

# The three sorry stooges who should take most blame for giving us Jacob Zuma

I don't know about you, but I'm getting a bit sick and tired of all the smarty pants suddenly discovering that they have a conscience, washing their hands in invisible water and apologising profusely for having imposed the calamity that is President Jacob Zuma upon us. Each heartfelt mea culpa from these worthies is like salt in a gaping wound.

It is yet another reminder that things could have turned out differently had people thought about the good of the country, instead of their own selfish political interests. Zuma is an own goal. We brought it upon ourselves.

The latest to join the confessional procession is Jeremy Cronin, griot of the SACP who saw nothing wrong in supporting Zuma, a corrupt tribalist, in Polokwane 10 years ago and has stuck by him since. Now that he's stepping down as the party deputy general secretary after 22 years (they do stick around, these communists!), he tells us his heart was never in it. Pull the other one.

Cronin's epiphany is so very convenient. The fact that it happens as he steps down from the leadership speaks to a lack of backbone or principle. Where was Cronin when some members were driven out for voicing their strong disapproval of the party's exuberant embrace of Zuma?

He was, of course, marching in the footsteps of his leader, Blade Nzimande, who, at the same conference, spoke of Zuma's betrayal.

Nzimande, as a learned man, will know that betrayal is a big word.

It often refers to matters to do with conscience and country. If he means that they were deceived, Zuma did no such thing. He's always been corrupt, and those who supported him knew that all along. The president-to-be marched into Polokwane dragging with him a whole slew of scandals and embarrassments, with the likes of Nzimande serenading him.

Instead of pointing a finger at Zuma's betrayal, Nzimande should maybe concern himself with the duplicity of the SACP.

While it has called on Zuma to step down, its members, including Nzimande and Cronin, continue to serve in his cabinet. Their yearning for the perks that come with power obviously trumps their principles.

One sometimes has to wonder what the SACP's purpose or reason for existence is. Does it have, as it says, a historic mission to transform society? Or does it exist merely as Nzimande's meal ticket, his spaza shop?

But let's not be too hard on the communists. They were not alone in driving the country into a ditch. There were many – some significant, others not so notable –



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who cheered, chanted and danced as Zuma sauntered to power. They cannot now plead surprise, ignorance or pained betrayal.

There are three men – Nzimande is one of them – who did more than anybody else to raise Zuma from certain political death and into power. The other two are Zwelinzima Vavi and Julius Malema.

These three are the guilty men. No one did more to advance the debauchery of a Zuma presidency. They threw the full might of their respective organisations behind Zuma.

Thabo Mbeki had quite correctly fired Zuma as his deputy for corruption. He had hardly sat down in parliament when Vavi, in a radio interview, declared Zuma a tsunami which would rise to sweep everything before it.

Nobody believed him at the time, but Vavi had Cosatu's political muscle behind him. He was soon joined by the others in attesting to Zuma's strong suit as a leader.

At times it wasn't clear whether Zuma was conducting his own campaign or had become their captive. They literally carried him to power. They marched with him to political rallies.

They were with him in and out of court for his rape trial and his many charges of corruption. Aspersions were cast on his rape accuser. She was either a loose woman or a political plant to deny Zuma what rightfully belonged to him – the presidency, of course. The poor woman was harassed and driven into exile. She was later to die a leper in her own land.

It was not as if Nzimande, Vavi and Malema were not aware of the ugliness that Zuma represented. It was there for all to see – the widespread corruption, his misogynistic tendencies, homophobia, tribalism.

But they were driven by two things – their hatred for Mbeki and their belief that Zuma could be controlled. And controlling Zuma meant controlling the state. Come to think of it, it must have been the first attempt at state capture.

With victory achieved in Polokwane, Zuma and his willing sidekicks then trained their sights on the Scorpions and the NPA – the two organisations at the forefront of the president's prosecution. The Scorpions were clubbed to death, clearing the way for the wholesale corruption we see today. The NPA was taken over, and is now as meek as a lamb.

The rogues and the scoundrels are not only having a great time; they're in charge.

Those who helped Zuma to power should spare us their crocodile tears. Their objective has been achieved. They should just celebrate a job well done.