

Welcome to the Khanya College 24th Annual Winter School

By Maria Van Driel

Dear Comrades,

A very warm welcome to the 24th Khanya College Annual Winter School and the House of Movements (HoM). A special welcome to everyone who braved the cold and travelled from different provinces to be with us, and a special welcome to first-time visitors. We invite you and your organisations to enjoy the hospitality of Khanya College and the HoM, a safe space for learning, debate, and tolerance to engage with other activists and share ideas to strengthen the movement for social justice.

We meet at a dark and difficult time in this country's history, where inequality, poverty, unemployment and violence is pervasive, and the movements of the working class are struggling and facing many different challenges. The hangover of Covid-19 is still present and is sometimes overwhelming. Life for the working class has worsened since the advent of democracy in 1994.

Yet we must keep our focus and our hope. The struggle of oppressed people is international, and everywhere ruling elites dominate the wealth and the world's resources in the interests of their greed and private accumulation or profits for the few. This greed is also devastating the planet and the world's resources, and human life, as we are part of nature. Alongside poverty and inequality, increasingly we see soil erosion, fires, droughts, floods, and severe temperatures. A week ago, we experienced snow in Johannesburg. The impact of climate change and the destruction caused by the international capitalist system is unravelling in front of our very eyes.

One beacon of hope to bear in mind is that during apartheid there were also very dark days. But let us remember that it was working people in South Africa, Africa (and internationally) who stood united and overthrew apartheid, an almost invincible repressive regime.

The world is literally *man-made* and does not have to be organised the way it is and has not always been organised as such. Hence we can change the world. Another world is possible! This is the reason for our struggle. We must remake the world in the interests of all the world's people, our children, future generations, Mother Earth, and nature.

Arm yourself with knowledge and Organise!

This year, the theme of the school is *Arm Yourself with Knowledge and Organise!* After Covid-19 especially, the need to organise ourselves has become an urgent issue. This includes mobilising and organising the working class, educating

ourselves and building our organisations. These tasks are multi-layered and seemingly daunting. However, there are many working-class experiences that we can draw on, in South Africa and internationally, that provide lessons for movement building. One of the biggest obstacles facing the working class is an ideological one, realising that we can unite, and muster the courage and the confidence necessary for this struggle.

There is therefore much responsibility on the shoulders of the youth and the new emerging cadre in South Africa. The future is ours, and we need to make it a future for our children to live in harmony and peace with nature.

There is therefore much that we all hope to gain from this year's Winter School, and we thank all the participating organisations and movements for their solidarity with Khanya College. We request that you use the opportunities that the school affords you to learn, share, network and enrich the school. The choice to struggle for social justice is also a choice to enrich one's own life in the struggle for humanity.

Enjoy the Winter School

In solidarity
Maria van Driel
Khanya College Coordinator

This article was submitted as part of the Imbila Yesu publication produced daily for the duration of the Winter School in 2023 (23-28 July 2023). It appeared in Edition No. 1, released on 24 July 2023.

You may republish this article, so long as you credit the author and Karibu! Online (www.Karibu.org.za), and do not change the text. Please include a link back to the original article.