

SJC out for itself, not poor

WHY has the media not chastised the Social Justice Coalition (SJC) and Jewish Recovery for their attacks on me as impostor in your editorial (1 Jan discuss, not derided), Washand Argus, May 8?) you treacherously saw the opportunity to respond to their attacks.

I stand by every word I said in the council chambers about the SJC because we have repeatedly corrected their lies. The SJC consistently chooses to describe the very people the city is committed to serving: the poor.

Christ-madness, for which your editorial hailed the SJC, entails being concerned with the well-being of the community. It is against the SJC's more concerned with building a media profile based on mistruth, than with society's most vulnerable.

Debate is successfully conducted only if arguments are based on facts. There is no opportunity for debate with a collective that knowingly misrepresents truth. Debate would require the SJC to engage with the city's budget, yet it appears they have chosen not to do so. They have therefore not taken the trouble to examine the data, as the editorial stated.

If they wished to participate constructively in debate on the budget,

innumerable challenges regarding full flush toilets.

Most of Cape Town's informal settlements are on previously owned land, are extremely dense, and houses fall under power lines, on landfill sites, in a road or railway buffer, in areas where there is too little infrastructure, or in water bodies/retention ponds and floodplains, among others. All these conditions preclude the city from providing full flush toilets. Providing full flush toilets in these areas could result in electrocution, drowning and spread of disease.

However, we have in no way allowed these challenges and regulations to prevent us from rendering this service. We have found ways to deliver services within the confines of the law, understanding our commitment to serving those most in need.

The city's Water and Sanitation Department plans to spend R205.7m (operational and capital budget) on services to informal settlements in the 2015/16 financial year.

- This money will be spent on:
 - more toilets and taps
 - sanitation and water facilities
 - cleaning and emptying
 - alternative sanitation

- municipal programmes
- water to informal settlements, which is not heated and free
- removal of wastewater air pollution

This does not include funding allocated to the built water, sanitation and wastewater infrastructure to deliver water to informal settlements or removal of wastewater and its treatment elsewhere. If you haven't seen any of this in the SJC's campaign, it might be time to wonder why. Another question is why the media has not interrogated the budget independently. Many have jumped on the SJC bandwagon without engaging in a meaningful way. The media has become complicit in a false narrative.

What is to be gained by spreading misinformation? It will not advance the poor. But then, we doubt that's the agenda of the SJC anyway.

While they continue to spend 80 percent of their funding on salaries for people who are no more than Twitter trolls, we will get on with the business of caring for the poor.

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they would also need to recognise the legislative constraints on local government. Why else would the SJC allege that the city is spending only R20 million on informal settlements, when the reality is that it is spending R200 million in these areas? What reason could there be for building toilets?

The SJC would serve their cause better if they engaged meaningfully with the Municipal Finance Management Act before initiating spurious campaigns. The facts are in approximately 63 percent of informal settlements the city faces

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