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Voice of the South African Communist Party

Umsebenzi



Cde

Fidel Castro

1926-2016

**Hamba Kahle
Comrade Fidel**

FIDEL CASTRO

Unity of ANC and our Alliance – our most fitting tribute

Blade Nzimande recalls the extraordinary contribution of Comrade Fidel to revolutionary struggle against capitalism and imperialism not just in Cuba but globally



Friday 25 November 2016 will go down in history as the day the world lost one of its greatest leaders. The leader and former President of Cuba and First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, Comrade Fidel Castro Ruz, passed away on that day, at the age of 90.

Comrade Fidel, as he was fondly addressed in Cuba, belonged to the rarest breed of finest revolutionaries. He made an invaluable contribution in the struggle for the emancipation of humanity. The bourgeoisie hated him, precisely because he firmly fought for an end to their exploitative and oppressive capitalist and imperialist system.

This price is the fate of a true revolutionary – a true revolutionary cannot be liked by the exploiters of the working class, the oppressors of the people, counter-revolutionaries, reactionaries and charlatans. Cde Fidel was a communist par excellence. To the end he fought for the overthrow of foreign domination, capitalism and imperialism.

A communist to the end

The SACP dips its red flag to mourn this gallant revolutionary, undoubtedly one of the greatest revolutionaries society has ever produced. In particular, Cde Fidel supported many national liberation struggles, including the all-important struggle to realise and defend Cuba's national sovereignty and that of other nations. Cde Fidel understood that a progressive struggle to safeguard national sovereignty is a strong antidote to imperialist expansionist ambitions, and yet it is another important platform to forge



El Comandante: Fidel Castro during the Cuban armed struggle in 1958

principled internationalist solidarity.

Cde Fidel's passing must start a process of celebrating his life and role in the struggle to serve humanity. Indeed the Cuban Revolution has not been of the Cuban people alone, but has inspired millions in Latin America, Africa and the

The SACP dips its red flag to mourn Cde Fidel, one of the greatest revolutionaries society has ever produced

world over. It is for this reason that Cuba has for decades enjoyed worldwide solidarity against the illegal economic blockade imposed by the United States.

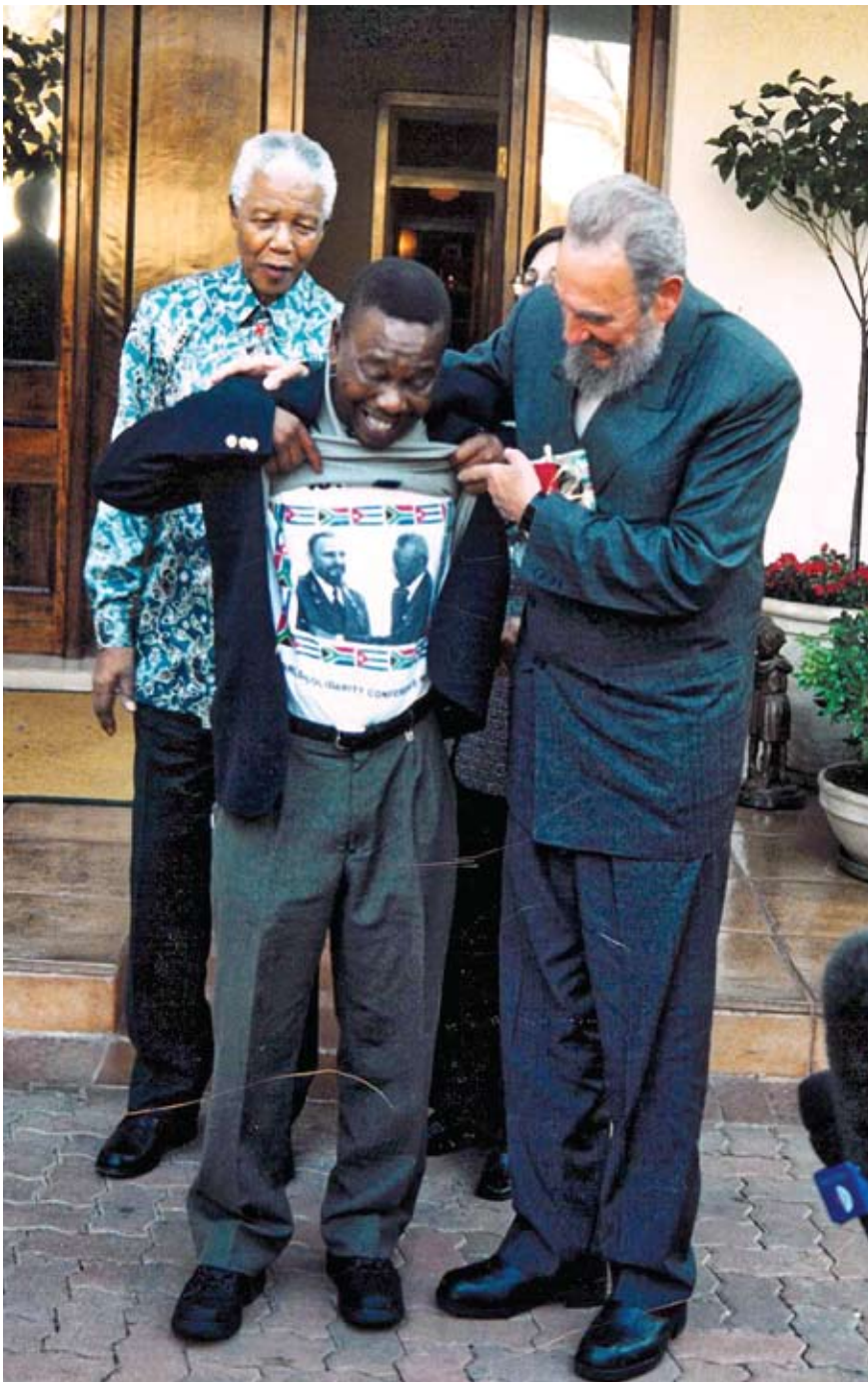
The SACP forged strong links with the Communist Party of Cuba during Cde Fidel's leadership. Many SACP cadres studied and trained in Cuba during the darkest days of apartheid repression. These fraternal relations were strengthened and continue to this day.

Even when Cuba was going through one of its most trying times, the difficulties brought about by the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, it never shirked its internationalist commitments. My first visit to Cuba was during this time. I vividly recall the electricity cuts and food rationing, among others, but through the leadership of Cde Fidel and the Party, the country managed to get out of that situation while continuing to send its doctors to many parts of the world.

A fighter for social and economic justice

Cde Fidel will be remembered for the success of the Cuban Revolution in lifting the quality of life of the people with meagre resources that have, for over half-a-century, been heartlessly squeezed under the imperialist onslaught and pressure directed mainly but not exclusively from the US.

And today Cuba outdoes the US in areas such as government spending on education as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product – Cuba is ranked 1st and the US 39th. In Cuba, healthcare is universal. In the US it is not. Life expectancy in Cuba is very high. These are some of the fruits of the relentless struggle that



SACP GS Blade Nzimande, Fidel Castro and Nelson Mandela outside Mandela's home in September 2001

was led by Cde Fidel to overthrow the dictatorship of the US-backed Fulgencio Batista.

Before then, the labour of the people of Cuba, their basic resources and wealth, were exploited by and to the benefit mainly of US imperialist capital. Only an elitist group and its patronage networks, both created as a buffer between the exploited majority and the exploiters, fed off the crumbs that fell from the tables of imperialist economic control. This was to become the base of

counter-revolutionary elements against the Cuban Revolution.

A principled anti-colonial, anti-imperialist

Cde Fidel will be remembered also for offering unconditional international solidarity support to the struggles of the peoples of the world. Hundreds of thousands of Cuban volunteers worked under his brilliant leadership and fought in 17 countries in African independence struggles.

Cuba's support in our continent did not end there. It continues to this day.

During the recent outbreak of the Ebola virus, Cuba, a small island, had the largest contingent of healthcare workers to combat the deadly contagion. None of the so-called developed countries could match Cuba's role.

Cde Fidel will best be remembered by all democratic and peace loving people for his deployment, from 1976 to 1988, of 60 000 Cuban troops in Angola to fight alongside the People's Armed Forces of Liberation of Angola (Fapla). It was this solidarity effort that stopped and, at the historic battle of Cuito Cuanavale, pushed back and defeated apartheid South Africa's Western-backed forces. The apartheid regime's defence force was thereafter forced also to withdraw from Namibia. These two historic events directly led to the independence of Namibia on 21 March 1990 and laid a strong foundation for the realisation of our own April 1994 democratic breakthrough.

Cuba's support to our National Democratic Revolution (NDR) did not end there. The Cuban Revolution continues to support our struggle for democratic transformation and development. As part of this support, South Africa is proudly a beneficiary of many Cuban doctors who are looking after the healthcare needs of our people, including in remote rural areas where there are either few or no South African doctors. Cuba is host to 3 000 South African student doctors, twice the number of doctors who graduate in South Africa every year.

Everywhere Cuba offered support – it never took away anything, not a particle of soil, not a cent, except the remains of their casualties where any occurred, such as in Angola during the defeat of the forces of apartheid South Africa. Compare this to the looting of our continental resources by the under-developers, colonisers and imperialists, the US and its European allies!

But imperialism, especially the US, spoke ill of Cde Fidel and labelled him a dictator. How could a dictator be so overwhelmingly loved and defended in his own country and revered by millions of the oppressed and the exploited across the world? The US is the actual dictator!

Fierce defender of Cuba's chosen socialist path

In spite of their extensive efforts in fabricating volumes of propaganda smearing Cde Fidel by misinformation, the successive US imperialist regimes actually recognised that he did not fight as a lone man in the struggle. He inspired work-



Guerrillas: Fidel Castro and other liberation fighters at camp in the Sierra Maestra Mountains

ers, peasants, students and other strata to fight against economic exploitation and imperialist domination, and to forge ahead with socialist construction and defence of the Cuban Revolution. The misinformation by the US and its allies did not succeed in turning the people and pit them against Cde Fidel and the Communist Party of Cuba. Only a minority either bought into that propaganda or were bought to propagate it.

Cde Fidel not only survived many assassination plots. Each time he emerged more resolute than ever as an immensely popular and revered leader in the worldwide anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, movement for liberation and universal human emancipation. He survived more than 638 assassination attempts directed mainly by US imperialism.

According to a 351-page report of the US's own Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities entitled "Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders", "United States Leaders, including most Members of Congress, called for vigorous action to stem the Communist infection in this hemisphere". According to the report, it was policy to "get rid of Castro". The US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director Richard Helms is quoted in the report saying the pressure "intensified during the period of Operation Mongoose and continued through much of 1963". Operation Mongoose was a covert operation of the CIA developed during the first year

of US President John Kennedy's administration. Helms is further quoted in the report as saying as the pressure "to get rid of Castro" increased, "obviously the extent of the means that one thought were available ... increased too".

The US intensified its propaganda of misinformation about Cde Fidel as the pressure to get rid of him intensified. Uncritical consumers of US propaganda, including in South Africa, simply regurgitated the fabrications. For those who do not see the bigger picture, the position adopted by the US was only against Fidel as an individual leader. The reality, on the contrary, is that this system of antagonism went beyond the person of Cde Fidel, Cuba and the Western Hemisphere – which the US regarded as its own backyard for exploitation and domination.

Target of imperialist terrorism

The sin committed by the Cuban people under the leadership of Fidel was to fight for national independence and control of their country's resources, labour and its proceeds.

The hostility by the US was wider: to

Castro survived more than 638 assassination attempts – most of them initiated or directed by US imperialism

this day it continues to apply to the rest of humanity, especially those of us who stand on the side of democratic national sovereignty and control of our own resources, labour and its proceeds. This is why the US labelled as "terrorists", our own leaders such as Cde Nelson Mandela and many others. The US maintained this classification well beyond our 1994 democratic breakthrough.

The Cuban Revolution, since its victory on 1 January 1959, has experienced relentless counter-revolutionary, including terrorist attacks. The US-backed Bay of Pigs invasion was defeated in April 1961. This was a CIA sponsored attempted military coup to overthrow Cde Fidel and defeat the Cuban Revolution.

One of the brutal terrorist attacks against Cuba was made on 6 October 1976 when Cubana de Aviación Flight 455 from Barbados to Jamaica was bombed, killing all 73 people on board the Douglas DC-8 aircraft

The US imperialist aggression against Cuba has been multifaceted. It involved economic warfare including for more than half-a-century the illegal economic blockade of Cuba and the occupation of the Guantanamo Bay – which the US has since been using as its centre of human rights atrocities.

The real cost of the illegal US economic blockade on Cuba has yet to be conclusively calculated – including all the economic and social consequences of the atrocious pushback against Cuban national development.

In memory of Fidel we will deepen our solidarity with Cuba! On behalf of the SACP I want to reiterate our Party's just call to the US to lift its illegal economic blockade of Cuba unconditionally. The SACP also calls for the US to evacuate and hand over Guantanamo Bay to the Cubans, as it is part of Cuba.

To Donald Trump, the next president of the US: the SACP says, Sir, there is still time, before your inauguration, to discard what we would call your Trumpishness – that is, your recklessly harsh and often racist utterances and uncaring attitude towards the circumstances of others especially against Cuba, Mexicans, women, Muslims, and Africans and Diaspora.

As the SACP, we will stand with Cuba in support of its just struggles and choices to pursue the humane – socialist – path of development. The SACP also takes this opportunity to salute the people of Cuba for their courage and resoluteness in defence of their motherland. We also salute the workers and poor of the world and

all progressive movements and parties for having stood firm in solidarity with the Cuban revolution. The best way to preserve the memory of Cde Fidel is to intensify this solidarity: always, until all forms of aggression against Cuba and its people are defeated.

In our country, we will honour the memory of Cde Fidel by intensifying our struggle for socialism under our strategic and programmatic slogan:

Socialism is the future, build it now!

This means intensifying the immediate struggle to drive a second, more radical phase of our democratic transition. It means intensifying the fight against monopoly capital, corporate capture and the parasitic bourgeoisie, and relentlessly fighting corruption wherever it occurs. It means building a broad popular front of working class and the people to strengthen our movement and realise the goals of our revolution.

One of Cde Fidel's early successes that had a lasting impact on the course of the Cuban revolution was the merger between the earlier Cuban communist party, the Partido Socialista Popular (PSP), with the July 26 Movement founded in 1953 by Cde Fidel. This merger led to the formation of the current Partido Comunista de Cuba (PCC) – the Communist Party of Cuba in 1965, with Cde Fidel as its founding First Secretary. It has been the unity of the Communist Party of Cuba that has guaranteed the success and advances of the Cuban Revolution.

Unity, the best tribute!

The unity of the Cuban Communist Party and the Cuban movement must be a lesson for us as the national liberation movement in South Africa as we bid farewell to Cde Fidel. It is only united movements that are able to make decisive revolutionary advances. Divided movements can only lead to serious setbacks and even defeat of the revolution. The ANC in particular and the Alliance as a whole need to take this lesson to heart, especially during this period when our revolution, as well as the unity of the movement, is seriously at stake.

Let us not only honour Cde Fidel through speeches and written articles, but let us honour him by acting to unite ourselves and set aside any factionalist interests that can only lead to the destruction of our movement.

Adios Cde Fidel. On a personal note I cannot resist ending this tribute by mentioning some of the instances where I had had the privilege to listen to and



Che Guevara and Fidel Castro entering Havana on Cuba's liberation day, 1 January 1959

meet with Cde Fidel personally.

In the 1990s I was part of an SACP delegation 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. Cde Fidel addressed the forum, which was held at the Havana Convention Centre. I remember very well in his off-the-cuff remarks Cde Fidel admonishing the Sandinista leader Cde Daniel Ortega who was in attendance that he was worried Cde 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 written speech, which was his trademark! But I only had an occasion to personally interact with Cde Fidel on his visits to South Africa. He came on a state visit in 1998 and I had

the pleasure to be among the MPs who listened to him on that occasion.

I was also among the comrades who accompanied him to tour Robben Island. I remember the shock on his face when he saw Cde 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 cell. When Madiba and Fidel met again in September 2001 in Madiba's house at Houghton in Johannesburg, I remember very well Cde 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, among 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 Cde Madiba to invite me to the meeting of September 2001. This was a private meeting between Madiba and Fidel at his Houghton home as Cde Fidel had attended an international gathering in South Africa. On inviting me over the phone, Cde Madiba joked that he was not feeling safe to meet a leading Cuban Communist on his own, so I had 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 Cde 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 Cde 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, as he had only spent two years in Batista's prison between 1953 and 1955!

A humble person indeed!

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

The unity of the Cuban Communist Party & the Cuban movement is a lesson for us as SA's national liberation movement

Cde Nzimande is the SACP General Secretary and Minister of Higher Education

FIDEL CASTRO

An heroic revolutionary, an exemplary humanist

Jeremy Cronin provides a compelling account of Comrade Fidel's leadership of the Cuban Revolution and socialist Cuba's internationalism, and unpacks lessons both provide our NDR



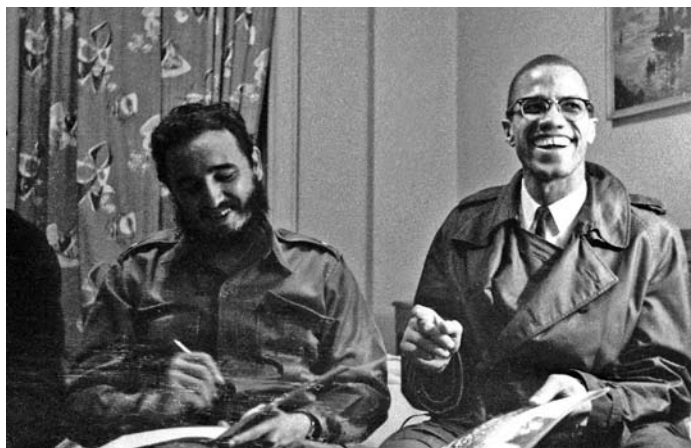
In 1945 a bloody first half of the 20th century drew to a close. With end of the 2nd World War, at a global scale, a relative stalemate was now established between the Western imperialist powers under the dominance of the United States and an emergent socialist bloc of countries. The first half of the 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-



Comrades: Fidel Castro and US activist Malcolm X meet in Harlem's Hotel Theresa in 1960

owned sugar and tobacco plantations.

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 galvanise 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 1 January 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



Fidel Caatro: a proud patriot but with a deep sense of internationalism

land holding was placed at 402ha. 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.

The reaction from Cuba's US neighbour, just 90km away, was quick 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 commit-

tees, 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 10 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

**The imperialists cannot
forgive us for making
a socialist revolution
under their noses**

– Fidel Castro, 1960

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 Africa. What is especially remarkable about these deployments is that the Cubans have never asked for one cent in compensation. They have never sought 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 know this, and honour 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 (then South West Africa) planned a joint pincer movement to capture Luanda and defeat the MPLA government. In 1975 Savimbi's Unita backed by apartheid South Africa, 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 lifeline. 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 programme 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 en-

tire 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 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, before 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.

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.

**Let us defend our national
sovereignty, inspired
by the outstanding example
of Cde Fidel and the
Cuban revolution**

The Cuban revolution would not have survived for one year if the same mistake had been made there.

Leadership is critical and Fidel (like Madiba and Chris Hani) exemplified this admirably. Fidel was always in the front-line 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.

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 airlifted 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 Cde 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 on 1 December 2016.

Cde Cronin is the SACP's First Deputy General Secretary and Deputy Minister of Public Works



Cuban mourners line the 900km route from Havana to Santiago de Cuba along which Castro's remains were carried for burial

FIDEL CASTRO

Final farewell to a fallen revolutionary

SACP General Secretary Blade Nzimande was one of just 100 mourners – direct family and invited international dignitaries – to attend the private interment of Fidel Castro's remains on 4 December

After attending the interment of Cde Fidel Castro's ashes, a clearly moved and emotional SACP General Secretary Cde Blade Nzimande, said: "Of course, he was 90 and not well. We all knew he was going to pass on. But somehow, being there, you felt it was not happening, that he was still alive! He seemed to be there, looming as large as ever, in the spirit of the Cuban people. And maybe that's true. People like him never really die!

"And for me to be there, at his tomb, among about 100 people allowed, was a great honour and a very humbling experience. It was inspirational. It shows how seriously the Cubans take the SACP and ANC that we were given this privileged

access."

Cde Nzimande and Minister of Defence and ANC NEC member Cde Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, represented the South African government.

Also attending the funeral, but not the interment at the tomb, was an SACP delegation comprising National Treasurer Cde Joyce Moloi-Moropa, and SACP Provincial Secretaries Cdes Norman Shushu, Jacob Mamabolo, Gilbert Kganyago and Limpopo 2nd Deputy Provincial Secretary, Cde Rudzani Ramagumo.

Cde Castro was interred in Santiago de Cuba, where the 26 July Movement he led launched the armed struggle in 1953. He was born in Biran not far from Santiago de Cuba.

"That Cde Castro was interred in Santiago de Cuba symbolises, I think, the importance of the armed struggle in waging national liberation struggles against oppressive regimes. Also, that he was buried near his birthplace symbolises his rootedness among ordinary people, which was a hallmark of his leadership."

More than 500 000 people attended the funeral rally in the main square of Santiago de Cuba. "When Cde Smiso (Nkwanyana, SACP KZN Provincial Secretary) died, the funeral was so big and well organised, I said at the time it felt as if he had organised it. I had a similar feeling here – that Cde Castro had organised the funeral.

"You also had this enormous sense

of loyalty of the people to Fidel and to the Cuban revolution. Many people were very emotional at the funeral. One of the great contributions Fidel and his comrades made was to build a strong sense of nationhood among the Cuban people, something so lacking in our country. And what Cuba shows is that strong internationalism and a strong sense of national sovereignty can go hand in hand.”

Cuban President Raul Castro was the main speaker at the funeral. Other speakers included representatives of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, veterans, youth, students, writers and artists, and farmers.

“As President Raul spoke, it struck me that we in this country don’t know enough about him. Yet he’s such a crucial figure in the Cuban Revolution. He was there with Fidel at the launch of the armed struggle. Interestingly, unlike Fidel then, Raul was in the youth wing of the Communist Party, and the Party had its problems with the 26 July Movement, believing that some of Fidel’s actions were reckless and led to backlashes against the Party from the Batista regime. After overthrowing the Batista regime, and changed conditions, the 26 July Movement merged with the Communist Party. Cde Raul played an influential role in winning Fidel and other comrades over to the merger.”

At the tomb, Cde Castro’s family, the Cuban Communist Party Politburo and about 50 foreign leaders were present. Among them were Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, Bolivian President, Evo Morales, former Brazilian presidents Dilma Rousseff and Lula da Silva, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, Ethiopian President Mulatu Teshome, and the vice presidents or other senior representatives of several countries, including Angola, Iran and Eritrea. It was said that Angolan President, Eduardo Jose dos Santos,



SACP delegation to Cde Fidel’s funeral: (Above) Ruzdani Ramagumo, Norman Shushu, Gilbert Kganyago, Joyce Moloi-Moropa and Jacob Mamabolo. (Below) Norman Shushu, Joyce Moloi-Moropa, Blade Nzimande and Gilbert Kganyago



Mourning Castro

Cde Castro was cremated on 26 November. The casket carrying his ashes then lay in state for Cubans to pay homage to Castro at the José Martí Memorial in Havana for two days, followed by a rally at the Plaza de la Revolución in which President Raúl Castro and heads of states that are allies of Cuba paid tribute.

From 29 November to 3 December the casket carrying his ashes travelled along a 900km route to Santiago de Cuba, tracing in reverse the route of the “Freedom Caravan” of January 1959 in which Castro and his rebels took power.

On 4 December, Castro’s ashes were interred in a private ceremony in Santa Ifigenia Cemetery in Santiago de Cuba.

was unable to attend because of a death in the family. There were also representatives from the Communist Parties in the developed world.

Several heads of state had attended the memorial for Castro earlier in the week. President Jacob Zuma spoke on behalf of the South African government at the memorial service.

Cde Nzimande said it was hard to accept that Castro’s ashes represented the towering world leader. Yet it was also very moving: “Fidel’s ashes, in a small glass box, with a simple ‘Fidel’ on it, were put into a huge rock on which was inscribed a quote from him on what revolution means.”

Cde Nzimande noticed that “on the bus returning to Havana, (Argentinian footballer) Diego Maradona wore shorts, and on his left leg he had a tattoo of Castro.”

Cde Moloi-Moropa said: “Unforgettable, unforgettable! That outpouring of love for Castro was like when Madiba died, but also different in the huge commitment to the Cuban revolution, even with all the problems. Although it was a funeral you felt like you were seeing socialism in action.”

Cde Shushu added: “What also makes Fidel great is his insistence that he didn’t



Above: Part of the 500 000-strong crowd of mourners packed into Santiago de Cuba's main square for Castro's funeral rally

want a statute erected of him or a road, clinic, building or anything named after him. He requested that the Cuban parliament passes a law preventing this from ever happening. This from a world-renowned revolutionary. How many other leaders, including Communists, would do this?"

Cde Kganyago: "The Cubans died in Angola for us, and they asked for nothing in return, no oil concessions or anything. They also gave so much to other liberation struggles. I was really glad to be there to pay my respects."

Cde Nzimande smilingly recalled: "It's said that (Soviet Communist Party leader) Brezhnev was once asked if Castro was really a Communist. He replied: 'What I know is that I'm a Fidelist!'"

"Ultimately", said Nzimande, "Fidel's death is a powerful reminder of the need to maintain popular support for national liberation and socialist struggles, and for us in this country to re-connect with the people. It's also a reminder of the relevance of socialism, not just in Cuba, but the world over, and the need for us in this country to intensify the struggle for socialism." ●



Hundreds of thousands more Cubans lined city streets and rural roads on the Havana-Santiago de Cuba route along which his remains were carried to bid him farewell







Revolution means to have a sense of history; it is changing everything that must be changed; it is full equality and freedom; it is being treated and treating others like human beings; it is achieving emancipation by ourselves and through our own efforts; it is challenging powerful dominant forces from within and without the social and national milieu; it is defending the values in which we believe at the cost of any sacrifice; it is modesty, selflessness, altruism, solidarity and heroism; it is fighting with courage, intelligence and realism; it is never lying or violating ethical principles; it is a profound conviction that there is no power in the world that can crush the power of truth and ideas. Revolution means unity; it is independence, it is fighting for our dreams of justice for Cuba and for the world, which is the foundation of our patriotism, our socialism and our internationalism.

- Comrade Fidel Castro's words inscribed on his tomb in Santiago de Cuba

SACP & STATE POWER

We must ensure ANC persists as a revolutionary force

OJ Fourie argues that the ANC needs a strong and unified Alliance behind it to see it through its current problems



The Central Committee of the Party released a Discussion Document in the 3rd Quarter edition of *The African Communist* titled “Now more than ever the SACP has a leadership duty in the NDR.” This Discussion Document focusses on the “SACP and State Power” and it is part of the build up to the SACP’s 14th National Congress that will be held in July 2017.

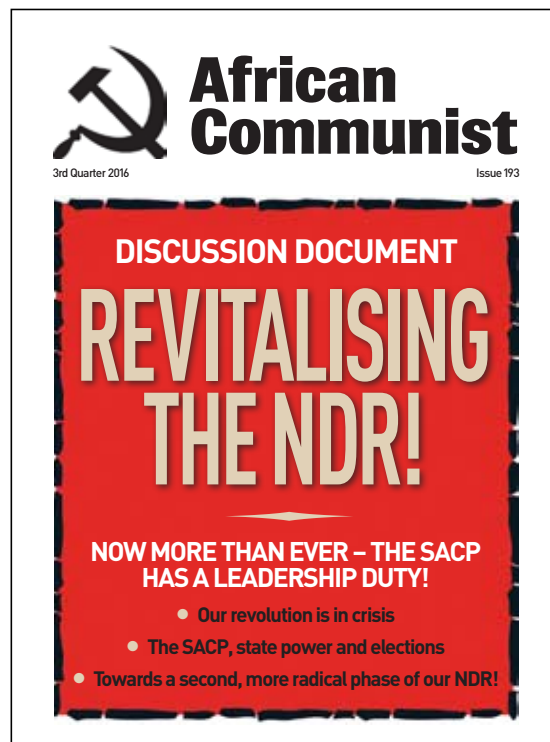
It is important for any Communist Party anywhere in the world to make organisational decisions that are in the interests of the working class. Therefore, any decision that the SACP makes must further advance the political programme of the Party, which is The South African Road to Socialism.

As members of the SACP, we must continue to ensure that the road to socialism continues to be paved. Socialism is what we believe will ultimately create a better life for all - a more equal, just and humane society. In the South African context the machinery that is used to pave the road to socialism is the Alliance.

The decision on whether or not the Party should contest state power should be taken based on whether or not it will assist in advancing socialism. If not, then the Party should not contest state power.

Whatever the outcome at next year’s National Congress, the Party must emerge stronger and more resolute than ever before.

The recent inability of the ANC (as



the leader of the Alliance and as the ruling party) to unite itself, to rid itself of endemic corrupt practices, to deal with being plagued by money-driven factionalism, to prevent assassinations of and by ANC members, and to deal with personality cults have been causing the continued downward trajectory of the ANC. This is also reflected in the downward electoral support for the ANC in this year’s local government elections, the lowest since the first democratic elections in 1994.

Below are some questions to consider in our discussions on state power:

If the Party decides to contest state power at the ballot box, will we be immune to the challenges that the ANC

is currently facing or will it just be a matter of time before the Party struggles with the same challenges? An honest self-reflection is therefore needed during these discussions.

What will Party members who are deployed by the ANC do if they need to choose to vote between the ANC and SACP? Will all SACP members who are currently being deployed by the ANC, whether in parliament, national, provincial, or local government be recalled from their deployed positions? One could argue that no deployments will be recalled because the ANC and the Party could form a coalition after elections. But what is the use of contesting state power if the status quo remains irrespective of the outcome? If the Party were not to perform well at elections, would the ANC likely be forced by its own members to deploy fewer Party members within a coalition than is currently the case? This would obviously weaken

the Party’s influence in government and would impact badly on the working class.

These questions are bound to influence discussions on whether the Party should contest state power on its own or through the Alliance.

If the Party were to contest state power, many members of the Alliance would probably feel as if the SACP and the ANC are getting a political divorce. Most members of the Alliance, Party members in particular, have dual membership of the Party and the ANC.

If the Party decides to contest state power officially at next year’s National Congress, would it mean that Party members forfeit their ANC membership



The ANC and SACP belong together: those with dual membership regard the ANC as our ANC

and are guaranteed to vote for the Party? Or would some Party members decide not to forfeit their ANC membership and therefore vote for the ANC?

One thing that is almost certain is that the Party will end up with less members and the ANC will end up with less voters if the SACP decides to contest state power. A further drop in electoral support for the ANC will surely push the ANC below the 50% majority mark and therefore possibly, depending on coalitions, it will be removed from power come 2019.

When we reflect on the long and rich history between the SACP and the ANC,

we should note that as Party members we consider the ANC to be our ANC. For those who have dual membership of the SACP and ANC, the Alliance has been ingrained in our DNA and the two cannot be separated. The ANC has gone through many difficult periods in the past and the Party has ensured that the ANC survived, without the Party leaving the Alliance in those difficult times. Therefore, if the ANC is today finding itself again in a difficult period, it is the revolutionary duty of the Party to ensure that the ANC survives yet again. Let us not destroy what we have helped build.

In light of this difficult period for the ANC, it will require more from the Party to foreground the plight of the working class. The inability of the ANC to resolve its challenges cannot be used as an excuse not to press our agenda for socialism, nor can it be used as an excuse not to defend the ANC.

There would have been no history of the ANC without the SACP, and there would have been no history of the SACP without the ANC. I believe that there can also be no future for the ANC without the SACP, and there can be no future for the SACP without the ANC.

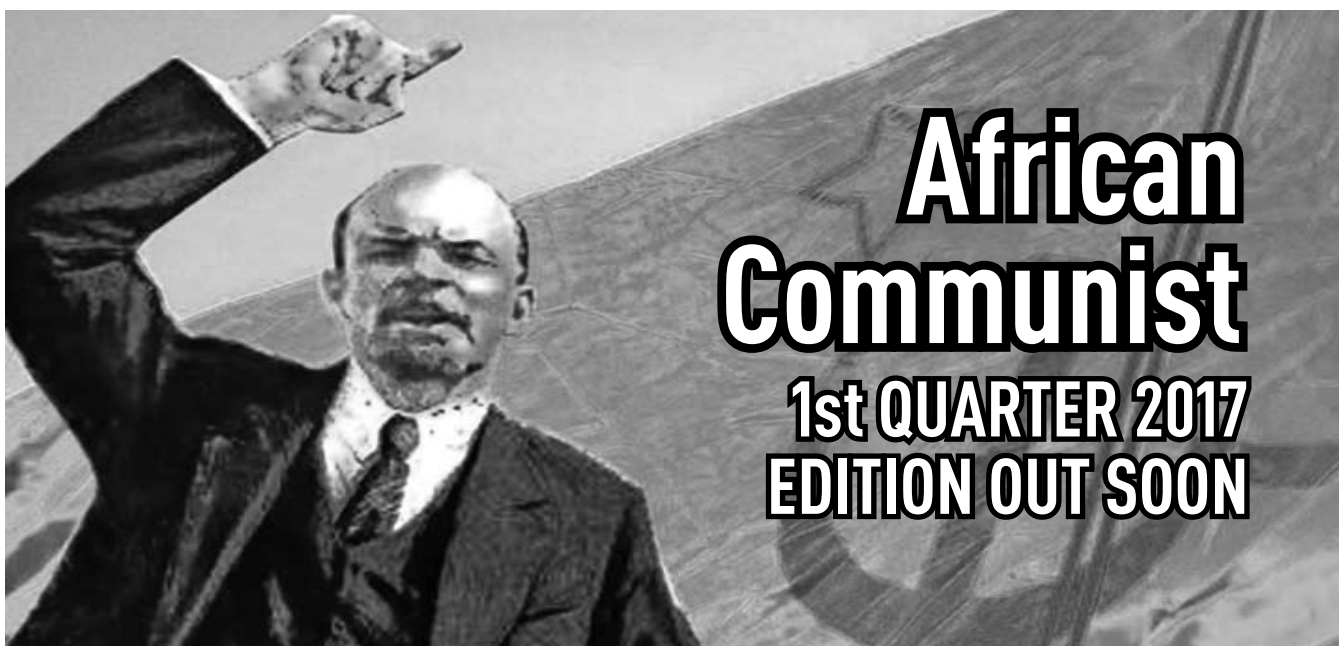
Together, the Alliance provides optimum conditions to implement the National Democratic Revolution (NDR).

Let this current generation of the Alliance not be judged by history to have failed the Alliance.

If I could have spoken on behalf of opposition parties, I would have announced that we wish for a split within the Alliance which will be a giant leap forward to bringing an end to the ANC as the ruling party, because the Alliance has been a continuous irritation to them and an impenetrable force to safeguard the NDR.

The debates and discussions with regards to the Party and State Power will surely gain momentum leading up to next year's National Congress, but it should not be rushed, and it will be very important for all Party members to engage in the debates in a highly disciplined manner.

Cde Fourie is Deputy Secretary of the SACP Kimberley district



SACP & STATE POWER

SACP must stand for elections, Comrades!

Adrian Williams looks at the implications of the SACP contesting elections in the crucial context of the state of the NDR

This being my “maiden” article in any SACP publication, I would like to start by saying I was afraid to submit my thoughts to this publication, not because of the content, but because, in a successful socialist revolution, you need both the soldier and the intellectual and I’m more of a soldier



This is one of the more important questions for the SACP. This is not a question about who gets to be in government or which CC members get to become MPs, Ministers and MECs. Rather, it is a question about the SACP’s relationship with the National Democratic Revolution (NDR). If the SACP contests state power independently through the ballot box, then essentially we are questioning the ANC’s capacity to lead the NDR in the present situation. We would be asserting that unless an anti-capitalist, socialist-oriented programmatic perspective is inserted into our present struggles, the NDR will be doomed to defeat.

Now that all sounds wonderful, but let’s not forget the implications of this radical step. Although inevitable in my view, it is a radical measure and must always be seen as one. There is a perception out there that the SACP would only get around 3% at the poll. The socialist revolution is a revolution of the minds of the people and will take decades. People need to change from an attitude of ‘mine’ to one of ‘ours’. Not contesting state power out of a fear of losing is not a legitimate argument. A legitimate argument for not contesting the elections independently at the current time would be: what if the SACP won with 67%? This would be a two-



As soon as we are ready, we must raise the Red Flag as an election banner

thirds majority and would allow for constitutional amendments. Does the SACP have the capacity at all levels in all spheres of government to transform this government into a democratic socialist institution?

Think about your locals comrades, in the municipalities where we live. Are there enough capable communist comrades to control a municipality, district, province and national government? We are not only talking about elected representatives, but also about directors general, municipal managers, and middle management across government.

Contesting state power through the electoral system shouldn’t be taken

The SACP calls for a total ban on labour brokers, but its members are deployed to Parliament, which declined to ban them

lightly or reactively. When we engage in the socialist revolution, an integral part of which is advancing, consolidating and defending the NDR, we will engage in that revolution to liberate society. If we, and indeed the broader popular forces are not ready, we will fail.

So why then should we risk the revolution on what can be described as a gut reaction to the current material conditions?

We could argue that the ANC was not ready to govern in 1990, and it wasn’t. But it was ready at the beginning of 1994. There are many reasons for and against us contesting the elections independently. The logistics are important: do we have the numbers of capable communists, for instance? How developed is the NDR? More importantly, has the NDR, as led by the ANC in its current shape, stalled or even failed?

We should seriously consider that this may be where we now are. Of course, what has been achieved over the past two decades is not a complete failure. Yes we have a democracy and a consti-

tutional one at that. We can say that this democracy is working and this can be praised as one of our Alliance's greatest achievements.

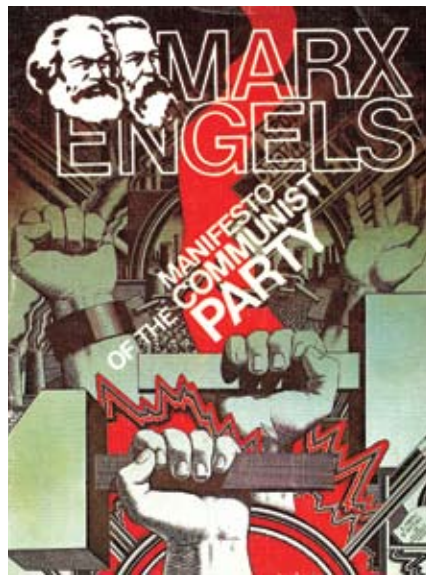
But when it comes to the National Question, especially the extreme inequality between races, there has been very little progress since 1994. The main reason for this is that class is basically divided by race in South Africa. White people are the vast majority of haves, and black people are the vast majority of have-nots. There has been minimal transformation of the private sector. The National Question is a class question and the only way to change class relations is through a class struggle. I understand that the view that the National Question is a class question has been debated within our movement for decades, but look around: even after more than 20 years of democracy ownership patterns have not fundamentally changed.

It is time that we take a serious and frank look at ourselves as the SACP. Are we able to contribute significantly to the implementation of a radical advance of the NDR? If so, how is that happening? Or have we devolved into a symbiotic organisation within the Alliance, conveniently forgetting our anti-capitalist socialism because those of us (like me) who are in Parliament are deployees of the ANC. Where in the socialist programme is the SACP? What is the SACP mandate of those of us deployed in government? Is my only SACP mandate to implement section 6.5 of the SACP constitution? This states:

"Members active in fraternal organisations or in any sector of the mass movement have a duty to set an example of loyalty, hard work and zeal in the performance of their duties and shall be bound by the discipline and decisions of such organisations and the movement. They shall not create or participate in SACP caucuses within such organisations and the movement designed to influence either elections or policies. The advocacy of SACP policy on any question relating to the internal affairs of any such organisations or the movement shall be by open public statements or at joint meetings between representatives of the SACP and such organisations or the movement." (See more at: <http://www.sacp.org.za>)

The SACP is calling for a total ban on labour brokers, at the same time I and many others are deployed to Parliament where labour brokers were not banned.

Comrades, the solution must be a collective one and it must evolve through



our collective engagement.

An SACP constitutional amendment for the 14th SACP Congress could read:

"No member of the CC may serve in any government or legislature elected position outside the SACP."

This would include being a member of the legislature and the Executive in all three spheres of government.

There is another compelling reason for the SACP to contest elections independently – although many Communists serve in legislatures, how much influence do we exert on the state?

One would imagine that an organisation like the SACP that has been in a strategic alliance with the ruling party, an alliance that is rooted in the struggle for our people's liberation, where both the ANC and the SACP had members imprisoned, exiled and murdered, had great influence within the state. Sadly this is not the case. An example of how

little influence we have would be the plight of the current General Secretary of the Communist Party of Swaziland. Our Comrade is currently living in a refugee camp in Lesotho because we failed to secure him asylum in South Africa. South Africa currently has more people living here because they got asylum than is the case in many other countries and yet the SACP has no influence on the granting of asylum to one individual.

"The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors", and has left no other nexus between people than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash payment'. It has drowned out the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom - Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation."

The above quote comes from *The Communist Manifesto*. It's intellectual, but basically it describes South Africa today.

My argument is that the SACP must contest elections as the SACP through the ballot as soon as we are ready to do so.

My question to you is, are we ready? ●

Cde Williams is an SACP Central Committee Member and ANC MP

Umsebenzi

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YCLSA

Deepen youth mobilisation towards socialism!

The YCL's mid-term National Council has again pushed the SACP to contest state power in its own name, writes Hlengiwe Nkonyane



The Young Communist League of South Africa (YCLSA) held its third National Council (NC) at the University of Johannesburg, Soweto Campus, from 8 to 11 December, under the theme Deepening youth mobilisation towards socialism! The NC was attended by about 1 000 delegates and by representatives of fraternal domestic and international youth formations.

Messages of support were received from the Progressive Youth Alliance, South African Students Congress, Cosatu Young Workers, BDS-SA, Botswana National Front Youth League, Swaziland Youth Congress and the Youth of the Communist Party of Portugal.

National Chairperson Cde Yershen Pillay officially opened the NC, who urged delegates to discuss the role of the South African Communist Party (SACP) in the current political climate. He urged them to provide direction on how best the YCL can strengthen the Party's structures to enable it to play a leading vanguard role.

Cde Pillay said the YCL is convinced that the Party must contest state power, asking: "Which Communist Party in the world does not contest state power? The answer is none. Why should the SACP be any different, given the current unstable state of the ANC?" He emphasised that the YCL should use the platform of the 14th SACP National Congress, in July 2017, to define the character of the mother body.

Cde Pillay said the Council should discuss the role of the YCL in ensuring that Cosatu affiliates establish youth structures that are politically, ideologically, organisationally and financially capacitated to carry out their revolutionary tasks on the factory floor.

In his political report, National Sec-



Catching the moment: A YCL office-bearer snaps the opening of the league's National Council

retary Cde Mluleki Dlelanga reflected on racial tensions facing our country, particularly the youth. He noted that more people are calling for the SACP to independently contest elections. The Party must not be afraid of becoming unpopular for the sake of being politically correct, he said.

On the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), he said there is no better candidate to lead the agency than current executive chair, YCL National Chairper-

son Cde Pillay. Under Cde Pillay's leadership the agency received a clean audit for the first time ever. Cde Dlelanga said that the YCLSA will withdraw Cde Yershen from the Board if he is not appointed as its chairperson. Cde Dlelanga said that the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) is the most direct route to socialism. This emerged from a Marxist-Leninist analysis of national liberation struggles of the 20th century. He pointed out that the NDR is facing threats, such as:

- Some people who do not love the African National Congress but rather love the privileges available to those in the leadership structures;
- Leadership positions being equated with instant wealth;
- People who are inducted along factional lines rather than on the basis of organisational principles;

'Which Communist Party in the world does not contest state power? None. Why should the SACP be any different?'



National Secretary Muleki Dlelanga delivers the political report to the YCL National Council

- Corruption of organisational processes;

- Revolution led by so called 'celebrities' instead of revolutionaries; and

- Isolation of the Left axis from the broader democratic movement.

Cde Dlelanga made it clear that YCLSA respects the position of the SACP to not pronounce on the succession issue of the ANC.

The Council was addressed by the Cosatu President Cde Sdumo Dlamini, who stressed that the working class should not find itself being used as hunting dogs which catch the animal but never get to enjoy it.

He reminded the Young Reds that during Cosatu's toughest times, it was only the SACP that stood with the federation, emphasising the SACP is the only real party for workers. He highlighted that during the times of Germany's Adolf Hitler there was a worker's party that turned against the communists, and that comrades must not be fooled by organisations strong on working class rhetoric, but with working class character and priorities. Cosatu is not a worker's party, he said – metal workers' union Numsa and former general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi had been expelled because they tried to turn Cosatu into a political party.

SACP General Secretary Cde Blade Nzimande said if people feel that he no longer deserves to be the Minister of Higher Education and Training, they should go through the structures to remove him. But they should know that he is not afraid to lose his Cabinet post.

Cde Nzimande stated that Cde Pillay did an outstanding job as Chairperson of the NYDA but warned that he should not sell his soul to be retained as the post was not an entitlement.

Cde Nzimande said that the student movement has no ideological direction. Opportunistic and factionalist demands therefore find their way into the student movement. The ANC cannot afford to face another breakaway and the Party should focus on uniting the Alliance and itself, he said, noting that the leadership transition is problematic within the ANC. He said that a leader of the ANC should not be part

of a faction and if so such a leader cannot continue to lead.

The General Secretary insisted that the YCL should focus on state power as a whole, not just the issue of contesting of elections. He reminded the Young Reds that workers are getting younger and that the league cannot use outdated methods of mobilising.

He advised delegates that every communist should read the 1934 Cradock Letter by Cde Moses Kotane, and that it is the obligation of every communist to read about history. He echoed the YCLSA slogan of 'Socialism in our Lifetime!' saying that it is relevant and very important.

Cde Nzimande spoke on the 20th anniversary of our Constitution, saying it was worrying that our Constitution is seemingly championed by liberals. He said that young communists must take the lead in this regard.

The Council observed a moment of silence, recognising the crucial role played by fallen communist heroes, including former President of Cuba, Comandante Fidel Castro Ruz and Cde Riot 'Makomanisi' Mkwanazi, an uMkhonto weSizwe combatant and veteran of Robben Island. ●

The student movement has no ideological direction. Their demands are increasingly factionalist and opportunistic

Cde Nkonyane, a member of the YCLSA, is in the SACP Media Unit

AUGMENTED CC

How has our liberation struggle become so cheap?

If our liberation struggle was so expensive, how has it become so cheap? Is the National Democratic Revolution in an interregnum? What is to be done? – Statement of the Augmented Central Committee

Randburg, Johannesburg, 16 December 2016

The annual Augmented Central Committee (ACC) of the SACP met on 14 and 15 December in Johannesburg. In addition to elected CC members and provincial SACP secretaries and chairpersons, the ACC includes delegates from the SACP's districts and an expanded Young Communist League of South Africa representation. Held towards the end of each year, this strategic planning session provides the SACP with the opportunity to review the past year and to prepare for the coming year, which, in this case, will be an eventful year with the SACP's five-yearly elective national congress from 10 to 15 July, as well as a critical ANC National Conference scheduled for the end of 2017.

Next year also marks the centenary of the Great October Socialist Revolution that occurred in Russia in 1917. The SACP intends to use the occasion to reflect on lessons learned from the 20th century and, in the midst of an all-round capitalist crisis in the present, the imperative and challenges of building socialism in the 21st century.

The ACC devoted most of its time to discussing an extensive political report tabled by the SACP Secretariat.

The report noted that the national democratic transformation process opened up in 1994 is now on dangerous terrain.

For many decades, a broad national democratic consensus has underpinned the multi-class and ideologically diverse character of the ANC, and of the Alliance it has headed. Quite naturally, this national democratic consensus has not been entirely free of tensions, different but legitimate tendencies, and contrasting ideological currents. This consensus has now eroded dramatically over the recent past with the

emergence of a reckless, conservative populism within the movement.

At the root of this erosion, the ACC agreed, is factionalism linked to corruption and the looting of public resources driven, in particular but not only, by a network of the corporately captured, most notably by those in orbit around the Gupta family.

Corporate capture of key parts of the state and of key personalities has resulted over the past two years in extremely worrying developments, including indications of a shadowy parallel state that operates outside of Cabinet discipline and beyond answerability to Parliament or even the formal structures of the ANC, let alone to the broad South African public.

Elements, some of whom were associated with the apartheid-era security apparatus, are now unleashed on longstanding comrades.

Over the last days, in InChanga, political assassinations continue, directed against a community that has openly expressed its support for the SACP and concern at the deterioration of ANC leadership in its region.

The ACC, however, also noted that 2016 has seen a significant backlash against corporate capture and corruption from a very wide array of forces, including from many historically associated with the liberation struggle – the progressive faith-based sector, ANC stalwarts and authentic

(not counterfeit camouflaged) veteran MK combatants, the trade union movement and others who had left for business or academia.

In particular, the meeting welcomed the fact that key issues that the SACP (almost alone, certainly from within the ANC Alliance) has been raising consistently, are now receiving much greater focus and exposure, including from within Parliament, led by the ANC's parliamentary caucus. These issues include the parasitic destruction of the SABC and the connivance of MultiChoice in this decay; and the corporate capture of key state owned corporations (SOCs).

As the pressure mounts on wrongdoers, their recklessness increases. We are also seeing a co-ordinated, populist ideological fight-back being mounted from these quarters. They label those, including the SACP, who expose their parasitism as tools of "white monopoly capital" or of "foreign imperialism".

When we attack Guptersation their counter-argument is "what about the Ruperts and Oppenheims?" – as if the Guptersation of Sars, Eskom, Denel or Transnet strengthens the capacity of the state to deal with established monopoly capital. Or as if the SACP has ever been on friendly terms with the Ruperts or Oppenheims.

They claim to be "anti-imperialist" – as if landing a foreign wedding party at a high security air-force base, or illegal money laundering and expatriation of surplus to Dubai and other tax havens strikes a blow for national sovereignty. They say they are the victims of an imperialist "regime-change agenda" directed from London, but their propaganda offensive, involving fly-by-night NGOs and pseudo-analysts, is run by the notorious, right wing, UK-based,

The SACP 14th National Congress will decide on contesting elections as part of our Strategy on State Power



Preparing for the CC: Officials Alex Mashilo and Malesela Maleka (with their backs to camera) and officials Solly Mapaila, Jeremy Cronin, Blade Nzimande and Thulasi Nxesi shortly before the official opening

Bell Pottinger image consultancy.

It is important to build the broadest national democratic consensus against these counterfeit anti-imperialism and morbid tendencies. The SACP has engaged with some of the progressive formations in regard to this. However, it is equally important that we do not just confine our critique of parasitism to a moral critique, or to imagining that South Africa's solutions lie in a retreat back to before 2009, or 2007.

Since the first Zuma administration, 2009-2014, an SACP-influenced left in government had ensured a wide range of transformative programmes had been implemented, in particular the shifting of government economic policies away from a neoliberal posture on a wide range of areas – state owned entities trade policy, labour policy, competition policy, industrialisation, infrastructure development, the spatial economy to overcome our apartheid geography, the massive expansion of post-school education and training (bringing its own new challenges), and work on advancing a solidarity economy and the right to work through public employment programs.

All of these and other progressive initiatives were advanced in the face of the

global capitalist crisis and the collapse of the commodity super-cycle. They were also partially checked and compromised by counter-tendencies from within government. Despite all this, two million new jobs were created since the adoption of the left-leaning New Growth Path in 2010. These SACP-influenced government initiatives along with others such as those in the health, basic education, and land and agrarian sectors, point the way forward if, as a country, we are to exit from our triple crisis of racialised poverty, inequality and unemployment.

It was in this context that the ACC rejected the line advanced by hostile opponents of the Party that senior SACP personalities have been sitting comfortably but ineffectually in senior government positions. The meeting further noted that even in sectors in which leading SACP members

in the executive and Parliament had been blocked, dismissed or forced to retire, their principled activism in portfolios like communications and energy had served to expose wrong-doing and prevent the worst parasitism from having a free run. They laid the basis for the current parliamentary and other processes looking at the facts behind the stalling of digital migration or the attempt to foist a reckless nuclear build programme on our country.

Need for unity in the ANC: The ACC was also addressed by Cde Gwede Mantashe in his capacity as Secretary General of the ANC.

The ACC engaged with the SG's presentation, and arising out of the Secretariat Political Report expressed concern about deepening divisions and factionalism in the ANC, affecting the Alliance and the capacity of the ANC to lead society.

The SACP believes that if the ANC does not unite and become rooted in the masses again, it will not be able to lead the National Democratic Revolution. The SACP will continue for now to contribute to the ANC playing this role but will also simultaneously independently contribute to building a working class-led popular movement to advance the national democratic revolution (NDR).

**The parliamentary inquiry
into the SABC should
consider recommending the
scrapping of the MultiChoice-
SABC Agreement**

The ACC expressed its concern that for a 105-year-old liberation movement it is unacceptable that the ANC does not have a clear policy on leadership succession, and urges that it develops such a policy and implements it as soon as possible.

Rather than simply focusing on names of those who should be elected as ANC President, other office bearers and National Executive Committee members, there has to be a consideration of the criteria for effective leadership. A key consideration would be the capacity of a leader and leadership collective to avoid being factionalist and unite the ANC, the Alliance and the historical support-base of our liberation struggle.

SACP and state power: The ACC took further the discussion on the SACP and state power, including the possibility of contesting elections on our own, as part of the ongoing discussions leading to the SACP's July 2017 14th Congress at which decisions will be taken.

The meeting reaffirmed that the SACP seeks to establish democratic working class power over the state and will engage in new ways of achieving this raised in the Discussion Documents being finalised for our 14th National Congress in July 2017. It is at this congress, after discussion at branch level, that decisions will be taken on the SACP contesting elections as part of our Strategy on State Power, which is inextricably linked to and must be buttressed by democratic popular power. Among the issues that would need to be clarified at the 14th National Congress are:

How will the SACP taking part in elections on its own advance the national democratic and socialist struggles?

If the SACP takes part in elections on our own, would it still be part of the Alliance?

If so, how would the Alliance be re-configured?

If the SACP is not part of the ANC-led Alliance, who would it ally with?

How would contesting elections relate to the broader popular front the SACP seeks to create?

The SACP will engage with its Alliance partners, as well as a range of other progressive formations, on these and other relevant issues in the lead up to its 14th Congress and beyond it.

SACP will work towards trade union & worker unity: The SACP is committed to assisting our ally, Cosatu, in every way possible to re-build and become a formidable force again in these unique and especially challenging times. The SACP believes

that Cosatu has made significant progress in the recent period under difficult circumstances. But there is still much to do.

The SACP and Cosatu share a commitment to building a radical and militant working class movement. For the SACP, this will require, in the first instance, the deepening and protection of our relationship with Cosatu. The SACP needs to pay close attention to helping to rebuild Cosatu's industrial unions and expanding into unorganised areas.

The SACP has renewed its commitment to extend its work and engagements beyond Cosatu and seek to reach out to all organised workers. This will also help to contribute towards the "one country, one federation" aspiration. The Party believes that there is much more that unites than divides workers across the different unions and federations. However building a single union federation is not a boardroom exercise. It requires the mobilisation of workers around common concrete demands.

There are common aspirations of workers across federations and unions – fighting against labour brokers and casualisation, the transformation of the financial sector to invest in job creating activities, the industrialisation of our country and growing the productive sectors of our economy, including building worker co-operatives. It is specific demands and campaigns around these issues through which the SACP will seek to encourage broader worker campaigning and co-operation as part of building a militant working class movement.

Another important matter around which to mobilise organised workers is that of fighting the parasitic bourgeoisie and rolling back its capture of the state and state owned entities. This is a campaign that has not been taken up by any of the unions either inside or outside Cosatu. But it poses one of the most serious threats to transformation and defending workers' gains. Those interested in the corporate capture of the state are targeting the capture of the very unions organising the sectors of the state they are interested in.

The SACP will revitalise, resource and strengthen the SACP's Trade Union Com-

In 2017 we will convene an imbizo to bring together a range of the mass democratic forces to consider the challenges facing SA

mission. This Commission will develop a nationally co-ordinated programme to strengthen our bilateral relations with Cosatu and all its affiliates, and to reach out to all organised workers and their unions, especially those likely to accept a minimum programme of action to defend workers.

We welcome the decision of the social partners to agree on the principle of a national minimum wage. We feel that negotiations should continue on the amount. The minimum wage also needs to be linked to an effective comprehensive social security system.

Increasing securitisation of the state: The SACP once again draws attention to the intense factionalisation, narrow politicisation and increasing corruption of the state's security agencies, the most recent example of which is the bogus charges against Cde Robert McBride and his colleagues. In the lead-up to the ANC's 2017 National General Council this is likely to increase. It is clear that the state's security agencies have themselves become a threat to national security.

We condemn the security agencies for taking sides in the internal divisions within the ANC, Alliance and government, and the increasing securitisation of the state. We are determined to combat this.

We welcome the Parliamentary SABC inquiry: We congratulate the ANC on initiating this Parliamentary Inquiry, which we believe will contribute to re-building the confidence of the people in the ANC and Parliament.

As the SACP has long been saying, the SABC is utterly dysfunctional and corrupt, as is being glaringly revealed by the long-overdue Parliamentary Ad Hoc Committee inquiry into the SABC. We want to see decisive action taken against those responsible for this, including criminal prosecution.

MultiChoice and Naspers have played a major role in the crisis in the SABC and we believe that the parliamentary inquiry needs to call Koos Bekker and Imtiaz Patel to answer for their part in this. As we have repeatedly said, we believe that they have unduly influenced the Department of Communications' approach to the Set Top Box policy in order to retain MultiChoice's 98% monopoly of the pay-TV sector. This is against ANC policies that would have transformed the sector and benefited new emerging entrepreneurs. We also believe that the parliamentary inquiry should consider recommending the scrapping of the illegitimate MultiChoice-SABC Agreement.

Now for parliamentary inquiries into



Deputy SACP Chairperson Thulas Nxesi officially opens the Augmented CC, National Treasurer Joyce Moloi-Moropa to left

state-owned entities: In view of the dysfunctionality, mismanagement and widespread corruption allegations of key State Owned Corporations, we urge that Parliament carry out inquiries into Eskom, Transnet, Denel, PetroSA, and the SAA.

Official inquest into the assassination of the Cde Chris Hani: The ACC endorsed a proposal to campaign for the re-opening of an official inquest into Cde Chris Hani's assassination. The SACP will consult with the Hani family and explore a legal route to follow in this regard. We will also campaign through political action. Our 2017 commemoration of Cde Hani's assassination will be dedicated to demanding the inquest.

The SACP will also continue to oppose parole for Janusz Waluś, one of Cde Hani's murderers. We believe that he and his late convicted co-conspirator Clive Derby-Lewis did not make a full disclosure of the circumstances surrounding the assassination. The SACP noted the recent contradictions between Waluś' position and the so-called Derby-Lewis disclosure released posthumously. Derby-Lewis died an unrehabilitated convicted murderer who believed apartheid was the right policy for South Africa and that Cde Hani had to be killed.

SACP to develop policy on nuclear energy as part of the energy mix: This area is crucial in the transformation of our economy. The SACP will further consider the energy mix for our country and the role and place of each of the components,

including nuclear energy. The SACP will finalise policy on this matter of crucial importance at our 14th Congress.

The SACP is very concerned about the perceptions of corruption and secrecy surrounding the government's proposed nuclear project, and calls on government to be as transparent as possible, and for Parliament to play its full role to ensure this.

Campaign on water: South Africa is a water-scarce country, and this resource is vital for our livelihoods as well as a critical input into the economy. The sector is faced with huge challenges, including the threat of mining acid to our water resources.

Water has very big projects in the pipeline; primarily the building of dams and these are a target of tenderpreneurs. We need organisation and mobilisation to ensure that these funds are not wasted or siphoned off. The SACP also needs to contribute to campaigning around how to save water.

Fidel Castro: A revolutionary legend: The SACP once again acknowledges the huge contribution Cde Fidel Castro made to the national liberation and socialist

The SACP will campaign in 2017 for the re-opening of an official inquest into Cde Chris Hani's assassination

struggles, not just in Cuba, but globally. He had a huge impact on our own struggle and many other struggles on our continent. The SACP sent a delegation to his funeral and they were moved by the outpouring of love for him by Cubans and the deep commitment of the Cuban people to their revolution. The SACP conveys its heartfelt condolences to the Cuban people, revolutionaries everywhere and to Cde Catsro's family. Hamba Kahle, Cde Fidel!

SACP to convene imbizo to encourage national unity: The SACP is aware of the many economic, political, social and other challenges that confront our country and how concerned people are about this. This is reflected in the current terrain in which all manner of regressive social phenomena have sprouted – violence against women and children; xenophobia; the spread of “happy-clappy” evangelism – including all manner of quackery and fake “prophets-of-doom”; the resurgence of “identity” politics including, in rural areas, a resurgence of ethnicity, and even renewed life being breathed into narrow Africanist and black consciousness discourses and so on.

More than ever, the ANC-led Alliance is required to give leadership and unite the country to address these challenges. The SACP urges the ANC to play its full role in this regard.

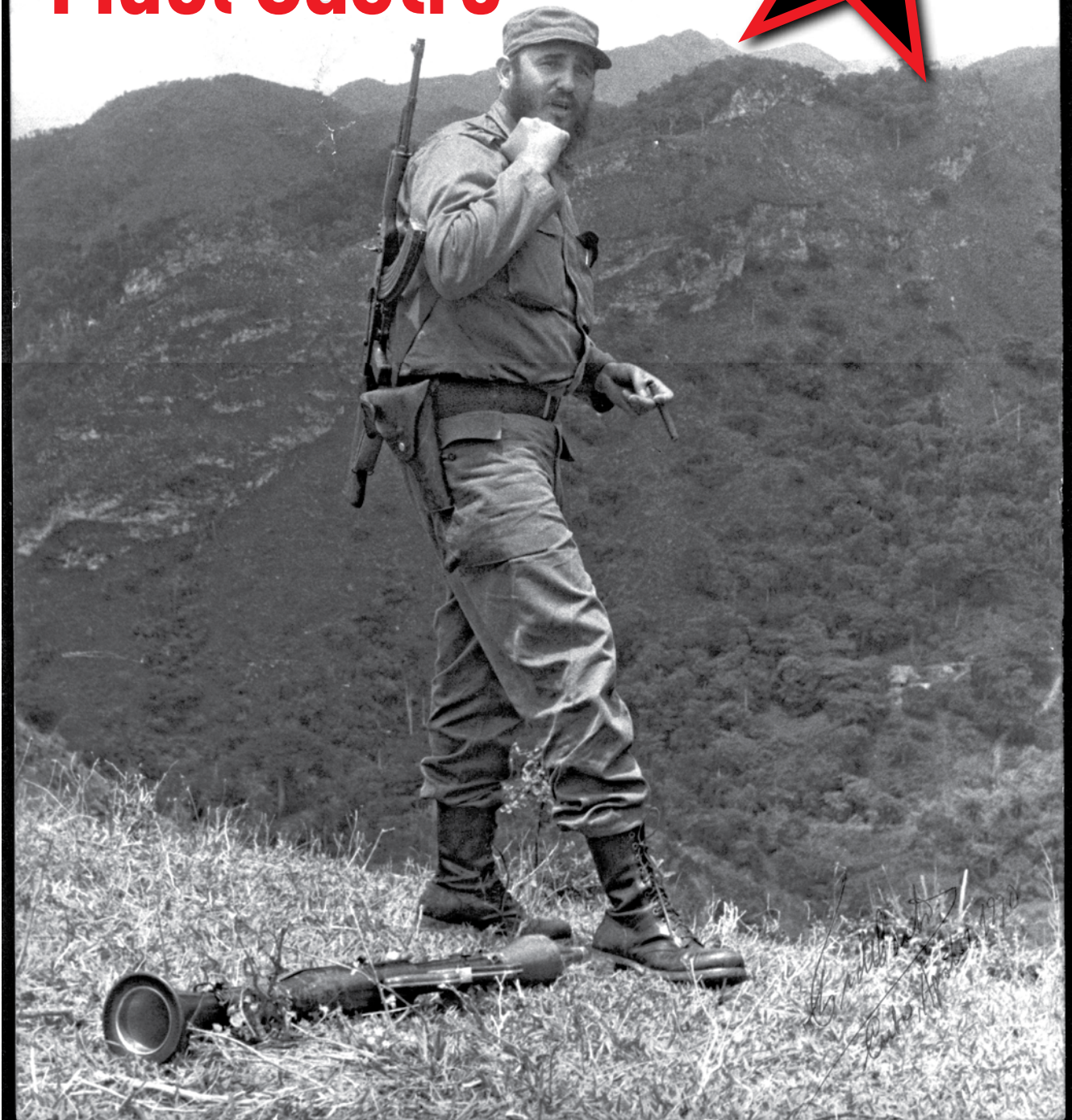
For our part, the SACP will before our July 2017 Congress convene a national imbizo to bring together a range of the mass democratic forces to discuss the challenges facing our country and consider ways to address them.

We believe that a revitalised mass democratic movement led by the working class and its allies can triumph over these obstacles. It is the ANC-headed Alliance, provided we unite and become rooted in the masses, that can lead a new process of accelerating the NDR. But at the same time, SACP needs to build a working class led popular movement in preparation for increasing leadership role in the NDR.

The 55th Anniversary of MK: Today is the 55th Anniversary of uMkhonto we-Sizwe (MK) the joint armed-wing of the SACP and the ANC. We convey our revolutionary greetings and warmest good wishes to those who were a part of it. We also acknowledge the many, many gallant MK fighters who gave their lives for the cause of national liberation.

End of year good wishes: Finally, the SACP conveys good wishes to the workers and the people of our country over the festive season. We urge all South Africans to drive safely on the roads. ●

El Comandante Fidel Castro



¡Hasta la victoria siempre!
(Always, until victory)