

Winter School 2022 Kicks Off!

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The 23rd Khanya College Winter School took off on a sombre note with comrades remembering all the fallen heroes. Comrade Maria van Driel, Khanya College Director, opened the school by welcoming participants and discussing the theme of the Winter School, 'Organise to Remake the World' which calls on the working class to organise against neo-liberalism and the issues that affect them. Participants reflected on the long struggles in the fight against injustice, and how they lost their comrades along the way. The opening ceremony also paid tribute to Comrade Oupa, who was the Khanya College Director until November when he passed away.

The comrades reflected on the crisis that face the working class and its sources. Neo-liberalism is the main root of all the struggles the working class is currently facing and has led to a high level of unemployment and social divisions in society as everyone looks after themselves. Unemployment affects youth who has turned to substance abuse and violence. The Winter School uses Popular Education as a methodology, so it was fitting that the session on the crisis facing the working class was a simulation game where all participants played a game depicting the different social forces in society and how they relate to each other.

The simulation depicted the current context of the crisis facing the working class. It mirrored the social inequality in our society and the hierarchy that places the working class at the bottom of the hierarchy. Participants were divided into groups, some were the 'big bosses' known as the capitalist, some were government workers such as the police, SASSA officers and city councillors, while others were ordinary citizens looking for jobs to sustain themselves. This exercise was the most frustrating exercise to partake in. Everyone had to endure the reality of how our country is actually ran by these 'Big Bosses' and the corrupt ungovernable state officials who are the puppets of the ruling class. Ultimately, this exercise demonstrated the kind of individuals and powers that really rule South Africa. The game showed power dynamics in society. It also depicted how workers are treated by managers and exploited by the capitalists. The government, councillors, government officials and the police are meant to serve the interest of the working class, but they are deep in the pockets of the capitalists, which has given birth to the exploitation of the working class, the divisions within the working class and blatant corruption.

It was also clear from the simulation and the debriefing that while the working class knows the sources of its problem, and the big crisis they are in, there is not much organising taking place to change things and confront capitalism. The working class does not have many allies to help it organise. The capitalist system, ensures that the working class is too occupied with trying to find jobs, put food on the table so that they never get time to organise against the injustice. It is clear with the current

economic climate that everyone can be replaced, so workers are forced to accept their conditions. According the freedom charter “the people shall govern,” the simulation game clearly showed that the capitalist is governing the country solely and the working class is the punching bag and source of riches and profit.

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