

Molefe as MP 'divisive'

BLADE HITS OUT: SACP WOULD HAVE ADVISED DIFFERENTLY IF CONSULTED

» **Calls for Gordhan's head to roll are factional, says Communist Party leader.**

Eric Naki

South African Communist Party (SACP) general secretary Blade Nzimande has lambasted the ANC for electing Brian Molefe as a parliamentarian and calls by some structures for Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan to go.

Nzimande described Molefe's elevation to an MP and the continuous calls for Gordhan's head as "factional" and "divisive".

"The ANC cannot decide on its own on matters like that of Molefe. We were not consulted," Nzimande said. "The ANC has a right to put whoever it likes in parliament, but had we been consulted we would have advised differently."

Nzimande, addressing journalists on the last day of a three-day SACP central committee plenary session in Johannesburg yesterday, said Molefe's election would perpetuate divisions in the ANC.

Molefe was sworn in as ANC MP in the National Assembly last week amid opposition from some within the ruling party, including his ANC branch in Madibeng in the North West, while the opposition parties lambasted it. Molefe is implicated in the State of Capture report by former public protector Thuli Madonsela.

The report linked him to the Gupta family after Molefe had exchanged 19 cellphone calls with the eldest Gupta brother, Ajay, and was found to have been in and around the Gupta luxury mansion in Saxonwold on several occasions. But Molefe denied that he

visited the Guptas, saying he was in the vicinity to visit a shebeen.

Nzimande said it bothered the SACP that some people often called for Communist members in the Cabinet to be removed. "We do not like these shouts that we must be removed. Even these calls against Pravin are factional, we should unite as the alliance," he said.

Answering a question from *The Citizen* about calls by party structures for the SACP to separate from the ANC and stand alone in future elections, Nzimande underplayed the suggestions.

"We will never go it alone. If we decided to go to the ballot we will go with those forces who share the same perspective with us as a party of the working class. We don't represent our jackets," Nzimande said.

But he acknowledged that the issue is an ongoing debate within the SACP and would be finalised at the party's national congress in July.

"As the SACP we will call for unity. If we are united in action that would be the first indication that we are not going it alone," he said.

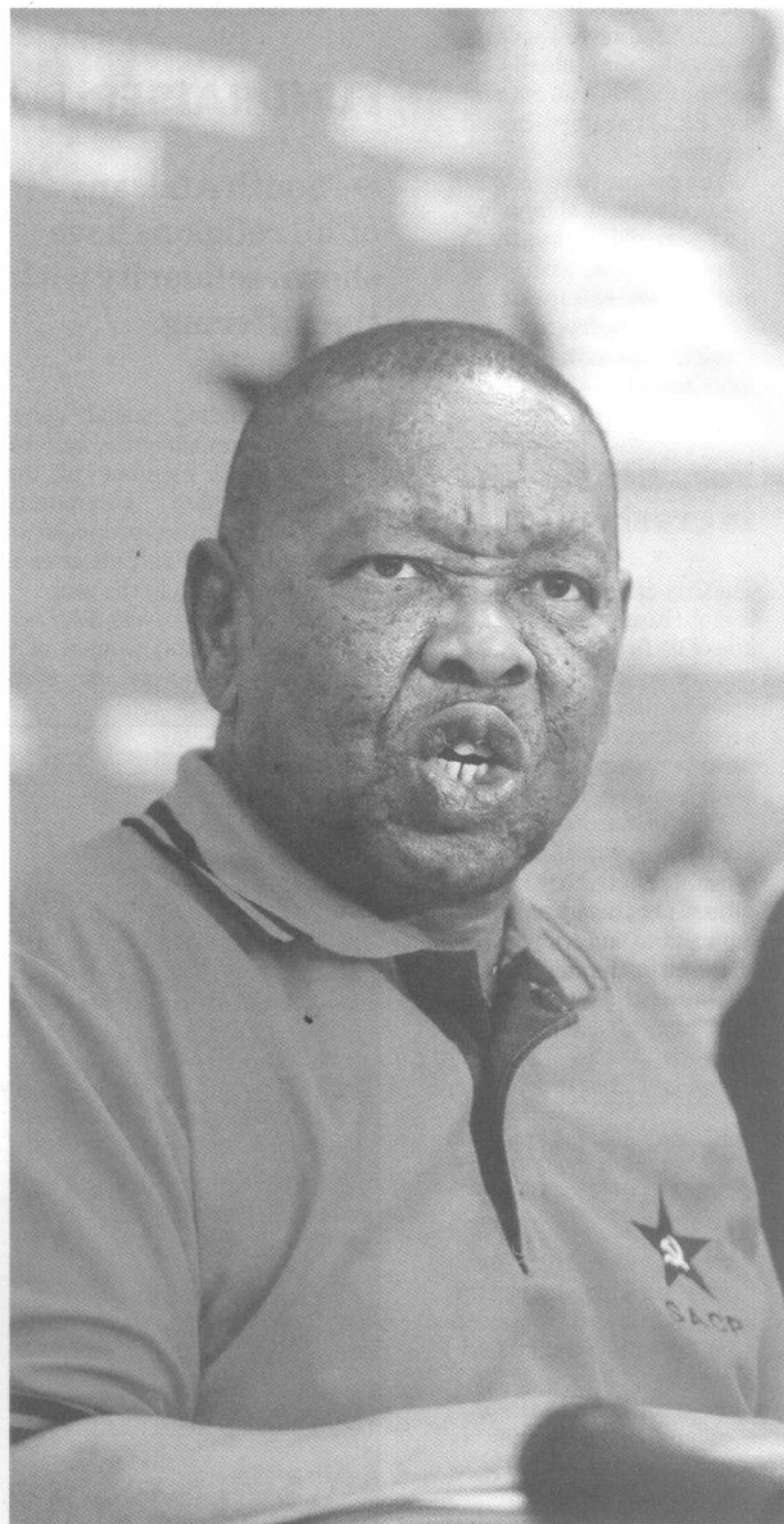
SACP deputy general secretary Jeremy Cronin said the SACP has not pronounced its preference on who should be the ANC deputy president because the party believed that is an ANC issue.

"We believe that is an ANC space, the ANC must decide on that."

Cronin said the SACP would be partisan in favour of the poor and the working class but not to factionalism. "Our basic position must not be over-indulgence on these matters. This is speculative and speculating on personalities can be dangerous," Cronin said.

The SACP is careful not to side with the factionalists or individuals but it would be on the side of the poor and the unemployed.

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STERN. SACP general secretary Blade Nzimande briefs media in Johannesburg yesterday on the 19th SACP central committee plenary session. Picture: Nigel Sibanda