The expulsion of Malema may, for now, provide a surge behind Zuma's campaign for a second term and increase, if not his actual prospects of being president of both the ANC and the country until 2019, certainly his own confidence that he will. But this will prove to be a Pyrrhic victory – a victory that has done so much damage to the ANC that it will turn-out out not to have been worthwhile.

The illusions that Zuma's accession to power would lead to the ANC's ideological re-birth and organisational re-unification have evaporated as rapidly as the coalition of convenience, led by Malema, that elevated Zuma into office has disintegrated.

Far more clearly than in the Mbeki/ Zuma factional battle, particularly from Zuma's corner of the ring, this conflict is seen for what it is: a bare-knuckled struggle for control of the state for access to resources for self-enrichment by rival capitalist factions, in which ideology is little more than stage costume. It is inflicting incalculable damage on the ANC's political credibility and organisational cohesion, without making the slightest difference to its historical ideological orientation.

But this factional civil war is not taking place in a social vacuum. In insisting that he is being persecuted politically for raising the issue of nationalisation and expropriation of land to address inequalities in the distribution of wealth, Malema is exposing and capitalising on an undeniable reality – that the ANC's economic policies have been a complete failure for a working class now seething with discontent.

Malema's attempts to shift the battle onto the ideological plain has been severely compromised by credible allegations of corruption, and the undeniable reality that, in class terms, he is indistinguishable from his foe. They are both the same social stock – petty bourgeois aspirant capitalists – and both determined to get rich as quickly as possible.

Whereas Malema has adopted a left-wing posture, the ANC under Zuma has shifted to the right. By retaining the same capitalist policies that alienated Mbeki's regime from the ANC

rank-and-file and from the masses, Zuma has ensured that the wrath of the masses is turning against his administration, fuelled by the unfulfilled promise that the Zuma-era would be the era of the poor.

In times of social crisis, the growing resistance of the masses produces divisions within the ruling elite centring around how to respond to the demands of the masses; will it suffice to contain their discontent by continuing as before or by developing new policies – to wield the stick or offer the carrot.

Much more clearly than pre-Polokwane, which was characterised by a vague anti-neo-liberalism, what Malema has injected into the conflict is the semblance of a programmatic albeit populist adaptation of the economic policies of the Zuma administration.

By focussing on both the inequalities in the distribution of wealth between the working class and the capitalists, as well as the continued domination of the commanding heights of the economy by white capital, the ANCYL's economic freedom campaign has sharply exposed the impotence of the Zuma leadership's economic policies. Not only has the ANC failed the working class; the aspirant black capitalist class whose interests the ANC was created to advance, has not fared any better.

The disciplinary action against Malema, both in content and in procedure, reveals the extent to which the ANC leaders stand in terror of the possibility of alienating their capitalist masters. The extraordinary lengths the ANC has gone in the disciplinary case have little to do with the charges themselves. In pursuit of its factional aims, the Zuma leadership has been prepared to inflict irreparable damage on the ANC's internal regime with the blatant manipulation of the ANC's disciplinary processes and charges so laughable that were they consistently applied would result in the ANC becoming embroiled in perpetual prosecutions and wholesale expulsions.

What horrifies the Zuma faction is the potential of Malema's campaign to find an echo not only amongst the unemployed youth but the ANC's natural constituency – the aspirant black capitalist class. The disciplinary hearing was conducted like a show trial, with the SABC commandeered in a desperate attempt to discredit him in the eyes of working class youth who might be aroused by his populism, but mainly to appease big business – to reassure them that the ANC stands ready to defend the *status quo*; that no threat to private ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange – that is the economic dictatorship of the

capitalist class – will be tolerated.

No less than when the Zuma/Mbeki conflict first provided the platform for today's virtually permanent factionalism, the Malema/ Zuma battle is an indirect expression of the polarisation between the classes in society. But whatever the outcome at Mangaung, the erosion of ANC support among all social classes will continue.

Victory by the Malema faction will be of no benefit to the working class. For all his radical posturing, Malema is no less a capitalist than Zuma. His programme promises no more than to try to use the state to speed up the development of the black capitalist class as the Nationalist Party did with the Afrikaner bourgeoisie. The eradication of inequalities, poverty and mass unemployment is impossible under capitalism. Victory by Zuma will mean a continuation of the same capitalist policies, with the same results.

For the working class the only way forward is the creation of a mass party on a socialist programme. Such a party will emerge through struggle, the coming together of the service delivery protests, the annual student protests against financial and academic exclusions and industrial action in the workplace all of which continue to escalate. The DSM is campaigning for the Assembly for Working Class Unity called by the Thembelihle Crisis Committee in October 2011 to be reconvened, drawing in communities, students, youth and workers from across the country to develop a common platform, a common programme of action and a representative leadership to lay the foundation for a mass workers party on a socialist programme.