

My First experience at the Khanya College Winter School.

By Priscilla Khauoe

My anxiety started on the day of arrival. I was overwhelmed just by looking at the people arriving from different provinces, speaking different languages, and being of different age groups. When the big day came on Monday, 15 July 2024, my anxiety levels went even higher, I was curious about what exactly would be happening in the school, especially how Khanya College accommodated these comrades in the sessions. Cde Nosipho Mdletshe was the program director of the day introducing processes and the theme.

Then there were struggle songs sung by the comrades to express their excitement and commitment to the struggle. It was old and young comrades in unity. I was amazed by seeing the young ones being so passionate about singing the struggle songs and I just asked myself if they understood the words of the songs or if they were just taken by the rhythm. What I thought stood out was the well-executed opening ceremony, the chairperson of the Board of directors Father Mokesh Morar welcoming the participants on behalf of the board of Khanya and Khwezi Mabasa from Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) highlighting the important work that Khanya college does for organisations and activist noting their relationship because of the work they do together to advance social Movements.

After him was the director of Khanya College Cde Maria van Driel. She explained how they came about the Winter School back in 1999 and the reason why Khanya College is so dedicated to improving the working class conditions, stating that Khanya is not helping the working class but rather working with the working class in the struggle. Day two was the day my anxiety level went down. I was more relaxed. I attended sessions that were more informative and interactive. The theme is Solidarity and Mutual aid.

Later that day, there was a speaker, Dr Saths Cooper, who motivated us about the continuing struggles in our communities. He informed us about the use of mutual aid during the anti-apartheid struggle, emphasising how Black Consciousness movement used mutual aid to help people on hard days during apartheid. He also told us that even then, there used to be informers, but the community didn't allow them to lose focus. To conclude, the winter school is such a great experience, and a roller coaster mix of emotions, the sessions are informative, and the comrades are engaging. I was worried about the age difference between participants, but the environment and topics included everyone regardless of age.

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