

**SACP
Kimberley District**



VOICE

November 2017
24

OF THE PROLETARIAT

**PATRIOTIC
EDITION**



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SOCIALISM IS THE FUTURE / BUILD IT NOW!

Building the widest Patriotic front

By Ntamehlo Sivuyile



“The communist manifesto is very clear that communists do not have an interest separate and apart to those of the proletariat...”

The 14th National Congress of the Party has called on the leadership of the Party in all levels, under the guidance of the Central Committee, to provide leadership to the widest patriotic front in defence of our democracy and our country’s national sovereignty. It also affirmed that the Party must continue to play a leading role in consolidating a popular front of working class and progressive forces to advance, deepen and defend our democracy. This call by the Party has indeed received a lot of attention and criticism, others accused the Party of populism and or opportunism. For example, when some of our leaders attended the Save SA march on state capture, etc. Others accused the Party of abandoning the class struggle and ultimately socialism (*It was on the news that some say that the Party met for five days and said nothing about socialism*).

The suggestion by our detractors is that the content of the class struggle must remain fixed all the time, they disregard the fact that it is dictated by the concrete situation at a given historical moment.

Borrowing from the late General Secretary of the SACP comrade Joe Slovo’s SA Working Class and the NDR 1988, when he says:

“Class struggle does not fade into the background when workers forge alliances...”

“Class struggle does not fade into the background when workers forge alliances with other class forces on commonly agreed minimum programmes. The history of all struggles consists mainly of such interim phases. What is the essence of conflict during such phases if not class struggle? There is no such thing as ‘pure’ class struggle and those who seek it can only do so from the isolating comfort of a library arm-chair. The idea that social revolutions involve two neatly-labelled armies was dealt with by Lenin with bitter irony: So one army lines up in one place and says “we are for socialism” and another, somewhere else and says, “we are for imperialism,” and that will be a social revolution! Whoever expects a “pure” social revolution will never live to see it. Such a person pays lip-service to revolution without understanding what revolution is.” (*Collected Works*, Volume 22, pp. 355-6).

The workers in Vietnam were not abandoning the class struggle when they concentrated their main energies, in alliance with other class forces, on defeating Japanese militarist occupation, French colonialism, and finally US imperialism and its puppet forces. When Hitler unleashed world war, the main content of the workers’ class struggle correctly became the defeat of fascism. This task necessitated the most ‘popular’ of Fronts which brought together both pro- and anti-socialist forces. It is a matter of historical record that the anti-fascist victory made possi-

ble, among other things, the greatest extension of the socialist world since the October Revolution and opened the road to successful anti-imperialist and anti-colonial revolutions.

The above implies that building the widest popular fronts is not a new thing for communist parties, especially in a period of capitalist hegemony, as our ultimate objective is the winning of power by the working people. Again, when we celebrate the centenary of the Bolsheviks revolution, we need to draw some lessons from that revolution a revolution that inspired many communist parties around the world, although at first they managed to wage insurrectionary struggles which some were partially successful for a short period and others contained and then crushed by the bourgeoisie.

But, what had gone wrong in those countries? In Moscow, in the Communist International headquarters, the Bulgarian revolutionary, George Dimitrov argued that the newly formed Communist Parties had isolated themselves from the broader worker and popular movements of their countries. They had failed to build united fronts (with the social democratic and other labour forces), still less broader popular fronts, and had conducted themselves in far too sectarian a manner. They had left space wide open for fascism, which had, in many countries, through a

combination of terror and demagoguery, succeeded in mobilising popular forces.

In Italy, Antonio Gramsci, like Dimitrov, he believed that the working class parties had isolated themselves; they had failed to develop a “hegemonic” project, capable of leading the broadest range of popular social forces.

The communist party whilst it must retain its independence, it must broaden and extend its activity, it must continue mobilise popular forces without compromising the fundamental interests of the working class. The communist manifesto is very clear that communists do not have an interest

separate and apart to those of the proletariat as a whole, which is why our structures should be able to reach out to all trade unions including those who do not affiliate to Cosatu.

Building a popular movement can only be realised by a campaigning Party, through the intensification of our know your neighbourhood campaign, building street committees to fight crime, working with the burial societies, the stokvels, co-operatives as well as taking up community issues.

Cde Ntamehlo Sivuyile is the District Secretary of the SACP Joe Slovo District

“...building the widest popular fronts is not a new thing for communist parties...”



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