatan he is.

Please, Mr Editor, do the right thing and apologise to Gumede and the readers who part with R21.50 to buy your newspaper. Last week you completely lost the plot. — *Themba Sepotokele, former journalist, now a media trainer*

Critical thinking sells out?

Your invitation to the *Mail & Guardian's* Critical Thinking Forum must be a joke

the question to be debated has absolutely no clue about the situation in South Africa with regard to carbon emissions and energy needs — or it was deliberately phrased to steer the debate in a direction that would avoid the real issues. Or did one of the biggest global environmental polluters/destroyers/exploiters, and in my opinion liars — the sponsor whose logo adorns the invitation — get to design the question on the basis of its own self-serving interests?

Where is the *M&G* heading? Once a highly respected publication, it seems to no longer possess a sense of the importance of retaining its critical independence.

There is no difference whatever between the government censoring the media and letting corrupt corporate interests manipulate your out-

purposes now up for grabs to the highest bidder?

If your invitation is meant to be a sincere attempt at fostering critical debate I suggest getting your act together or risk losing the flimsy remaining fragments of environmental integrity and credibility the *M&G* has left. — *Wally Menne*

Let no more children die

The tragic story of the death of Leon Booyesen (October 29) horrified me. What kind of criminal justice system do we have that allows young offenders to die like this?

What kind of warders allow young offenders to be violated in this manner while in their care?

A 14-year-old, irrespective of the crime he has committed, is still a child who needs parental care and protection. Booyesen died a tragic death and he endured severe pain. How many more children must die in police custody before something is done? Minister [Nosiviwe] Mapisa-Nqakula, I hope Leon is the last child to die in police custody and I hope he is also the last child to be violated in police custody. — *Tshepo Msibi, Johannesburg*

Moving township tale

The story by Monako Dibetle, "But I live in Kagiso" (November 5) was very moving. It gave an objective picture of the misery and hopelessness in which blacks live, 16 years into democracy. This is the picture in many townships. I wish the *M&G* would feature more such stories. —

the *Jay Leno* show to defend his new state legislation, which makes the punishment for possessing marijuana equivalent to that of a traffic ticket

● "We haven't got any instruction from superiors for her release yet. But we are preparing security plans for November 13." — A Burmese government official on the expected release of detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi now that the army's proxies have claimed a landslide election win

● "I was told to cooperate or I would face [a] lot of problems." — Pakistan wicketkeeper Zulqarnain Haider, who fled to the United Kingdom, claiming he had refused to get involved in match-fixing

25 YEARS
AGO

Political prisoners Carl Niehaus and Jansie Lourens, both serving sentences for high treason, have applied to the Supreme Court for permission to marry.

This follows consistent refusals by the SA Prison Services to allow them to marry.

If they marry it would give them the right to correspond with each other and have contact visits. And a victory in the Supreme Court could set a precedent for a number of other prisoners who also want to marry.

Niehaus and Lourens were sentenced two years ago for 15 years and four year imprisonment respectively. In papers before the court, they have asked for a setting aside of the Prison Service's refusal of permission to marry. They have also asked for the necessary arrangements to be made for a marriage ceremony to be performed.

— *The Weekly Mail, November*

Send letters to letters@mg.co.za. Letters should include the name and address of the writer, and must be received by 5pm on Monday. They should not exceed 400 words. Letters sent as attachments should contain the writer's full name and email address. Preference will be given to letters sent exclusively to the *M&G*.