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The DA makes ANC ministers look bad? Ag, shame. But what did they expect?

This thing about the ANC complaining that the DA makes them look bad and incompetent is just too delicious for words. It provides light relief in what has been a sombre and cheerless time, and it is music to the ears of long-suffering citizens who've waited years for the party to get a kick up the rear.

Elections have consequences. And it hasn't taken too long for ANC politicians to complain. They seem surprised they have to work to earn a salary. *Ag, shame, arme skepsels*. They're gobsmacked that opposition ministers, these novices, were so quick out of the starting gates to outsmart the old hands. It's called work, a concept that is obviously foreign to them.

What seems to be getting their goat is that the performance by these upstarts is getting enthusiastic public acclaim. Social media has been buzzing. They must be wondering what's wrong with "our people". Such crybabies. They should man up.

Stop feeling sorry for yourselves, and do some work. It turns out ANC ministers are also a bit weak in the knees – Khumbudzo Ntshavheni complained that ministers were scared to face the media. It's not difficult to see why.

The ANC always boasts it has a good story to tell. But there hasn't been a lot that they can gloat about. More often they're confronted with questions about corruption, crime, incompetence, the looting, the lack of service delivery – enough to wear down even the most determined among them.

No wonder they'd rather hide from the public. It's what they do rather than what they say that would speak the loudest. But the collectivist mentality tends not to allow for individual talent or brilliance to shine. Where or when everybody is in charge, nobody takes responsibility and everybody gets tainted with the same brush.

Also, a constant refrain among ANC members is that the party is unable to attract talent to leadership positions. But how would that be possible when the relics at the top who feel threatened by young blood are the gatekeepers? People like Angle Motshekga, who should have been put out to grass long ago, are a



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real tragedy.

The ANC claims to have embarked on a renewal process, but how can it renew and rectify its mistakes when it hangs on to the geriatrics who drove it into the ditch in the first place?

I guess if people like Siviwe Gwarube, 35, Leon Schreiber, 35, and Dean Macpherson, 39, were members of the ANC, they'd still be kicking their heels in the youth league, waiting their turn.

But the ANC surely should have seen this coming. Opposition parties were always going to carry out their briefs in a way that would not only maximise their profiles and their policies, but would also curry favour with the public. That's what politicians do, and they'd be remiss if they didn't.

The ANC seems to have been caught napping. They probably thought these chaps, once in government, would also sit back and become too comfortable.

Helen Zille came in for criticism this week for saying that what we have is not a government of national unity but a coalition between the ANC and the DA. Maybe that wasn't her place, as some have suggested ... or some truths are better left unsaid. But she's right. The two parties that matter are the ANC and the DA; they're the cornerstone, the anchors. The others are mere extras.

The two parties could easily have formed the government on their own, but to mollify its left flank and critics generally who saw the deal with the DA as a backward step or even a betrayal, the ANC decided to engage in some subterfuge by inviting other parties to the manger. It was not only to mask the deal but

also to dilute the DA's influence in government. That is quite sad because it reflects a lack of confidence. Put bluntly, it's an inferiority complex.

A party that has held untrammelled power for three decades should have learnt a thing or two about governing and not be intimidated by a few individuals who've never been in government or even run anything of consequence. It's a sad state of affairs.

That fear is apparently why the ANC in Gauteng is doing everything it can to avoid a deal to form a provincial government with the DA, which was going to show them up. The ANC's shortcomings were going to be laid bare and, with the local government elections around the corner, they weren't prepared to take that chance.

Their party bosses seemed to agree with them, but competition, even within the cabinet, is not a bad thing. It could be the shot in the arm the ANC sorely needs, and could be an antidote to the lethargy that has brought the country to such a pretty pass. It could have been an attempt to discourage such competition when minister in the Presidency Maropene Ramokgopa said recently she had been tasked by President Cyril Ramaphosa to co-ordinate all ministers' activities.

Unfortunately, our constitution does not provide for a prime minister. The president appoints and directs members of the executive. But maybe lessons are being learnt. We've been arrogantly told all these years that cabinet ministers and other government officials, including the president, are ANC deployables and their job is faithfully to implement and enforce the party's policies. But now, with the arrival of opposition ministers, the tune has changed.

"There's no DA minister, there's no ANC minister, there's a government minister," Ntshavheni told a press conference. We're making progress. It's going to be a bumpy ride. It won't be easy getting this band of rivals working together. The crybabies should simply roll up their sleeves and join the fray. They must try it; they too will have fun. There's nothing more satisfying in life than receiving plaudits for a job well done.

Not known for his political dexterity, Ramaphosa's job now is to keep this ship of state afloat while making sure the naysayers in his party are kept reasonably quiet.