

ANC needs internal blowup

Justice Malala

It may be time for things to come to a head, for the fighting within the party has led to paralysis in the state



THERE is a worker song that trade unionists always haul out when spirits are flagging at their protest marches or funerals. It is particularly loved by members of the SA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union.

To a catchy tune, the chorus goes: "Ma ku lwiwe! Ma ku lwiwe!" (Let's have the fight! Let's have the fight!).

It is an angry song, one that calls for battle to lance the boil that is troubling the opposing sides. It is a call to break the deadlock, to have the deciding battle.

It may be time for a major, open crisis and battle inside the ANC. It may be time for the two main opposing sides within the party to lance the boil that is holding us all to ransom.

It may be time for things to come to a head, for the extended period of low-level fighting within the party has led to paralysis in the state.

Perhaps the social grants crisis will be that moment, that major trigger for a blowout.

Dialogue has failed. President Jacob Zuma is reportedly not talking to his deputy, Cyril Ramaphosa.

Zuma is also not talking to his long-time ally, the SA Communist Party, who have threatened a walkout if there is a cabinet reshuffle.

The president also seems to be estranged from his previously very voluble main support, the Congress of SA Trade Unions.

A wounded Zuma is surrounded by the motley crew of the corrupt and incompetent (like Social Development Minister Bathabile Dlamini) he has built around him. He is not as powerful as he used to be and skulks along in his lair, unable to act.

His detractors wait for him to strike via a cabinet reshuffle or trumped-up charges from the captured National Prosecution Authority.

They know Zuma is not all powerful. If he fires Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan, as his acolytes Jimmy Manyi, the Guptas and others want him to, then punishment will be swift and painful – the rand will tank, the ratings agencies will go negative and political uncertainty will ratchet up.

Foreign direct investment will lag that of other emerging markets. Unemployment will tick up and economic growth will stall.

Even Zuma and his cronies are wary of the fallout from such a reckless move.

His opponents are similarly petrified. They do not raise their voices too high. They do not act or speak against the man they believe is surely, swiftly, taking them over the cliff edge.

They wait for someone else to speak. They entreat the media and civil society to speak. They beg the veterans to speak. But all these formations quiver and shake when Zuma appears in front of them.

The veterans, the MK leaders, all of them have been cunningly outmanoeuvred and outwitted by the wily Zuma. They are, as they say in Afrikaans, *tjoepstil* – as quiet as a mouse.

We, the people, suffer from this stalemate within the ANC. Policies are not

being implemented. Corruption flourishes and billions meant for the poor fly out of the country to Dubai.

Populist rhetoric devoid of any real content becomes the order of the day. The stresses on our society intensify.

That is why we need a battle inside the ANC. We need a real, monumental crisis. We cannot afford this wishy-washy holding pattern. It is costing us and our country dearly. We need a blowout.

Zuma should fire Pravin Gordhan, Mcebisi Jonas, Cyril Ramaphosa and Derek Hanekom. He should fire Blade Nzimande and Thulas Nxesi and all the other SACP leaders within his cabinet.

He should call them in, one by one, and tell them that, as is his constitutional prerogative, they should clear their desks and go.

Then he can do what he really wants to do – install Dlamini-Zuma as his deputy, the "corrupt bastard" Brian Molefe in Finance and Manyi as his special adviser.

He should then swiftly implement his new plan, the much-vaunted radical economic transformation.

If Zuma does not do this then Ramaphosa, Gordhan and their cohort should make it clear whenever Zuma and his cronies open their mouths that they are not about the cronyism, the looting, the corruption that stinks to high heaven around the president. They should tell him straight that he is taking the ANC straight out of power and to electoral and historical oblivion.

They should challenge him instead of being so quisling about it all.

South Africa's poor economy ground to a halt last year. This year it will cough and stutter a bit and we will all clap and slap ourselves on the back. Wake up, people!

Nine million people are unemployed

and 17 million social grants are paid every year. What is the plan to get people into jobs? Where is the implementation? No plan is being implemented because the ANC is in a low-level war with itself. Nothing gets done. Everything is stuck in limbo.

We need a crisis, badly, so that this frustrating logjam can be broken. We cannot afford it anymore.