

Monthly journal of the SACP Eastern Cape



RED



INK

Ed 23: December 2016

BLADE NZIMANDE

*“Adios Comrade Fidel:
On a personal note”*

CHRIS MATLHAKO

*“International Anti-
corruption day”*

JEREMY CRONIN

*“Guard against counterfeit anti-
imperialism”*

“The red ink that never dries”



Background

The Red Ink is the SACP Eastern Cape monthly journal. The Red Ink is a medium of the SACP for propagating its views with the working class in an unmediated fashion.

While it is important to constantly engage and contest ideas within the bourgeoisie commercial media but SACP is alive to the reality that any commercial media is first and foremost inclined to reflect views of its masters (monopoly capital).

Guidelines for Submission of Articles

Style and Length.

The length for feature articles is 1200-1800 words. Letters to the editor must not exceed 300 words and opinion pieces must not exceed 800 words. Articles must be written in plain and simple English. Articles may contain words in other South African languages, with the English meaning bracketed. Articles must be relevant to membership of our party and the working class in general, exciting and solicit debate and discussions.

Articles about recent events or contemporary issues in South Africa and the world will be given preference for publication in the Red Ink.

All SACP District Spokespersons, YCLSA Spokesperson and other Spokespersons of the MDM fraternal organisations are encouraged to submit articles about the recent activities; as they might not be covered in the mainstream media.

Due Date

The Red Ink is published monthly (12 issues per annum). The due date for the submission of articles is the 20th of each month. Late submissions will not be considered for an edition of such month but for future editions.

Originality

The Red Ink publishes original articles. We also publish articles which have appeared elsewhere in whole or in part. Should you feel that republishing an article would be beneficial to Red Ink readership and that the article will reach a broader readership through our medium than the medium that first published it, then you need to bring this to the attention of the Editor. All sources cited in the articles must be referenced.

Themes

Different editions/ issues of the Red Ink will have specific themes (Joe Slovo Month, Chris Hani Month, Youth Month, Red October, SACP anniversaries, COSATU Anniversaries, ANC anniversary, etc.) therefore some articles must be tailored to suit the specific theme. Each issue/edition of the Red Ink will indicate the theme of the next edition, so articles should be submitted as such.

Processing of Articles

All articles shall be subjected to scrutiny by the Red Ink editorial team. The Red Ink is particularly interested in fostering a culture of reading and writing amongst the leadership and membership of our party. We will therefore give special consideration to the articles written by the general members of our party. Articles will go through a review process, after which we will inform the contributor whether the article will be published or not.

The review process largely depends on the adherence to deadlines provided by the Editor and the content of the article as submitted.

Editorial Team

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Next Edition: Kindly forward your contributions to simdodi@gmail.com on Friday, 20 January 2016. The theme is the Joe Slovo month.

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In the month of November 2016, we have lost one of the world's finest revolutionaries, El Comandante Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz. Cde Fidel Castro was the Commander of the Cuban Revolution, the founding Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba and the former president of Cuba. He died on 25 August 2016 at the age of 90 at Santiago de Cuba Province, Cuba.

The General Secretary of our party Cde Blade Nzimande commenting on the passing of this colossal revolutionary had this to say *"Cde Fidel Castro belonged to the rarest breed of finest revolutionaries who made an invaluable contribution in the struggle for the emancipation of humanity. Human history will be incomplete without Cde Fidel Castro's colossal contribution in the struggle for freedom for a society without the exploitation of one person, group, or country by another. The SACP is deeply saddened by the loss"*.

Cde Fidel Castro led the Cuban revolution that defeat the dictatorship of Batista. He was part of the revolutionary collective that confronted the US led imperialism and defeated it. They defended Cuba and its people against the imperialist forces, and built strong internationalism. They fought not to only liberate Cuba but to liberate other oppressed countries. Importantly, Cde Fidel Castro started by consolidating the national sovereignty of Cuba before leading international anti-imperialist struggles.

We shall forever be indebted to the Cuban people for the contribution they have made in building just society, with no exploitation of man by the other. The Cuban led by Cde Fidel fought the Cuito Cuanavale in defence of the Angolan government and the people of the Southern Africa region. Cde Fidel Castro sent soldiers and the medical experts to the region to help defend the national sovereignty of Angola and that of the Southern Africa region.

It is the decisive defeat of the South African government in the Cuito Cuanavale battle that paved the Wayforward for the South African democratic breakthrough. When Fidel Castro and the Cuban forces left the region they did not leave with bags full of gold, silver, coffee or any other mineral resources but with bodies of their departed soldiers.

The Cubans under the leadership of El Comandante correctly understood international solidarity as an act of

humanity than an act to enforce regime change as perpetrated by the US led imperialism.

Cde Fidel Castro departed when we celebrate 20 years of bilateral relations between South Africa and Cuba. Our country and many other countries are beneficiaries of the Cuban international solidarity. We continue to receive medical and other advanced forms of training from Cuba.

As the Eastern Cape we will forever be indebted to the Cuban people for the service we continue to receive from Cuban doctors located in many parts of our rural province. It is Cuban doctors who came to Africa on the wake of the Ebola pandemic to help in rescuing lives, when no one from the 'western powers' was willing to assist in rescuing lives. We shall forever be grateful to the Cubans for their kind contribution to promoting humanity across the globe.

Comrade Fidel Castro led and united the people of Cuba for the common vision even though under the US economic blockade for many decades. The people of Cuba defended their national sovereignty, they attached no monetary price to it. They refused to sell their country to the US led imperialists. Their resilience proved that nothing can stop an idea whose time has come.

We should honour Cde Castro by defending our national sovereignty and working towards radical transforming the lives of the people. Our freedom must have far deeper meaning to the people, than the flag and the national anthem. It should mean be economically active, receiving quality healthcare, free quality education for the poor, social wage amongst other things.

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 SACP Eastern Cape

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We (the movement) is incapable of doing that when both our country and the African National Congress (ANC), as the leader of the progressive forces are facing a threat of being capsized by the corporate capture.

It is in this context that we call for the unity of the alliance and that of the ANC as a proper tribute to Cde Fidel Castro and all our fallen martyrs. The ANC must disabuse itself of being usurped by the corporates. There has been a bad phenomenon in the movement that of the parasitic and smash and grab bourgeoisie taking control of the leadership of both the ANC and the government, which has resulted in the looting of the state and 'raping of our national sovereignty'.

There has been many incidents that has indicated a decline of the revolutionary moral in the movement and the desire to sell our organisations and the state institutions to the highest bidder, for the benefit of some leaders with their families. These incidents includes:

- The landing of the Gupta Family private plane at the Waterkloof Air Base, which is one of South Africa's national key points.
- The 'reported' appointment of cabinet ministers by the Gupta Family.
- The looting of state owned enterprises by the Gupta family and others.

It is important for the ANC led movement to defeat the corporate capture. Let us confront the Guptas head on, and defeat them in defence of our movement and the country. In honour of Cde Fidel Castro Let us confront and defeat the Ruperts and preserve the integrity of our organisations, leadership and the country.

SACP Sanitary Towels Campaigns:

Every year teenage girls in in the working class communities are reported to miss up to fifty (50) days of schooling per year and even fail to participate in sport activities when they undergo their menstrual cycles. The main reason behind that is the lack of sanitary towels amongst other things.

The other contributing factor to this sad reality is the stigma attached to the menstruation, in some homes the girls are accused of either being sexual active or having multiple partners if and when they go to their periods. We ought to have an educational drive in our communities to destigmatize this natural process. As the negative results of that there is a high rate of failure in the schools in the working class communities.

In the month of November the South African Communist Party (SACP) Mbuyiselo Ngwenda District (Nelson Mandela Region) launched its first campaign at love life youth centre under the theme "*free sanitary towels for young girls*" in response to the challenge. The campaign is anchored on mobilising society to take responsibility in their own health and livelihood and to actively participate in the provision of sanitary towels to the needy teenagers. The SACP is the district is informed by the realities in the Nelson Mandela Bay and surrounding areas.

The SACP in the Mbuyiselo Ngwenda held the launch at the Love Life Youth Centre, Uitenhage. The programme was also attended by the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Thoko Xasa. This event was also attended by the school kids, YCLSA and community members in and around Kwanobuhle in Uitenhage.

Our party in the district handed over 16 packs of Always maxi sanitary towels ,bar of soap, toothpaste and shield anti-per spirant roll on to 16 teenage girls whom were identified by the branch leaders of ward 43 in Uitenhage These sanitary towel gift packs were purchased using the money raised by district executive committee and the sponsor received from Advocate Anusha Rawjee and further donation of 10 boxes of sanitary towels were received from the office of the Deputy Minister of Tourism Thoko Xasa. The SACP extends its gratitude to all those who have donated and worked hard to make the programme a success that it was.

This important but often unmentioned challenge of keeping teenage girls in school is at the heart of SACP Mbuyiselo Ngwenda District health commission. The initiative was spread to other areas in the district by the YCLSA in partnership with Ikusasa Lomama Non-profit organisation they also distributed boxes of sanitary towels to the teenage girls of Kwadwesi.

To date the ongoing campaign "*free sanitary towels for young girls*"has touched a lot of lives and assisted many girls in Mbuyiselo Ngwenda District. The health portfolio of the SACP Mbuyiselo Ngwenda district walks on the footsteps of Karl Marx when he says "First you socialise medicine and everything else follows like night follows day".

The SACP wishes you a happy and safe festive season.

May you have a revolutionary reading!

Siyabonga Mdoti - SACP Eastern Cape Provincial Spokesperson

Guard against counterfeit anti-imperialism: a tribute to Fidel Castro, a heroic revolutionary, an exemplary humanist

By Jeremy Cronin, SACP 1st Deputy General Secretary

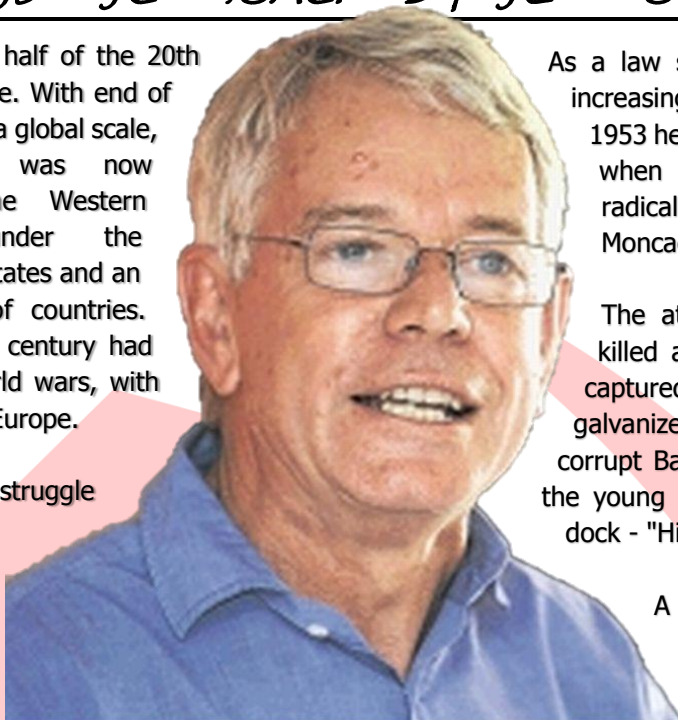
In 1945 a bloody first half of the 20th century drew to a close. With end of the 2nd World War, at a global scale, a relative stale-mate was now established between the Western imperialist powers under the dominance of the United States and an emergent socialist bloc of countries. The first half of the 20th century had seen two catastrophic world wars, with much of the bloodshed in Europe.

Now the epicentre of the struggle for human justice, democracy and national self-determination shifted to the geo-political South. Europe had been liberated from fascism, racism and occupation, but throughout the geo-political South their close cousins were alive - various toxic versions of colonialism, neo-colonialism, settler colonialism, semi-colonialism, apartheid colonialism. Everywhere these oppressive realities were accompanied by rabid racism.

In was in this context that in the late 1940s and into the 1950s a new generation of popular, dynamic and fearless revolutionary leaders emerged. Some were to die relatively young, Che Guevara, Patrice Lumumba, martyrs in struggle. Others survived into the late 20th century.

Some of these had however lost their revolutionary vigour. But there were outstanding exceptions, those who survived, with their authority, humanism and reputation intact and enhanced - among them Fidel Castro and Nelson Mandela.

Both were born into relatively privileged families but in the midst of deep rural poverty and under the scourge of oppressive regimes. In the case of Cuba, the island was a neo-colony of the United States with supine and corrupt comprador local leaders. Havana had been turned into a brothel, a casino playground of the Mafia, while the majority of Cubans were pressed into back-breaking work in US-owned sugar and tobacco plantations.



Jeremy Cronin, SACP 1st Deputy General Secretary

As a law student in Havana, Fidel moved increasingly in radical left circles. In July 1953 he first came to national prominence when he and a small group of fellow radicals launched an armed attack on the Moncada military barracks.

The attack was defeated. Some were killed and others, including Fidel, were captured. But the event served to galvanize a rising tide of opposition to the corrupt Batista regime. In particular it was the young Fidel's rousing speech from the dock - "History will absolve me".

A year later Fidel was released on amnesty and went into exile. With his brother Raul he teamed up with other Latin American radicals, including the Argentinean Che Guevara.

They formed the July 26 movement and planned an armed liberation struggle back in Cuba. In November 1956, in a rickety boat, the *Granma*, 81 armed revolutionaries set sail from the coast of Mexico bound for Cuba.

The trip was planned to take five days. Through their underground contacts back in Cuba they had organised for diversionary attacks to occur away from the selected landing destination. These duly occurred but the boat was in such poor condition that the trip took seven days, by which time their own plans had been uncovered and they were ambushed on landing.

Once the survivors had regrouped in the Sierra Maestra it was found that only 19 of the 81 had survived, these included Fidel and Che. They were to become the core of a liberation struggle in the Sierra Maestra. With support from left wing parties and trade unions in the towns and cities, working with the rural poor and winning over deserting government soldiers, in a remarkably short time the revolutionary movement swept through the island, arriving in Havana on January 1, 1959. The dictator Batista fled to the US with suitcases stuffed with millions of stolen dollars.

In February Fidel was sworn in as Prime Minister and a series of radical reforms were quickly enacted. A cap on land-holding was placed at 402 hectares. Foreign

ownership of Cuban land was prohibited. 200,000 peasants received title deeds. A mass literacy campaign was launched with college and university students suspending their studies for a year and selflessly going out into the deep rural areas. Health-care was nationalised.

Of course the reaction from Cuba's US neighbour just 90 kilometres away was soon in coming. Oil exports were cut back. When Cuba imported oil from the Soviet Union, the Shell, Esso and Standard Oil refineries refused to refine the product. Fidel's response was decisive - he nationalised the refineries. The US then cut Cuba's sugar export quota. Again the response was patriotic and decisive - the US-owned sugar mills were nationalised along with US banks.

But Fidel Castro understood that the US would not be content simply to destabilise the Cuban revolution through economic and financial means, especially as they were not working. The Cuban army was doubled in size. More importantly in September 1960 a People's Militia, the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs), was established. These were street and block committees, provided with basic military training but also responsible for community work, like home-based care visits. They were genuine organs of localised popular power, and indeed popular democracy. The enemies of Cuba argue that there is "no democracy" in Cuba. But what is more democratic - local popular power, or the oligopoly-driven two-party dominated US presidential elections?

By 1970 one-third of Cuba's population was involved voluntarily in CDRs. And this was to be the popular bedrock, the decisive factor in the very survival of the Cuban revolution, enabling Fidel to outlast ten US presidents and 637 assassination attempts.



In April 1961 the US launched the Bay of Pigs invasion, using Cuban exile proxies trained and armed by the CIA. With a US fleet steaming off the coastline, and aircraft bombing Cuban infrastructure, a

mass beach-landing was undertaken. It was routed in a matter of days, with Fidel himself leading at the front. He later said: "what the imperialists cannot forgive us is that we made a socialist revolution under their noses". On the basis of these advances and the defence of the revolution in the face of a blockade (that still continues) Cuba has made amazing and universally acclaimed social advances - in literacy, in health-care (with infant mortality rates way below the US), and in technology (Cuba is a world-leader in bio-technology, for instance).

Internationalism

Fidel was always a proud patriot, but, like the revolution he led, he was also imbued with a deep sense of internationalism. As he once put it, the imperialists "don't understand...that our country is not just Cuba; our country is also humanity." These were not just words. Over the decades Cuba has selflessly deployed hundreds of thousands of doctors, engineers, soldiers to the Middle East, Latin America, and indeed Africa. What is especially remarkable about these deployments is that the Cubans have never asked for one cent in compensation. They have never sought for mining concessions in foreign countries, or for a slice of the business action in countries that they have literally saved from devastation. In many of these countries thousands of Cubans lost their lives.

As Southern Africans we should honour this and know this better than most.

Soon after Angolan independence, the CIA working out of Mobutu's Zaire and the apartheid regime with its bases in Namibia/SWA planned a joint pincer movement to capture Luanda and defeat the MPLA government. In 1975 Savimbi's UNITA backed by apartheid SA, and Roberto Holden's FNLA backed by the CIA were on the outskirts of Luanda. It was the dramatic arrival of 18,000 Cuban troops airlifted and shipped in at the eleventh hour that saved the day.

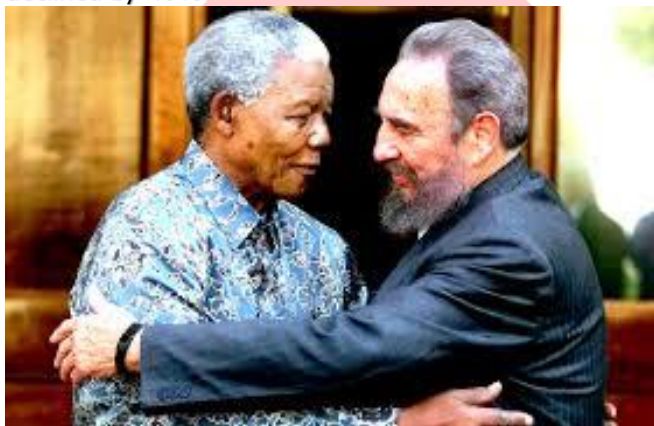
In 1987 an even more decisive battle occurred in southern Angola at Cuito Cuanavale. In the dry season of that year Angolan government forces had advanced on Savimbi's Jamba headquarters, but they had overstretched their supply lines and the apartheid regime had been waiting for this moment to launch a lightning motorised attack with the aim of definitively defeating the Angolan forces.

This plan nearly succeeded, it was only frustrated by the technical capacity of the Cuban forces to rapidly build advanced airfields. The Cuban-piloted Soviet MIG jet fighters outmatched the apartheid Mirage fighters and

suddenly the balance of conventional armed capacity had shifted in southern Africa. The apartheid invasion forces no longer had air superiority and they were forced to beat a hasty retreat back over the Namibian border. In 1988 the New York Accords forced the apartheid forces to leave Namibia and in 1990 Namibian independence occurred. Our own negotiated transition commenced in the same year. As Fidel once said: "The history of Africa will be written as before and after Cuito Cuanavale."

The Special Period: 1990 – 2000:

But these advances in southern Africa were to coincide with a dramatic global development, the collapse of the Soviet bloc of countries. Suddenly Cuba, after three decades under a US-imposed blockade found itself deprived of its one life-line. It couldn't import oil. Its own sugar exports collapsed. By 1992 the economy had declined by 40%.



The response of Fidel and the Cuban people was typical. It was not to surrender themselves into the hands of the IMF. It was not to abandon ship. This island of 11 million people, faced with isolation, embarked on an heroic program of sovereign self-sufficiency. They moved away from the old neo-colonial dependence on mono-cropping (sugar and tobacco). They moved away from large energy-intensive state and cooperative farms, to smaller farms. They even replaced tractors with oxen and found that the latter were better for soil conservation. Deprived of access to extensive industrial fertilizers they adopted widespread vermiculture. Important advances were made in localised solar energy resources.

By 2006 Cuba was the world's only nation which met the UNDP's definition of sustainable development, sustainably putting back into nature what it was taking out. Typically, Fidel understood the wider human and international implications in this new direction forced upon the island. Cuba's energy and sustainability challenges, he said, were a forerunner of a global

challenge. As he never tired of arguing in the last decades, if the entire world's population was to consume at the level of the average North American, then we would need seven planet earths. The path of profit-driven, capitalist growth underpinned by imperialist aggression is simply unsustainable. It is, in fact, a crime against nature, and, since we are part of nature, it is a crime against humanity.

Lessons for post-apartheid South Africa:

Bound inextricably together by the ties of a common struggle, by the blood of Cuban doctors and MK soldiers in Angola spilt by the apartheid regime, bound by the mutual admiration and respect that our two great leaders Fidel and Madiba felt for each other - it is nonetheless important to recognise that Cuba and South Africa are different countries. As the Cubans have never tired of reminding us, Cuba of 1959 and South Africa of 1994 represented different realities and in different global contexts. The Cubans never tried to export their revolution to South Africa as a singular model to be replicated here.



Nevertheless, there are many important lessons we can learn from the steadfast example of Fidel and the courageous Cuban people, not least at a time when it is obvious that our own national democratic revolution is going through a complicated period.

Here, briefly, are three issues that deserve consideration within our own reality.

One, the Cuban revolution, living and surviving literally under the nose of the most powerful imperialist state, always understood the critical importance of popular protagonism, of popular power, and of revolutionary morality. These were qualities once well understood within our own liberation struggle, not least during the 1980s when rudimentary organs of popular power emerged in townships and rural villages as the semi-insurrectionary struggles against apartheid grew. Post-1994 we have tended to demobilise popular forces

(except during electoral campaigns) and preferred to conduct ourselves as a delivery state. The Cuban revolution would not have survived for one year if the same mistake had been made there.

Two, leadership is critical and Fidel (like Madiba and Chris Hani) exemplified this admirably. Fidel was always in the frontline of struggle, in the Sierra Maestra, at the Bay of Pigs, in the economic struggle for survival. In the late 1960s Cuba's sugar harvest was threatened. Fidel personally led the campaign to ensure targets were met. When, in 1969, the target was not met, Fidel offered his resignation. He took personal responsibility and did not displace it onto a collective. This was not to be the first or last time that he offered to resign.

Three:

We must guard against counterfeit anti-imperialism. The Cuban revolution was, it had to be, anti-imperialist. Here in South Africa within our movement we sometimes find a degenerate, counterfeit "anti-imperialism", reactionary attitudes and behaviours masquerading as "anti-imperialist", "anti-monopoly" capital. During the terrible AIDs-denialism period, led by some within our movement, we were told that AIDS was "just an imperialist plot". Nowadays, the struggle against corporate capture of key parts of the state are said to be part of an "imperialist agenda". When the Cubans air-lifted 18,000 troops into Angola, it was a powerful and selfless act of internationalist solidarity. Can we say the same for when we allow a private wedding-party from India to be airlifted into Waterkloof air-base? Siphoning hundreds of millions of rands out of South Africa to Dubai is not a blow against "white" monopoly capital.

Let us defend our national sovereignty. Let us be inspired by the outstanding example of comrade Fidel and the Cuban revolution. Let us assert fearlessly our right to our own path of sovereign national development against imperialist agendas, against monopoly capital, against corporate capture and corruption by parasitic forces. We owe this to our people. We owe this to the sacrifice that the Cuban people have made to our own country and region.

LONG LIVE THE MEMORY OF FIDEL CASTRO - PATRIOT, INTERNATIONALIST, HUMANIST!

This is an expanded version of the tribute delivered in the South African National Assembly by the SACP's First Deputy General Secretary, Cde Jeremy Cronin on 1 December 2016.

SACP mourns the death of the Commander-in-Chief of the Cuban revolution, Comrade Fidel Castro, an internationalist revolutionary par excellence

The South African Communist Party (SACP) expresses its profound revolutionary solidarity and condolences with the people of Cuba and Castro's family on the passing on of former Cuban President Comrade Fidel Castro. Cuban President Comrade Raul Castro announced last night 25 November 2016 that: "The Commander-in-Chief of the Cuban Revolution died at 22:29 hours".

SACP General Secretary Comrade Blade Nzimande expressing the Party's condolences the following morning 26 November 2016 said:

"Comrade Fidel Castro belonged to the rarest breed of finest revolutionaries who made an invaluable contribution in the struggle for the emancipation of humanity. Human history will be incomplete without Comrade Fidel Castro's colossal contribution in the struggle for freedom, for a society without the exploitation of one person, group, or country by another. The SACP is deeply saddened by the loss."

The people and government of Cuba offered an outstanding solidarity support under the leadership of Comrade Fidel Castro in our own struggle against colonial oppression, apartheid, economic exploitation and African continental independence. The defeat of the forces of apartheid South Africa in Angola that paved the way to the dislodgment of the apartheid regime in South Africa in 1994 would not have happened without the people of Cuba and Comrade Fidel Castro's exceptional leadership.

Cuba's contribution in the struggle for freedom by the democratic people of our country, Southern African region, the African continent and elsewhere came without any strings attached. This revolutionary culture continues to this day, the latest example being the excellent work done by Cuban healthcare professionals in the fight against the deadly Ebola virus in our continent. South Africa is also host to Cuban healthcare professionals working in rural areas where there are few or even no South African doctors looking after the health needs of our people. South Africa also has about 3000 students training as doctors in Cuba.

We deep our red revolutionary banner in memory of Cde Fidel!

Issued by the SACP.

Adios Comrade Fidel: On a personal note

By Blade Nzimande, SACP General Secretary

In the 1990s I had the privilege of being delegated by the SACP to Cuba. Sometime in the mid-1990s I represented the SACP at the Latin American Left platform called the São Paulo Forum, attended by many leaders from left political parties and movements. Comrade Fidel addressed the Forum, which was held at the Havana Convention Centre. I remember very well in his off the cuff remarks Comrade Fidel admonishing the Sandinista leader Comrade Daniel Ortega who was in attendance that he was worried Ortega was too relaxed and the imperialists were going to kill him as they feared the Sandinistas might return to power. Indeed the Sandinistas came back with Ortega as President of Nicaragua.

In one of my other visits to Cuba I had an opportunity to listen again to Cde Fidel addressing a gathering at the Karl Marx Theatre in Havana. He spoke for five hours without a speech, which became his trademark! But I only had an occasion to personally interact with Comrade Fidel on his visits to South Africa. He had a state visit in 1998 and had the pleasure to be amongst the Members of Parliament who listened to him on that occasion.

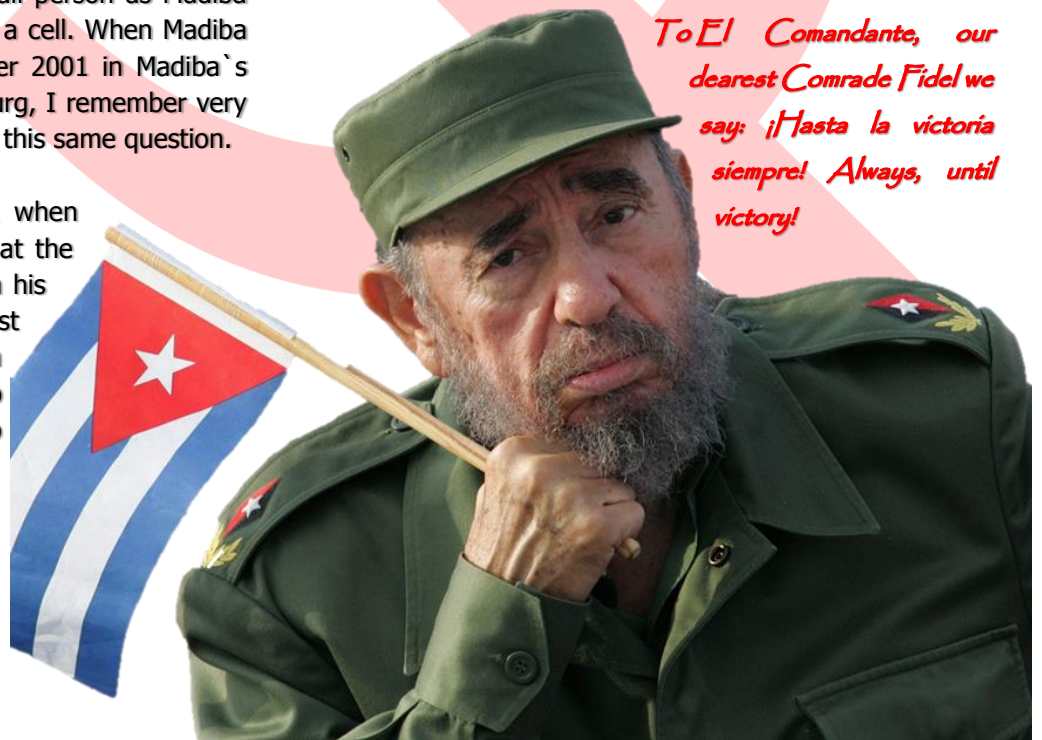
I was also amongst the comrades who accompanied him to tour Robben Island. I remember the shock on his face when he saw Comrade Mandela's prison cell, asking the same question most people ask when they see that cell, as to how such a tall person as Madiba could fit into such a small size of a cell. When Madiba and Fidel met again in September 2001 in Madiba's house at Houghton in Johannesburg, I remember very well Comrade Fidel asking Madiba this same question.

I could see the sense of shock when looking into that cell, but I was at the same time sensing some relief on his part that because of, amongst others, the victory of the Cuban and Angolan forces in Cuito Cuanavale, Robben Island was no longer a prison but a

museum symbolising the victory of progressive forces over the forces of evil! I was truly honoured for Comrade Madiba to invite me to the meeting of September 2001, mentioned above. This was a private meeting between Madiba and Fidel at his Houghton home as Comrade Fidel had attended an international gathering in South Africa. On inviting me over the phone, Comrade Madiba joked that he was not feeling safe to meet a leading Cuban Communist on his own, so I better join him so that in case of danger his own fellow Communist could protect him. Were this true I do not know how I was going to do that because I noticed that day that both these tall men were of the same height! Where would I have fitted in that equation!? But on arriving at Madiba's house he changed the story and said to me and Fidel that he invited me because he wanted to show Comrade Fidel that it was not only Cuba that had Communists but South Africa too! I really enjoyed that conversation between these two giants which lasted for over an hour!

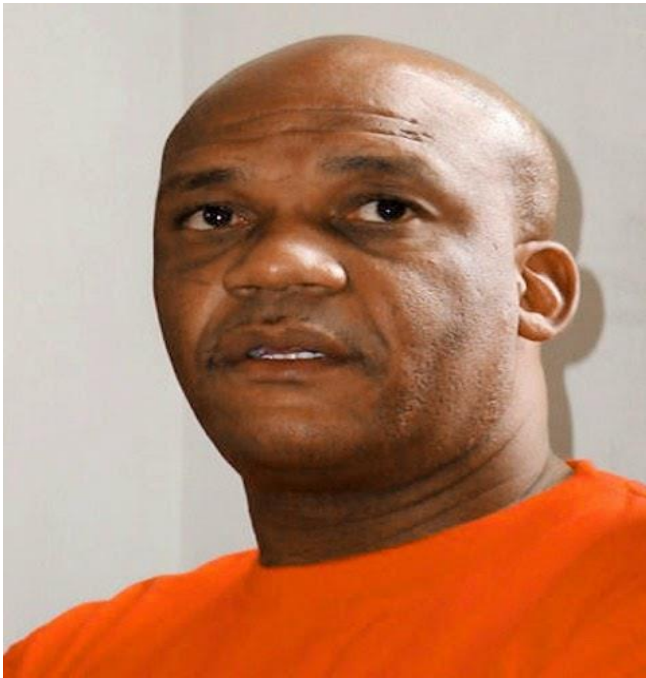
I remember they also exchanged their respective experiences about prison, although Comrade Fidel quickly requested Madiba to speak more about that subject as he had more experience since he spent 27 years in prison! Castro said his story of prison had faded comrade to that of Madiba as he had only spent 2 years in Batista's prison between 1953 and 1955! A humble person indeed!

To El Comandante, our dearest Comrade Fidel we say: ¡Hasta la victoria siempre! Always, until victory!



International anti-corruption day – 9 December

By Chris "Che" Matlhako - SACP Central Committee member



Chris Matlhako – SACP CC Member

2016 was a year of corruption scandals involving trillions of dollars across the world and most notably the Panama Papers that exposed tax havens for the ruling elite of the world. Corruption is arguably another name for capitalism. In the era of the worldwide economic crisis, the ruling classes around the world are manipulating and cheating in any way possible to save themselves.

The Panama Papers, confidential files from the Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca, were leaked, ensnaring high-level Latin American politicians and others in a sprawling tax evasion scandal. Among the politicians in Latin America implicated are Argentine President Mauricio Macri, Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto, Peruvian Keiko Fujimori and Brazilian lawmaker at the forefront of an impeachment drive of Dilma Rousseff, Eduardo Cunha. The set of over 11.5 million documents links the influential politicians in a scam to hide assets in shell companies and offshore tax haven, further entrenching the region in all ever-growing of corruption.

Just recently, in South Africa the former chairperson of the African National Congress (ANC) in the Northern Cape province, John Fikile Block, together with his co-accused Christo Stolz was convicted and sentenced to an effective 15 years for corruption and fraud for their role in manipulating tenders and others in the province.

Many other leaders at various levels of society have clouds of corruption and fraud allegations hanging around their heads. However, it's the Block's convictions and sentencing, which blows the whole matter of both the attitude and posture of the state's stance with regards to this matter. For there are a myriad of expectations in this regard as both members and non-members are waiting to see what the state's and the political organization's next move will be in order to be send the message home.

Although International Anti-Corruption Day, Dec. 9, originated with the United Nations in 2003, corruption is only growing - the only difference being that now in the age of the internet and whistle-blowers, it is exposed more often. According to the U.N., every year US\$1 trillion is paid in bribes while an estimated US\$2.6 trillion are stolen annually through corruption.

The Block case is further proof and indicative of the inherent entrenched spectre of corruption and political patronage that has characterized post-1994 democratic breakthrough in our country.

The South Africa Communist Party (SACP) has over time loudly protested against the rampant allegations of corruption and fraud in both the public and private sectors in the country. SACP General- Secretary, Dr. Blade Nzimande once said, "A thief is a thief even if he/she has an ANC or SACP card". As early 2010 the SACP concluded that 'corruption is fast eating into our society and unless there is a radical action, our democracy is under threat'.

The Block matter has blown wide open the linkages between the politically connected, the compradorial elite and their proximity to the (democratic) state and how this relationship has been (mis)used to advance a primitive accumulation process. Block's final conviction and sentencing is culmination of a process of the deforming and reconfiguration of the relationship between its leading cadre(s) of the national liberation movement and a distorted (primitive) accumulation process.

John Block as the ANC Provincial Chairperson presided for over a period of 12 years denuding and defrauding of the provincial government in the Northern Cape. As the provincial chairperson of the ANC, he and his cronies commanded the levers of the provincial state and directed the direction of tenders and who must be favoured.

His prints are all over the provincial state today as he promoted and employed/deployed cronies and others in key positions of decision-making in the provincial government. Current social and economic indicators suggest a systematic process of denuding the provincial state as all these indicators are on a spiralling and are rock-bottom now.

Following the 18th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 2012 under the leadership of the Xi Jinping, is perceived to be the widest possible campaign to tackle corruption in China and has implications for the both the 'developing world' and the West. Upon taking office, Xi vowed to crack down on 'tigers and flies', that is, high-level officials and local civil servants alike. Most of the officials investigated were removed from office and faced accusations of bribery and abuse of power, although the range of alleged abuses varied widely.

As of 2016, the campaign has 'netted' over 120 high-ranking officials, including about a dozen high-ranking military officers, several senior executives of state-owned companies and five national leaders. More than 100,000 people have been indicted for corruption. The campaign is part of a much wider drive to clean up malfeasance within the party ranks and shore up party unity. It has become an emblematic feature of Xi Jinping's political brand. A key feature of the Xi Jinping marker in his drive in the anti-graft campaign is an attempt to link this to the law.

It is said that Xi Jinping and the five generations Chinese leadership have given the rule of law greater pride and place in official rhetoric than their predecessors did. The October 2014 Fourth Plenum of the 18th Central Committee - widely dubbed the 'rule of law plenum' - declared the rule of law to be a guiding force in pursuing the Chinese Communist Party's major tasks, including economic development, political modernization, and realization of Xi's 'China dream'. After the 4th Plenum, Xi included 'comprehensively governing the country according to law' among his 'Four Comprehensives', which also included other goals that law is expected to advance (deepening reform, building prosperity and limiting party misbehaviour).

These statements amplified earlier commitments to law, including Xi's declaration in 2012 on the 30th anniversary of the 1982 constitution that China 'must firmly establish throughout society, the authority of the constitution and the law', and the seminal Third Plenum's pledges in 2013 to 'move forward with building a rule of law country', 'strengthen rule of law

guarantees', and 'safeguard the authority of the constitution and the laws'.

This emphasis on law contrasts with decline in official support for law during much of Hu Jintao period, which was marked by an emphasis on informal dispute resolution, scepticism toward the idea that courts should be guided primarily by law, and an apparent sense that law had failed to fulfil its promise in advancing the regime's aims. At the same time, one of the most dramatic initiatives of Xi's early tenure - a remarkably energetic drive against corruption - has even concluded primarily through the party's extra-legal discipline inspection commission under the leadership of Politburo Standing Committee member and venerable regime trouble-shooter Wang Qisha.

An important aspect of the ongoing process of engaging and coming to grips with the implications of corruption in our country, is an attempt to abuse the notion of the rule of law. Unlike in China, South Africa's application of the law is the opposite as those who face allegations of corruption and fraud, use the law to try and undermine and hide from the implications of the law.

The constant attempt to hide from the scrutiny of the law by a huge number of alleged, to frustrate the process is a matter that continues to dilute both perceptions and reality of the application of the law on corruption and fraud in our country. Block is also appealing his conviction and sentencing, and this is seen as an attempt to defeat any attempt for him to go to jail.

"Personalities and fame pass; the revolution must remain"; President Samora Machel - Mozambique

Comrade Chris 'Che' Matlhako is the member of the SACP Central Committee & Secretary of International Relations.

Let's defend the people's movement

By Benson Ngqentsu, SACP Brian Bunting District Secretary

The current happenings in the African National Congress (ANC) must not be reduced to mere anti-Zuma and pro-Zuma factions. President Jacob Zuma is not that important and cannot be elevated above our people, above our revolution and above our ANC-led national liberation movement. To many of us our pre-occupation in the struggle is our people, our revolution and our movement, not some greedy parasitic personalities bent on using our movement as a vehicle to capture the state and dispense patronage to their corrupt cronies and friends.

In essence, the current political differences in the African National Congress are about the soul and the strategic direction of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) and the soul of the ANC. They are about the soul of the NDR because at the heart of the NDR is the total liberation of Black people in general and Africans in particular from centuries of socio-economic bondages, decades of Colonialism of a Special Type, and apartheid. The task of progressive forces in the ANC is to see to it that the NDR remains on track and that it is not re-routed to serve the narrow interests of the greedy parasitic elements such as the Guptas and families of the state President and the presidential hangers on.

Clearly, the current capture of state organs and, yes, certain leading figures in the ANC and government is one attempt to re-route our shared National Democratic Revolution. This by its very nature undermines the will of the people and the will of the primary motive forces of our revolution, and thus, understandably, the people and the motive forces of the revolution punished the ANC at the 2016 local government elections.

The people and the primary motive forces of our revolution could see that the ANC leadership was no longer about the people, no longer about the revolution and no longer about the movement itself, but had come to serve some leading greedy parasites. There is no doubt that the millions of rands spent at the upgrade of one individual's house in Nkandla, and the billions of rands deployed to many state owned enterprises as bail-outs, should have been directed instead to change the lives of the people where those sums could have had a decisive impact on changing people's lives. The liberal perspective that the indecisive ANC National Executive Committee continues to advance after its recent meeting – that we must let things slide for the

sake of unity – also saps the people and the primary motive forces of our revolution of confidence in the ANC. In this current situation, the current leadership of the ANC must choose between the people, the revolution and the movement, on the one hand, and the greedy parasites that happen to be in higher leadership positions in the ANC.

Yes, the current differences are about the soul of the African National Congress as a leader of our National Democratic Revolution. Yes, the ANC is a multi-class formation but biased towards the working class and this character, its working class bias, ought to be preserved. Should the ANC be led by forces committed to a right-wing agenda the NDR will be sold to the highest bidder and thus the smash and grab rent seeking parasitic tendency must be crushed. Against this background, the ANC must be reclaimed from the greed parasites as led by Zuma and his greedy and corrupt faction. The ANC must be reclaimed from the rent seeking parasites so that we can be able to put the NDR back on track and revitalise the primary motive forces of our revolution to crush the selfish smash-and-grab parasitic tendency. Without fear of contradiction, the ANC in its current form is incapable of leading our shared national democratic revolution in this second more radical phase.

As the New Tendency and the 1996 Class Project before it, the current leading tendency also uses the approach of targeting communists and the SACP and captures some leading personalities from the trade union federation COSATU. At the heart of this agenda is the intention to weaken the voices that are firm to defending and advancing the NDR, so that this tendency can freely take billions of rands to Dubai without anyone saying anything. Our national sovereignty is not for sale, our revolution is not for sale and our movement is not for sale.

The error of weakness that progressive force made following the Polokwane political moment was to take a less critical stance on the ANC-led alliance and allow opposition forces to lead the criticism of our own movement.

This less critical stance – in the public domain in particular – was then taken for granted by leading characters of the selfish tendency who arrogantly assumed a green light to divert the NDR and rob from the people. ■

SACP held a successful march in Joe Gqabi

By Sydney Belebesi, SACP Joe Gqabi District Secretary

The South African Communist Party (SACP) in Joe Gqabi in the Eastern Cape led a successful march to both the government of the people and the financial sector in general and the banks in particular. The mass action was held to raise service delivery issues to the government and the parasitic brutality of the financial sector.

The party working with all progressive forces in the district led hundreds of people from the Mt Fletcher Old Taxi Rank to the magistrate court on the 25 November 2016. The march was held as part of the ongoing campaign of the SACP to transform the financial sector to serve the people.

The march was led and addressed by the SACP Provincial Secretary, Cde Xolile Nqatha. The march was also attended by the SACP 1st Deputy Provincial Secretary, Cde Sisimone Rakaibe & Cde Nkopane – SACP PEC Member. The march also received messages of support from our allies.

Some of the burning issues to the level of government that prompted the party to mobilise the people to be actively involved in seeking solutions to these challenges were the following:

Calling for the speeding up of infrastructure delivery in our communities, in particular road and access to quality drinking water. Calling for the delivery of the basic service for all, as we have witnessed many people having no access to the basic services as delivered by the government. What we have observed is that some of the people are not getting basic services due to them due to lack of capacity on those discharged with that responsibility, corruption and factionalism.

We are calling for the moratorium on the closure of public schools, as that directly affects children of the working class. Calling for the employment of security personnel and admin clerks in the public schools. Calling for the strategic capacitation of all the public healthcare facilities. Calling for the filling up of all funded vacant posts in the Department of Health.

We are calling for the speeding up of the process and the financial support towards the establishment of the

cooperatives academy. We are calling on our government to act swiftly against corruption. We are calling upon our government to act swiftly against stock theft.

Finance Sector: The party is calling for the accessibility of banking services in the small town of Joe Gqabi and other rural people, and on the banks to stop reckless and unsecure lending to the beneficiaries of the social grant which traps the people in a vicious circle of unending debts. It is in this context that the government should work more to support and monitor the NCR in the protection of the consumers from unscrupulous credit providers.

We are of the firm view that introduction of low prescribed assets to influence the redirect investment into the needy areas is of strategic importance. The latter should be done simultaneously with the public administering of the unclaimed pension fund monies and to avail this resource for public use whilst unclaimed.

We have observed how the people are suffering under some irregular and at times illegal garnishee orders that are affecting the workers. We call on workers and employers to scrutinize these garnishee orders and ensure compliance with the law and refuse to process illegal orders. We equally call on the courts of law to stop corruption of the court officials who collude with the banks to issue illegal garnishee orders.

In our country if a person buys a car worth the same price as that of the house, the car owner would pay over the period of five years, yet the home owner will pay for a period of over 20 years. It is in this context that we are calling for an end to the 20 year mortgage loans for houses which are attached by the banks.

The people of South Africa must demand the meaningful community re-investment programs, particularly around housing for the poor and the use of huge profits made by the finance institutions to fund the education and skills development in our country. We call on government to explore the special tax in this regard. There should be investment in the schools in the working class communities, for their academic excellence and recreational infrastructure. We are calling on the government to reintroduce the community re-investment bill. ■

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