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Malegapuru Makgoba's "truth is often less sexy than sensation" (M&G Feb 17-23) is undoubtedly another desperate attempt to cover up the real reasons for Ashwin Desai's continued victimisation.

Given Makgoba's 'power-wielding' 'Big Men' mentality, the "louder you shout" approach is not necessarily bad, but his repulsive 'the more you lie' manoeuvre is a recipe for disaster.

And the more he attempts to refute credible claims that Desai is a victim of a neo-liberal cabal at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), the very pathetic his argument sounds.

The Vice Chancellor's persistence use of the discredited "good corporate governance" argument is an insult to our intelligence and it exposes his intellectual bankruptcy.

Moreover, this propaganda campaign-apartheid-era- style- which only stands to dent his reputation and credibility should be condemned by all corners of academia.

His unilateral plans to create a 'single ideology' university-intolerant of opposing views-is a perversion of the very "excellence" and "sound ethics" principles he purports to uphold.

In recent months, not only Desai has endured bureaucratic harassment, other academics that have worked with indigent communities, or conducted 'undesirable' research, have also become 'persona non grata'

While acknowledging that the Desai matter has become a subject of much debate and commentary, he cunningly creates the misperception that only 'Africans' (on his side) and 'Indians' (on Desai's side) have been involved.

Many non-Indians, in South Africa and internationally, have supported Desai's endeavours for justice. And this campaign has done more than just "shout the loudest" as Makgoba wants us to believe, valid questions have been raised and he is yet to provide answers.

Furthermore, Dasarath Chetty, who is very Indian, has entered the debate on Makgoba's side. Therefore, reducing the matter to 'African' vs. 'Indian' while using the 'malicious' media as a scapegoat is not only racist and unbecoming of a vice Chancellor in the new South Africa, but is also a sad indication of the lowest of levels Makgoba is prepared to stoop.

His ignorant xenophobic claim that the Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa (CAFA) is led by "non-Africans .....not in touch with or listening to Africans and their plight" is very misleading.

CAFA's members are internationally acclaimed proponents of the rights of the poorest of the poor.

Makgoba's waving of the 'Africanist' flag smacks of hypocrisy. His University's anti poor policies have affected mainly African students and workers.

And it is not the 'African nationalists' that have stood up against the corporatisation of the institution and the impact this is having on the poor, but those he merely labels "narrow-minded ultra- leftist".

"Like the seasons of the year, the Desai issue will pass, and no amount of shouting.....will detract from the university's focus," is further evidence that, from day one, he has never desired to see the matter amicably resolved.

While Makgoba, from the comfort of his bourgeoisie colonial 'Campbell House' may already be claiming victory, the struggle for justice and equal rights at UKZN is far from over. The recent strike by workers and students corroborates this.

Finally, the government's deafening silence and failure to intervene and defend that which is right, raises serious questions. It is helping fuel suspicions that this is part of a much wider campaign to silence all those deemed 'enemies' of the state and the institution

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