

Zuma got a little help from friends

The Star Pg 10, (4/7/17)

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WHEN opening the SACP congress on Tuesday, party boss Blade Nzimande accused President Jacob Zuma of betraying him and the party.

Nzimande, who was set to retain his position as general secretary, said Zuma, a man he supported wholeheartedly, had broken their trust.

He was one of the last men standing behind Zuma ever since he assisted him to ascend to the Union Buildings in 2008. He seemed sincere in his admission that Zuma had disappointed them.

But Nzimande did not apologise to the nation for his role in helping Zuma to power and helping him sustain it.

How disastrous the president's tenure has been is a matter of public record. It has been characterised by an orgy of looting of state resources.

Not only has Zuma mortgaged our country to his friends the Guptas and his son Duduzane, but he has also paved the

way for them to derail the country's aim of creating a better life for all.

The Guptas and their acolytes have succeeded where many, including the so-called white monopoly capital have failed – to weaken the ANC and the state.

These are two instruments on which the hopes of millions of South Africans have been resting for the achievement of that dream of a prosperous South Africa, where every citizen is afforded an equal opportunity at a better life.

The movement is being hollowed out and the prospect of losing power has become real.

How did we get here?

Nzimande, former ANC Youth League president Julius Malema and former Cosatu boss Zwelinzima Vavi must be held accountable for Project Zuma.

The SACP explains that the Zuma project set about taking a wrong turn in the second term – in about 2014 – seven years after he was elected ANC president in 2007.

I hardly find this convincing. It was known as early as before 2007 that Zuma was going to wreak havoc on the state, and would have little regard for the constitution.

The formation of Cope in 2008 was not

only out of anger about former president Thabo Mbeki's removal but also their belief that Zuma was susceptible to corruption and the probability of him suffocating the state. Malema even went to the extent of saying the ANCYL wanted Zuma "with his corruption".

JZ, as he was affectionately called, was facing 783 charges of corruption, money laundering and racketeering.

Prosecuting Zuma was part of a political conspiracy to stop him from going to the Union Buildings, or so the argument went. He arrived at the Union Buildings, and power slowly but surely shifted from Pretoria to Saxonwold in Joburg, during the creation of what academics and the South African Council of Churches call a mafia state.

While this was happening, those who cared to speak up were accused of hating Zuma and were part of an "anti-majoritarian offensive" led by civil society and

the media.

A senior communist such as SACP deputy chairperson Thulas Nxesi went out of his way to defend the shameful spending on Zuma's Nkandla private home.

Now, Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa has joined forces with the SACP to fight against state capture.

Where were they when the Guptas laid the foundation for this looting?

Ramaphosa tells us that the Guptas have siphoned billions of rand from our coffers. This was over a long period.

As the deputy president of the country since 2014, where was Ramaphosa as the Guptas and Zuma were setting up and starting to operate their networks?

He and the SACP were defending the president, saying he was a nice guy who was never liked by the media, civil society and opposition parties.

Nzimande and the SACP were complicit

Some of the big names in the ANC, SACP and Cosatu should be taking some of the blame for his looting

in the setting up of this "parallel state".

So they, to some extent, aided and abetted the foundation of state capture, by commission or omission, through their vociferous defence of Zuma until late after the fallout. It even took time for the SACP to come out and condemn the Nkandla project.

We are a country that has dropped the accountability bar on many fronts. It has become common cause that our politicians commit some shameful acts and then get away with just saying "I am sorry".

The culture of a person falling on their sword is just not part of our body politic. How unfortunate.

Nzimande did not even bother to apologise to the nation about his role in the disastrous Zuma tenure. All he has been saying is that Zuma is worse than his predecessor, Mbeki.

Accountability, honest confessions and

an apology is also owed by those men and women in the top six of the ANC, its national working committee and the national executive committee.

These include ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe and treasurer Zweli Mkhize. They too know that they were part of the Zuma tsunami that has been sweeping through the state-owned enterprises, hollowing them out for looting.

The fact that Mantashe, Nzimande, Malema, Vavi, Ramaphosa and others have finally found their voice against Zuma is not sufficient.

There must be a Truth and Reconciliation Commission-style confession for them. We can't just afford to give them unconditional amnesty.

This will be the beginning of their journey to convince us, the people, to give them a second chance and forgive them for their participation, directly or indirectly, in state capture.

But as things stand, they must shoulder some of the blame for state capture and its ravaging effects on our economy, the government and their party, the ANC.

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