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The politics of new social movements

Services, Land & Human Rights: Anti-Capitalist Struggles in Pre and Post-Apartheid South Africa

Word count: 30,190

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank the following people:

Nic Dieltens, Prishani Naidoo, Ahmed Veriava, Mncedi and co. at Site C - Khayelitsha, Naeem Jeenah, Peter Hudson, Sam Hargreaves, Antina, Andile Mngxitama, Joost Boss + Manfred, Dave Thomas, Patrick Bond, Ian Phimister, Magda Gale, Tom Lodge, Nerisha, Ann Evelyth, Heinrich Bohmke, John Apollis, Anti-Corruption, Victoria Bambiso and the Alexandra Vukuzenzele Crisis Committee, Soyiso Mtemekwana, Khanya College, the APF, Dina Segal and Lauren V-G, Glenda Webster, Dups and all the *Comrades* in Harrismith, Molefi, Graham Bailey, Pier Paulo, Ben Zachariah, the Mkhonza family, the PSC & AWC *Comrades* around Jo'burg, Lauren Whitebread & Isadore + Leanne (in CT), *Indymedia*, Fatima Gabru, Ibrahim Fakudah, Boo Prince, Anna Weekes, Mildred Ndlovu and Naefa Khan.
James P, Komnas, Andrew, Rebecca, Zak, Lebo, Noomsa, Ned, Kathy B, Claire C, Audrey, Bushy, Tandi, Thembi, George B, Riyaad, Shirona, Fatima, Yolanda, Luke, Matt W-S, Mickey and of course Nisha, all of whom, work tirelessly in one way or another to keep Wits alive.
And for inspiration and more: Sarah Rose, Chris Hammond, Lex + Lawton, Laura W, Helen Clarke, Chloe, Dan Balla + Audibert & Grafton, Kate N, Radha, Nay, Dan, Lottie, Stacy Bisignano, Greg Finger, Jackie, Emily, Clive, and last but not least Salim Vally … thank you

This report is dedicated to Teboho Mkhonza who like others has sacrificed life in new struggles for justice and democracy …

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ABBREVIATIONS

Alexandra Action Committee (AAC)
Anti-Privatization Forum (APF)
Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC)
African Social Forum (ASF)
African Union (AU)
Alexandra Vukuzenzele Crisis Committee (AVCC)
Anti-War Coalition (AWC)
Black Local Authority (BLA)
Black Consciousness Movement (BCM)
Cape Housing Action Committee (CAHAC)
Cape Action League (CAL)
Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA)
Committee of Ten (CoT)
Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)
Conservative Party (CP)
Cradock Residents' Association (CRADORA)
Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA)
Extension of Security of Tenure Act (ESTA)
Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU)
Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI)
General and Allied Workers' Union (GAWU)
Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR)
Harrismith Concerned Residents (HCR)
Integrated Development Plans (IDPs)
International Financial Institutions (IFIs)
Lagos Plan of Action (LPA)
Local Labour Forums (LLFs)
Motor Assembly and Components Workers Union of South Africa (MACWUSA)
Municipal and General Workers' Union of South Africa (MGWUSA):
National Forum (NF)
Nationalist Party (NP)
New Social Movement (NSM)
North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)
Orange Vaal General Workers Union (OVGWU)
Pan African Congress (PAC)
Private public partnership (PPP)
Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC)
Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organization (PEBCO)
Regional Services Councils (RSC)
Settlement Land Acquisition Grants (SLAGS)
South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU)
South African Communist Party (SACP)
South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU)

Soweto Civic Association (SCA)
Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC)
Social Movement Indaba (SMI)
Treatment Action Campaign (TAC)
Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA)
United Democratic Front (UDF)
Vukuzenzele Community Forum (VCF)

PREFACE

"The longing for a better world will need to arise at the imagined meeting place of many movements of resistance, as many as there are sites of enclosure and exclusion. The resistance will be as transnational as capital. Because enclosure takes myriad forms, so shall resistance to it."

- Iain A Boal, First *World, Ha Ha Ha!*, City Lights, 1995

Boal's description captures the exuberance, hope and confidence of today's social movements. That there is something irresistible about autonomous, grassroots and subaltern movements in their anti-systemic alternatives to capitalism has become a notion which has gained considerable currency in recent years.[1] Formations of these groups (the Zapatistas being the oft cited example) are seen to mirror theories of the most utopian and radical forms of democracy. In **Part 1** we seek to examine a range of critical historiography in exploring the features of what is 'new' in today's social movements, using Zapatista style organization and discourse as the prototype. This definition will be moulded with the elements of critical theory which have at their core a radical transformative function of social movements. For example Castells' work on urban movements pictures: "collective conscious action aimed at the transformation of the institutionalized urban meaning against the logic, interest and values of the dominant class."[2] We will draw from Murray's assumption that such movements "actively contest the prevailing forms of political representation and the legitimacy of political rule."[3]

New social movements (NSM) will be seen within the context of anti-normative approaches to democracy. An alternative pole of reference will emerge in contrast to what we will term low intensity, liberal, parliamentary or bourgeois forms of democracy. All this will be lodged in an understanding of *old* social movements. We hold these to be single issue movements that fail to forge links to other sites of oppression and exploitation, or movements which take on a narrow class composition and understanding of change. Implicit in moving on from narrow, and or,

[1] Notes from Nowhere Collective, (2003), *We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anti-Capitalism*, London: Verso. Also see Negri, A. & Hardt, M. (2004) *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, New York: Penguin Press

[2] Castells, M. (1983), *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*, London: Edward Arnold Publishers

[3] Murray, M. (1987), *South Africa: Time of Agony, Time of Destiny*, London: Verso

Marxist-Leninist positions over class, is the multiplicity of relations humans have within the social body. This refutes crude economism conceptions regarding the make-up of the working class.[4] However, capitalism and our relations to production, still remain central in understanding the relationship of the subject to the social body. We suggest recent crisis points and weaknesses in capitalism (detected as neo-liberal trends) provide plenty of scope for weaving an historical dialectic back in. Evidence for this comes from critical theory which claims, perhaps falsely, to be founded on anti-essentialism.[5] We argue that it is *commodification* which breeds this resistance against the totalizing effect of capitalism at every level of the structure. Thus neo-liberalism embodies for much of this critical thought the subject of a "Fourth World War" fought by the *multitude*. [6] The mobile nature of contemporary capital and the immaterial essence of its production to define the *multitude* – essentially disenfranchised and disaffected subjects – has led to an expanded definition of the old working class.[7] The *multitude* is the reinvention of some social subject invested in an historical project. This *multitude* has taken on a particular guise, moving away from traditional conceptions of a revolutionary class**.** As Negri and Hardt note: "The closer we look at the lives and activity of the poor, the more we see how enormously creative and powerful they are".[8] The poor embody the ontological condition not only of resistance but also of productive life itself.[9]

However, we will also attempt to locate moments within the subject that go beyond the indeterminacies and moments of rupture within the structure. Careful attention will be paid to Zizek's *subject of lack*, in assessing the carnivalesque and irrational moments of today's movements and the role of what we will view as a renewed sense of voluntarism.

We remain conscious that we are forging a vision of new social movements which forges an at times uneasy alliance across a variety of groups who challenge dominant structures at different times, spaces and ways. It is sometimes tempting to lump various "anti-globalisation" groups together, without grasping the intricacies and nuances that bind as well as divide them.[10]

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[4] Laclau, E. & Mouffe, C. (1985), *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, London: Verso
[5] ibid., and Althusser, L, (1979), *Reading Capital*, London: Verso
[6] Subcommandante Marcos, (2001), *The Fourth World War*, Chiapas, Mexico http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/auto/fourth.html
[7] For refined conceptions see Callinicos, A. & Harman, C. (1987), *The changing working class: essays on class structure today*, London, Bookmarks
[8] Negri, A. & Hardt, M. (2004), op. cit. p. 129
[9] ibid. p. 133
[10] For an example see Sachs, M. (May 21st - 2004), *The Poor Believe in the Poll*, Mail and Guardian

Ultimately, we accept some of the essentialist critique that can be levelled at NSM theory, recognizing a trope of romanticism around struggle is deliberately and necessarily invented. This will be fully discussed in the controversial claim that some movements and elements of civil society have more validity than others. It will be considered in claiming that moments of oppression, subordination and exploitation require articulation and don't erupt into historical trajectories of struggle. This requires the development and expression of *relative* rather than *fixed* universals (e.g. around democracy, right to water, right to land). It is *commodification* and neo-liberalism that provides the stimulus for such relative universals. We shall see that they revolve around issues that are real to subjects in the narratives of their struggles and lives.[11] Finding some fixity of meaning and experience ensures our analysis is not post-structuralist. Post-structuralism has fostered awkward relationships with truths which have, as Mamdani has noted, not always led to a basis of a "healthy humanism".[12] It leads to a universalized aestheticization whereby truth, reduced to merely a style effect of discursive articulation, forges an endless spectrum of interpretation/re-interpretation. [13] Moreover, it can be utilized to create legitimacy for fascist, colonialist and imperialist discourses. **Part 1** attempts to provide the basis for the rest of the work by developing an understanding of the historicity of new social movements and what makes them different to other forms of political and social organisation. This is critical for later discussion which will draw upon the experiences of South Africa.

In **Part 2** we seek to build from the radical civil society theory and tease out features and characteristics of it within anti-apartheid social movements. This will involve an exploration around township civics which were and are often bundled under the umbrella of the United Democratic Front (UDF). Many of these were built around notions of *People's Power*, economic transformation and social justice. We will consider the ideology present in these movements and how it played out in realities, acknowledging the highly repressive scenario of the apartheid state. Within these movements we will flesh out radical spaces and visions which appeared to have dissipated in the ANC hegemony over the decolonisation process and subsequent "transformation" project.

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[11] This is not to say that the bourgeois struggle for low intensity liberal democracy is not real, but that it seeks in no way to achieve a system based on universal justice.

12 Mamdani, M. (1996*), Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism,* Princeton: Princeton University Press

[13] Zizek, S. (1989), *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, London: Verso, p. 32

We will not shy away from advocating that there were features within such radical spaces, such as Charterist, and or, unity projects, which emerged at various times to create implicitly anti-democratic politics. [14] Such problems as we will see went to the core of the UDF and also into the geo-polities of South Africa which became "ungovernable" in the 1980s. Depoliticization was not just a performative effect of ANC strength or "Stalinism" as often narrated by the left, but a weakness in the structure and formation of civil society. [15] We explore whether it was not just the ANC that "demobilized" the grassroots, but that the form and functioning of civil society that contributed to the conditions in which movements' own radical notions of *People's Power* and direct democracy dissipated.

Part 3 will look at this demobilization within the context of the transition to democracy during the negotiated settlement.[16] We scrutinize the nature of the period from apartheid to liberal democracy, noting trajectories of struggle which mark both eras. We argue that elements and goals in the struggle that sought a very different democracy to that gained at the CODESA talks have re-emerged in the deepening disillusionment of the ANC project after ten years of governance. This has within some discourse included the ability of the nation-state generally, within neo-liberalism, to bring about social justice. Yet, the suggestion that this is the period of "economic" rather than "racial" apartheid will need to be carefully explored in the context of Fanon's characterization of national liberation elites.[17] While noting the benefit an economic approach has in distinguishing the role of dominant classes, we suggest it can overshadow explicit structures of racism that penetrate to the core of South African society. They are brought out for example by grassroots movements such as the Landless People's Movement (LPM), in their campaign that equated landlessness with racism.

Finally **Part 4** examines the extent characteristics we ascribe to the new social movements of South Africa correspond with the features of anti-apartheid struggles of the 1980s. Moreover, it requires us to assess the critical theory developed in **Part 1** in terms of realities in post-Apartheid South Africa. We note the apprehension in considering parallels between anti-apartheid struggles

[14] For the Charter see, Hudson, P. (1998), Images of the Future and Strategies in the Present, The Freedom Charter and the South African Left, in State, Resistance and Change in South Africa, (eds.) P. Frankel, N. Pines, M. Swilling, Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers, pp. 259-277
[15] See McKinley, D. (1997), *The ANC and the Liberation Struggle*, London: Pluto Press
[16] Transition might entail shallow processes of transformation but generally structures stay in place. Transformation suggests some deeper process around class power, if not a radical overhaul of class relations.
[17] See Fanon, F. (1963), *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove Press

and current rights based struggles. While there have been a few attempts to make links within a continuation of struggle from apartheid to neo-liberalism[18], all too often, the anti-apartheid struggles that invoked notions of *People's Power* have been dismissed as undemocratic, authoritarian and reactionary.[19] While an attempt to wipe the slate clean might be useful in carving out a fresh and dynamic image for contemporary social movements, it perhaps ignores that there are similar issues, rhetoric and ideologies being played out today.

We will explore whether the historiography simply seeks to justify and re-create contemporary social movements to create ammunition for particular strands of political theory judged to be liberationist and correct within the current historical juncture. Are we carving out a fictional historicity within the identity of struggle that doesn't exist? Are narratives created more for attachments to a belief in certain "historical" processes than less sharply defined realities? Is the multitude, merely Marx's 19th century industrial working class, vested with an imaginary historical project? Noting the background of many individuals involved within the APF (trade union, SACP), we need to discuss how they have been placed on a new trajectory of thought given the features which define today's subjects in NSM compared to orthodox Marxist-Leninist thought around the revolutionary subject.

We hope a sketch of the past and an analysis of the present may contribute in the current debates within the social movements during a critical time for anti-capitalist struggles in South Africa. This work is not concerned with producing exhaustive lists of repressive acts conducted by the state, the brutality of private security firms, or broken election promises, but in uncovering the structure of the post-apartheid state and how social movements respond and re-create themselves. Despite their youth, they represent the first serious contestation of ANC hegemony in terms of an alternative discourse around democracy, social justice and transformation.[20]

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[18] Bond, P. (2004), *South Africa's Resurgent Urban Social Movements: The Case of Johannesburg, 1984 – 1994* - 2004, *CCS Report No. 22*, Durban, and Desai, A. (2002), *South Africa Still Revolting*, Johannesburg: Impact Africa Publishing

[19] Horowitz, D. (1991), *A Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society*, Berkeley: University of California Press

[20] For a brief introduction of social movement popular historiography in South Africa see Bond, P. (2001), *Against Global Apartheid: South Africa meets the World Bank, IMF and International Finance*, Lansdowne: UCT Press and Desai, A. (2002), *We Are the Poors*, New York: Monthly Press and Naidoo, P. & Veriavi, A. (2004), *Re-membering Movements: The Trade Union Movement and New Social Movements in Neo-Liberal South Africa*, Durban: Centre for Civil Society Report

This work has been made possible through regular contact with social movements in Gauteng. Informal participatory discussions with various activists and communities within these struggles have been invaluable and enlightening. Such first hand experience has provided an insight into the operative nature and democratic functioning of a variety of movements including the role of vanguards and leadership. My attendance at various forums and discussions, such as the Social Movements Indaba (SMI), has also been vital.

Fundamentally, the work hinges upon a critical exploration from three areas. Firstly, in the discussion necessary to establish a historicity of new social movements which will point to their methodological and epistemic construction. Secondly, upon an understanding of the South African experience that can cover an immense ground from apartheid into liberal-democracy which is aware and responsive to a wide range of historiography. Thirdly, a series of interviews and personal reflections from discussions with various activists across South Africa. Some are well known leaders. Others form part of the collective multitudes beginning to emerge and speak through the fissures of South African society. Relationships that I have made, as well as recent political events, culminated in the choices of the Khayelitsha township of Cape Town, Alexandra in Johannesburg and Harrismith in the Free State as the sites for this part of the research.[21]

The methodology hinges upon an accurate reflection and assessment of contemporary social movements from the people who participate and function within them, together with an historiographical account of social movements in the South African experience. Limitations here are perhaps obvious. Interviewees may have the tendency to be modest or emphasize their own personal role in struggles. Attendance of community meetings and forums is hoped to counter-balance this together with the use of contemporary subject work. However, there can be no objective yardstick by which to judge the contributions found in this paper. Furthermore, the lack of rigour within the methodology would alarm the majority of modernist and positivist historians and commentators. Yet, it is with this aim that the work attempts to accept the criticisms of romanticism, myth, euphoria and narratives in seeking to forge the very conditions outlined by Boal in which we might find the same "imagined meeting place" and discussion of *freedom*.

[21] Khayelitsha was recently awarded the most violent and unstable place to live in South Africa in Sunday Times, 27th October 2004, p. 18. Harrismith and townships throughout the Free State have a long history of being "ungovernable" and recently there have been a spate of township uprisings over the poor delivery of services. Time spent living in Johannesburg enabled contact with the APF affiliate Alexandra Vukuzenzele Crisis Committee (AVCC).

PART 1

HISTORIOGRAPHY AND CONCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT POLITICS: THE REVOLUTIONARY SUBJECT



Injecting the 'new' in social movements

"The real movements that are presently transforming the international order are the new alternative social movements. These do not have to be understood as replacing or in opposition to the labour movement. Amongst the real movements could also be counted the 'social movement unions' or 'new social unionism' that have explicitly or implicitly, to a greater or lesser extent surpassed the 'economism' and 'politicism', or the reformist or insurrectionary workerism, of their predecessors."[22]

- Peter Waterman, 2001

Our first task is to assess whether there is a general concurrence of the nature of NSM, as portrayed by Waterman above, and as we have laid out in the preface. Outlining the now classical Zapatista structure – not as a blueprint – but in order to establish NSM realities and theories will be a useful starting point. Although the NSM tag emerged in the early 1980s, typically around single-issue movements which opened spaces for transformation, the Zapatistas have been seen to embody some of the radical discourse into realities.[23]

The familiar tale of the Zapatista uprising on New Years Day 1994 is that of a response to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) agreement and the persistent encroachment of large scale cattle ranchers, multinational logging firms and oil companies across Chiapas in Mexico. While such narrative correctly identifies the main sites of grievances, it misses the type of visionary and proactive nature of Zapatista action. These shape vivid and creative moments of resistance and autonomy, and not the reactionary and clumsy tag of anti-globalization.

In the Zapatista movement communities can choose to join municipalities which co-ordinate exchanges between them to ensure basic needs are met. The system of delegation from below ensures it remains as close as possible to grassroots control and influence over action.[24] In theory

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[22] Waterman, P. (2001), *Globalization, Social Movements and the New Internationalisms*, London: Continuum, p. 34

[23] For early uses of the label see: Mouffe, C. (1984), *Towards a Theoretical Interpretation of New Social Movements*, in *Rethinking Marx*, ed. Wolfgang Fritz Haug & Wieland Eifferding, New York: International General Publishers

[24] Chiapas Revealed 2001 quoted in Fournier, V. (2002), *Utopianism and the cultivation of possibilities: grassroots movements of hope*, in "Utopia and Organisation", ed. Parker, M. Oxford: Blackwell, p. 203

power is diffused amongst a series of nodal points, leaving the centre loose and contested. However, there is a tension within the movement. Leadership has at various times engaged with the government, while at the same time constructed an anti-statist and autonomous discourse. Zapatistas have held dialogue with a deadly foe which seeks to exterminate the very gains they have made, while at the same time have tried to consolidate their democratic structures across Chiapas.

The historiography of the NSM, built on the prototype of Zapatista action, has developed this notion of autonomy into a coherent, if perhaps romantic, anti-statist ideology. Brecher et al. state:

"What is being created is a coordinated social movement composed of relatively autonomous groupings. It is a structure that differs from either an interest group pressuring the government or a party contesting for state power. It eschews a sharp distinction between organizers and the rank and file."[25]

Movements are popularly characterized as networks with an inflected centre. Those who think in terms of traditional models may assume it has no organization whatsoever and see mere spontaneity or anarchy. Laclau talks of organic intellectuals rather than orthodox leaders and for a project "allowing each man and woman to fully assume the responsibility of their own contingency and their own destiny."[26]

Fundamental to the developing a particular strain of revolutionary historicity around the NSM are the binding links of solidarity against various forms of oppression and subordination permeating a variety of social classes and spaces. Hardin notes how each protest group is initially formed:

"As people recognised in each other frustrations, aspirations and desires to transgress the current state of the world. Solidarity is the result of such interactions, the recognition of a 'we' out of many separate 'I's."[27]

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[25] Brecher, J. Costello, T. & Smith, B. (2002), *Globalization from Below: The Power of Solidarity*, Cambridge MA: South End Press, p. 86
[26] Laclau, E. (1990), *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, London: Verso, p. 196
[27] Jordan, T. (2002), *Activism! Direct Action, Hacktivism and the Future of Society*, London: Reaktion, p. 12

Laclau notes: "The multiplication of political spaces and the preventing of the concentration of power in one point are, then, preconditions of every truly democratic transformation of society."[28] They form chains of equivalence - hegemonic articulations - based around partially fixed ideologies. Although as we will discuss in our case studies from South Africa, a lack of resources together with state repression towards social movements, and the left generally, makes the critical tasks of communication and mobilization extremely challenging. Where the 'we' has replaced the 'I', emerges in the resonance between various social classes and components in their articulation of forms of subordination around access. We note this in the destruction of pre-paid water metres by APF members and the symbolic invasion of land by the LPM. Both are centred upon the notion of violation of rights to commonalities (e.g. water, land). Such access held an ambiguous position during apartheid. Payment and cost-recovery for basic services such as water and electricity was the subject of frequent boycott and dissent. Land was the subject of a massive historical theft and formed romantic, but also powerful, conceptions around its reclamation. We will need to consider in more depth how services and land failed to institutionalize during the transition and first decade of democracy.

The core aspect of radical NSM thought is the critique of capitalism and current crisis points which are generally referred to as *neo-liberalism*. Capitalism has emerged increasingly dominant and total at every level, representing a multiplicity of new inequalities and injustices. It usurps the remaining commons, destroys diversity and forges homogeneity.[29] Negri and Hardt call it a "biopower" ruling over life, threatening death and "producing and reproducing all aspects of society."[30] Social structures are subsumed by the totalizing effect of capitalism, a process characterized as financialization or primitive accumulation.[31] Socially, the massive redistribution of rewards and the social dislocations entailed by financial expansions tend to provoke movements of resistance and rebellion among subordinate groups and strata, whose established ways of life are coming under attack.[32] Such a system, as we will explore in more depth is **Part 3** does not function in some automated fashion along "free" market mechanisms. That is an illusory representation of a system requiring increasing state intervention over security and capital flow.

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[28] Laclau, E. & Mouffe, C. (1985), op. cit. p. 178
[29] Shiva, V. (1997), Biopiracy: the plunder of nature and knowledge, Boston, South End Press
[30] Negri, A. & Hardt, M. (2002), op. cit. p. 94
[31] For financialization see Arrighi, G. (2003), The Social and Political Economy of Global Turbulence, NLR 20, March/April pp. 5-71, and for an excellent overview of the role of accumulation see Marais, H. (2001*) South Africa Limits to Change: The Political Economy of Transition,* 2nd edition, London: Zed Books
[32] Arrighi, G, (2003), op. cit. p. 68

Some analysis suggests resistance to capitalism is now embodied with resistance to the nation state, marking a radical departure from orthodox leftist discourse that has held the state as an object of capture. [33]

However, the anti-statist, autonomous dynamic in NSM historiography tends to overstate the capacity and power within the movements. While we celebrate some of the novelties and emancipatory possibilities of civil society, other strains of historiography have seen the purpose of NSM in an entirely different guise. They develop a narrative of a "healthy" civil society where "movements act as the challengers and as 'maintainers' of democracy".[34] Indeed, such discourse can be located in the majority of international financial institutions (IFIs) which take bourgeois civil society and patriarchal social capital organisations as the pillars of liberal democracy and good governance.[35] When movements step outside of "acceptable" norms, practices and identities within the system, their practices are deemed illegal.[36] This holds particular significance given the draconian legislation threatening civil liberties across the world.[37] Whether an organization such as the APF is viewed, not as "ultra-left", but as "terrorist" becomes a real possibility as changes within the state unravel, and as social movement groups continue to define their resistance and visions of change.

Liberal definitions tend to paint the APF as acting as some kind of brake-stop on the ANC, maintaining welfare and social obligations on the state.[38] It dramatically reduces the power and vision for proactive models and blueprints for alternatives, forging passive subjects who offer not defiance but a voice of restraint and moderation.

Thus, the tension in NSM theory between the state and civil society can be seen to replicate the very contestation which radical democratic theory demands.[39] It can be seen to synthesize in

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[33] Negri, A. & Hardt, M. (2004), op. cit. and Holloway, J. (2002) *Change the world without taking power: the meaning of revolution today*, London, Pluto
[34] Ibarra, P. (2003), *The Social Movements: From Promoters to Protagonists of Democracy* in "Social Movements and Democracy", (ed.) Ibarra P. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 12
[35] World Bank, (2002), *Building a Sustainable Future: The Africa Region Environment Strategy*, Washington, DC, and World Bank, (2002), *Globalisation. Growth and Poverty*, Washington, DC
[36] Social Movements Indaba, Press Release, http://www.queensu.ca/msp/pages/In_The_News/2004/March/22.htm (21st March, 2004)
[37] See PATRIOT Acts I and II in the USA and South Africa's forthcoming anti-terrorist legislation
[38] Ballard, R. *An anatomy of new power*, Mail and Guardian, http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=196095&area=/insight/monitor/ (February 27th, 2005)
[39] Laclau, E. & Mouffe, C, (1985), op. cit. and Jordan, T. (2002), op. cit. p. 49 who notes: "Visionary movements can be far more uncertain because they place a radical indeterminacy at the heart of their ethics,

realities which produce new networks which we can utilize "to impose new norms on corporations, governments and international institutions."[40] Fundamentally, and what has been lacking in South African decolonization, is that these new norms are catalyzed into projects of transformation and not transition. If social movements are to enjoy success, it means injecting life and vitality into the semantics of "justice" and "democracy". This requires pressure on the state (whether it be moral, legal) but also bypassing the state (insurrection, defiance). Yet how can such semantics exist and be concrete given the continual contestation and indeterminacy that has been applied to the structure in non-essentialist strains of critical thought?[41] Can ethical or revolutionary discourse really remain open and continually shaped? How would social justice be attained? What are the hallmarks of a system that goes beyond low level democracy and seeks to forge systems of justice that have meaning not in theories but in experience? What can be the "norms" of a radical democratic discourse? In order to build our historicity of the new social movement, these are the questions we will need to grapple with in trying to resolve the dialectic between theory and reality.

Laclau and Mouffe note that: "democratic struggles imply a plurality of political spaces".[42] Concurrently they suggest *commodification* "provokes acts of resistance which launch new social actors into the historical arena; and the new actors, precisely because they are moving on a dislocated terrain constantly reinventing their own social forms".[43] This suggests there is something about *commodification* which holds properties or structural causalities which are intrinsically antagonistic to human nature. The project of the left we are told is to locate itself fully "in the field of the democratic revolution and expanding the chains of equivalents between the different struggles against oppression".[44] This essentialism which emerges through the back door whether it is in Laclau, Arrighi or Negri is perhaps necessary for the survival of the subject and the struggle.

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but they also determinedly drive towards the future. Such movements do not judge the present world against a blueprint for utopia but against a belief that the world can be different, radically different and that they are travelling towards just such a future."

[40] Brecher, J. Costello, T. & Smith, B. (2000), *Globalization from Below: The Power of Solidarity*, Cambridge, MA: South End Press, p. 26

[41] Laclau, E. (1990), op. cit and Zizek, S. (1989), *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, London: Verso

[42] Zizek, S. (1989), op. cit. p. 137

[43] ibid. p. 52

[44] Laclau, E. & Mouffe, C. (1985), op. cit. p. 176

The principal goal of the movements becomes "the elaboration of a new conception of democracy".[45] Sometimes it is referred to as *People's Power*, direct or radical democracy, or as Brecher et al have coined: *globalization from below*. They note:

"It is not a set of values or norms peculiar to the movement. The values and goals of globalization from below are the same as the rough global consensus articulated in innumerable UN documents, from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the most recent evaluations of environmental and social policy. Globalization from below is a movement *to implement* these widely shared global norms."[46]

Furthermore, a research report from South African Non-Governmental Organization Coalition (SANGOCO) noted:

"The surveys and analysis reported herein indicate that citizens have quite a clear view of what they would consider to be a good society. Social justice - including human rights and freedoms as well as provision of basic needs and decent living conditions - is necessary for a good society."[47]

The role of "universals" (essentially underlying values) within some of the "anti-normative" work can also be shown to have common identities with normative discourse especially in terms of producing a narrative of ethics. Thus, they are equally susceptible to post-structuralist concerns in terms of meta-narrative, historicity and language. Such essentialism and teleology in NSM thought, as we will explore in more depth shortly, is necessary for the hope, euphoria and narrative of struggle. What we turn to first is how universals play out within struggle, how their contestation creates co-option and depoliticization of radical political spaces, but also how they are located at the core of new social movement discourse.

Kitschelt notes how subjects involved in anti-institutional practices place effort and investment into organizational infrastructure.[48] He suggests this makes them, "more concerned with the

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[45] Della, Porta, D. & Reiter, H. (2004), *Police Measures Against the New Global Protest*, in *The Globalisation of Resistance: The State of Struggle*, Francis Polet & CETRI, Pluto Press, p. 112
[46] Brecher, J. Costello, T. & Smith, B. (2002), *Globalization*, Cambridge MA: South End Press, p. 62
[47] SANGOCO (2002*), Developmental Civil Society into the New Millennium: The Case of South Africa*, Johannesburg, p. 3
[48] Kitschelt, H. (2003), *Landscapes of Political Interest Intermediation: Social Movements, Interest Groups, and Parties in the Twenty-First Century*, in Social *Movements and Democracy*, (ed.) Ibarra, P., New York: Pal grave Macmillan, p. 86

survival of the collective organization and the protection of the political investment that comes with it. [49] According to Kitschelt this becomes a powerful stimulus to contain strategies and work within institutional channels, "thus transforming the disruptive movement into an interest group."[50]

Moreover, political entrepreneurs "could never sustain revolutionary socialism in the face of open electoral democracy", and that such an "opportunity structure led to the emergence of reformist social democratic parties."[51]

While these pose valid and challenging criticisms, Kitschelt perhaps presupposes more rationality and structure in movements than exists. For example Scott states:

"So long as we confine our conception of the political to activity that is openly declared we are driven to conclude that subordinate groups essentially lack a political life, or that what political life they do have is restricted to those exceptional moments of popular explosion. To do so is to miss the immense political terrain that lies between quiescence and revolt, and that, for better or worse, is the political environment of the subject classes."[52]

Moreover, where open declaration has taken root social movements appear to take on a variety of notions around leadership, concurring with Zapatista models, that seek from the outset to limit the amount of control that can be exercised within the movement. Moreover, various forms of resource work (self empowering, tools, knowledge workshops etc.) have been deployed in spreading a democratic ethic throughout movements. This is no guarantee that such ethics do not come to dominate, mirror elitist power structures and replace hierarchies with new ones in the same Leninist vanguard manner as older political movements. However, a consciousness and sensitivity to democratic structures that nurture pluralism and openness, rather than top-down symbolism and rhetoric, is evidence that contemporary movements are addressing some of the fundamental structural challenges. It requires, "when speaking of the universal, (that) we make

[49] ibid. p. 86
[50] ibid. p. 86
[51] ibid. p. 86
[52] Scott, J.C. (1997), *The infrapolitics of subordinate groups*, in Rahnema, M, & Bawtree, V (eds.), "The Post-Development Reader", London: Zed Books, p. 323

ourselves and our 'subject position' visible … to see us as part of an inevitably partial and particular contribution to a new kind of internationalism."[53]

The "pull" factor towards NSM from dominant structures should not be underestimated. Corporate arrangements usually accommodate interest groups that have already proven their ability to bind constituencies to certain universals. Corporatism is thus a process which responds and seeks to "bring in" or "synthesize" interests that already exist."[54] Reports from the last Africa Social Forum (ASF) note how Ammara Essy - interim chair of the African Union (AU) Commission - extended an invitation to the forum to participate in the AU civil society structures with "the clear intention to orient the whole proceedings towards subordinating the social movements and other organizations to government structures."[55]

When we come to discuss civil society in the 1980s in South Africa, the discrepancies in the Freedom Charter (e.g. between socialist and nationalist goals) will be viewed in regard to the depoliticizing effect unity can have on radical struggles when such movements become consolidated in Frontist or Populist politics.[56]

Some civil society is better than others

"And shouldn't we ensure that grassroots movements remain ineffective at running states; that they remain small, spontaneous, disjointed, and do not congeal into the formation of another 'unified version of a better future', another truth policed by another leader."[57]
- Valerie Fournier, 2002

Scientific claims, like all appeals to the "truth", are now recognised not as emerging from a verificationalist model, but from the dedication of thought to specific paradigms and metaphors. They form unique epistemic communities. Universal models of any kind are continuously

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[53] Waterman, P. (2001*), Globalization,* London: Continuum, p. 240
[54] Reitzes, M. (1995), *How should civil society formations relate to structures of Representative Government?.* in Humphries, R. & Reitzes, M. (eds.) "Civil Society after Apartheid: proceedings of a conference" by the Centre for Policy Studies on the Role and Status of Civil Society in Post-Apartheid South Africa, Johannesburg, 19-20 Sep, p. 101
[55] Hlatshwayo, M. (2004), *The African Social Forum: Between Radicals and Reformers,* in *The Globalisation of Resistance: The State of Struggle*, Francis Polet & CETRI, Pluto Press, p. 206
[56] Hudson, P. (1988), op. cit. pp 259-277
[57] Fournier V. (2002*), Utopianism and the cultivation of possibilities: grassroots movements of hope in Utopia and Organisation,* (ed.) M. Parker, Oxford: Blackwell, p. 209

reproducing and discovering their own assumptions in materials, discourse and conclusions. For example, in normative developmental discourse ideas around justice and democracy are depoliticised through the use of "scientific" and "technical" data which serve to marginalise the social and political connotations of neo-liberalism as enacted by the policies of IFIs, the state, and government. NSM discourses are constructed around points of felt subordination and oppression. As Waterman notes, we should be free about giving out a "subject position". This requires in theory and reality, value judgements as to which forces are hostile and which are conducive to a particular epistemic strain of "democracy" or "justice". Failure to do so culminates in the legitimization of a wide range of expressions, many of which may take on problematic positions (e.g. fascism or Zionism). The essentialism of a unique historicity is built on the premise that certain forms and discourses of civil society are more progressive, just and democratic than others.

This forms a paradox when pluralism has been established as a main crux of radical democracy by critical theory. SANGOCO's work on developmental civil society highlights some of these ideological conflicts.[58] They highlight how some South African organisations did and do not support "social transformation" as they see it.[59] Citing ratepayers associations (comprising both residents and businesses), extremely vocal in the affluent northern suburbs of Johannesburg, SANGOCO note how these movements operate to contest "increases in their rates as unfair, without recognising the historic apartheid-era subsidy they traditionally received from black residents whose places of employment and commercial outlets paid rates to white not black municipalities."[60] Some Afrikaaner organisations support the formation of a "Volkstaat". Other civil society groups and think tanks have placed their faith in neo-liberal policies, which have already had the effect of reinforcing apartheid-era economic and demographic realities.

Ultimately, an analysis of democracy cannot be located within bourgeois or liberal thought. They perpetuate, as we will seek to argue in **Part 3**, a range of systemic injustices anathema to broad conceptions of democracy whether they be those outlined at a macro-level by the United Nations Charter, or at a micro-level in the concerns of the Harrismith Residents Committee (HRC).[61] Low-intensity democracy might throw up occasional electoral choices, but leaves a social

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[58] SANGOCO, (2000), *Developmental Civil Society into the New Millennium: The Case of South Africa*, Johannesburg
[59] ibid.
[60] ibid.
[61] As outlined in their memorandum to the mayor of Harrismith, August 2004.

structure in place dominated and totalized by the vicissitudes of the market. Radical democracy and liberationist thought has thus developed valid criticisms around normative approaches. However, such thought fleshes out its own set of blueprints and values for attaining justice. Much discourse has deconstructed the values and language paradigms of other approaches, but has formed their own set of ethics of justice and rights. These become problematic in forming any discursive legitimacy for any strain of social movement thought.

Li notes how:

"Civil society has often been prescribed as the irreversible path to democracy and a panacea for political repression in authoritarian countries. Those who subscribe to this civil society determinism tend to use the term civil society to refer to any private or associational life (including productive, commercial, or consumerist activities) existing apart from the state."[62]

This civil society determinism is commonly found in IFI thought in the structural adjustment plans for the "Third World." However, such determinism can be seen within NSM and anti-capitalist thought which is not acutely aware that there is nothing intrinsic in the structure and in the nature of civil society movements that will struggle for an end to exploitation. Before we move on to an exploration of apartheid South Africa it is worth pausing to be clear exactly which elements of civil society we are concerned with. Van Wyk's analysis provides a useful starting place:

"In the interest of the democratic project it is imperative for civil society not to become too self-centred. It should not become a protective shield of "comrades" only, but it should also be protective of the broader polity that nurtures and protects civil society. It therefore must be stated that, theoretically, civil society in South Africa cannot be reserved for organisations on the political left or so-called "struggle organizations"."[63]

Discussion of the UDF will shed light on he totalitarian practices and politics which Van Wyk is referring to. However, a reading of NSM consistent with the type of democratic goals we have

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[62] Li, Xiarong. (1999), *Democracy and Uncivil Societies: A Critique of Civil Society Determinism*, in *Civil Society, Democracy, and Civic Renewal*, (ed.) Fullwider, R.K. Oxford: Rowman and LittelField Publishers, p. 403

[63] Van Wyk, M.J. (1993), Civil society and democracy in South Africa, *Africa Insight*, Vol. 23, No. 3, p. 137

outlined must be explicit in its reservation of civil society for certain groups. This cannot be used to reinforce top-down structures, populist politics, or be seen as a justification for Stalinism, but as the force required to challenge dominate structures and expressions which protect inequality and stifle social justice. Van Wyk's ideas extend to areas of civil thought which see social capital as sufficient to meet the needs of people:

"The argument in favour of building a strong civil society represents a revitalization of the ideas of social obligation and limited power. It is in civil society where people can experience the trust, empathy, altruism and solidarity that make for social obligations."[64]

Social capital networks might keep people alive, and hold some of the formative qualities which we look for in networks of NSM, but they offer little in terms of vision or alternatives. These are the norms around ideas for the function of civil society which we seek to challenge. Horowitz notes: "No South African regime will be able to respond to all the demands it will confront, but that will not necessarily doom stable democracy."[65] He does so within an understanding that grievances, demands and discontent somehow threaten "democracy". That such a reading reflects bourgeois interests mirrors the same elitist fashion in which Samuel Huntington famously explored the "danger of democracy" in the 1970s. The majority are written out of decision making for challenging the status quo and the nature of the relations of production.[66] For Horowitz neo-liberal growth is the only way to level blacks upwards to where whites are. Challenges to this paradigm are deemed to be a threat to democracy. We argue that resistance and expression of a range of grievances form a major role in building democracy. While these movements are vulnerable and fragile, and as Fine notes, open to "colonisation from the state", they present visions of democracy that eclipse liberal-democratic thought and transcend current systemic relations.[67]

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[64] Van Wyk, M.J. (1993), op. cit. p. 139
[65] Horowitz, D. (1991), op. cit. p. 238
[66] Horowitz, D. (1991), op cit. p. 235, and see Alexander, A. (2004), *Not the Democracy We Struggled For: The Landless People's Movement and the Politicization of Urban-Rural Division in South Afric*a, Thesis presented to Harvard College for Bachelor of Arts and a paper for the CCS.
[67] Fine, R. "Civil Society Theory and the Politics of Transition in South Africa", in ROAPE, Nov. 92, Issue 55, p. 82

Romanticizing the Multitude: Realities of autonomous power and the carnival

"This leads us from discussing the collective solipsism of a pleasure-politics in its full swing to its final component: the transformation from solipsism to resistance."[68]
- Tim Jordan, 2001

Linked to the politics of *globalization from below*, is the direct nature of resistance to capitalism which has at its core creativity based upon collective consciousness and autonomy. Greater significance is attached to a battle in which we use our bodies rather than the violence and orthodox tactics of "terrorism" and top-down armed struggle aimed at the revolutionary seizure of the state. This in turn evokes notions of movements forged from democratic expressions and impulses marking transgression from the closure of many liberation movements of the past.[69] The extent to which this new revolutionary is the product of the cracks thrown up by the structure, or of a subject which has more recourse to some kind of implicit humanity or anti-authoritarianism, characterizes one fundamental debate around the momentum for *globalization from below*. We have already suggested that *commodification* and neo-liberalism have played crucial roles across social structures in catalysing anti-capitalist global movements. However, whether subjects have any origin of agency, action or voluntarism that goes outside of and/or beyond the structure remains one of the key questions regarding social movements. Taking key ideas from Lacan, Slavoj Zizek weaves together the final elements into our understanding of revolutionary subjects.

Zizek gets more conceptual mileage out of the structure through an exploration of the interpolation process, and the contribution by the subject within it. This involves taking the notion of the indeterminate social body from Laclau – where the ruptures of *commodofication* create space for historical actors – but also borrowing from a Lacanian exploration of the traces of the subject before "subjectivization".[70] Given that subjectivization is a perpetual motion, the elements of the subject within this process must bring or represent something to the subject beyond structural causality. Zizek states that the subject's being is eclipsed by language culminating in the subject slipping under or behind the signifier. The subject is submerged by language, the only trace being a place marker or holder in the symbolic order.[71] The Lacanian

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[68] Jordan, T. (2002), op. cit. p. 93
[69] Those that sought to eliminate rather than contest opposition.
[70] Laclau, E. & Mouffe, C. (1985), op. cit.
[71] Fink, B. (1997), *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance*, Princetown: University Press, p. 52

subject is either always about to arrive, is on the verge of arriving, or will have arrived by some later moment in time.[72] The subject has a temporal and fleeting status, marked both behind and in front of the signifiers: the bearers of non-being. Zizek develops this idea of what is *missing* into a potentially emancipating project placing the subject in a transcendental corridor between signifiers:

"What the revolutionary imposes, however, is not so much the pure coherence of force but rather the insistent mechanism of desire".[73]

Fundamentally, we look for moments where structure leaves off and subjectivity begins. It is Zizek's notion of the symptom ("the substance of enjoyment") described as an inert stain and a pathological phenomenon laying the basis for something beyond the object within the subject.[74] Beyond interpolation is "the square of desire, fantasy, lack in the other and drive pulsating around some unbearable surplus-enjoyment."[75] We see it in the carnivalesque movements of today, the notion that we (as subjects of resistance) are everywhere.[76] We find it in new forms of media and social spaces.[77] The construction of societies and communities that challenge the dominance of homogeneity, capital and the market in anti-systemic struggles imbued with hope and euphoria.

Yet is this really an accurate description of current trends? Do we not over-estimate the role of social movements in their importance and potential? Rucht states:

"As with many so-called new movements in the past, there are also lines of continuity that tend to be first neglected but come to the fore particularly when historians begin to dig into the past. I would argue that the campaigns witnessed in the last few years are not new in terms of their ideological basis, social background of participants, means of mobilization, and tactics.[78]

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[72] ibid. p. 63
[73] Negri, A. & Hardt, M. (2004), op. cit. p. 356. Although this is not to confuse the affirmation of Negri's subject, see Negri, A, (2003), *Time for Revolution*, New York, Continuum, in comparison to subjects of lack according to Zizek. We seek to note their parallels in regard to forms of "irrationality" within struggle.
[74] ibid. p. 75
[75] ibid. p. 124
[76] Notes from Nowhere Collective, (2003), op. cit.
[77] See *Indymedia*, or Big Noise Film's (2003), *The Fourth World War*
[78] Rucht, D. (2003), *Social Movements Challenging Neo-liberal Globalization*, in *Social Movements and Democracy*, (ed.) Ibarra, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 222

We are warned not to posit too strong an association between social movements and the rejection of bureaucratic forms of organization and of political intermediation.[79] In this vein, the same party structures, hierarchies and elitism find form and replication in new movements just as they did in the past. Diani notes how movement activists "struggle to reconcile their aspiration to autonomous and independent action with persistent needs of coordination and decision making."[80]

This leads us to consider the way in which a trope of romanticism has been developed around social movements. Do we simply justify and re-create contemporary movements, creating ammunition for particular strands of political theory judged to be liberationist and correct within the current historical juncture. Are we carving out a fictional historicity within the identity of struggle that doesn't exist? It leads us to judge reactionary elements against the extent to which they are visionary. Moreover how accurate are we in attaching homogeneity to social movements and the broader leftist movement in the battle against globalization?[81] We will argue in Part 4 that there are important differences on the "left", particularly around vanguards and the continuation of Marxist-Leninist structures, which should be accentuated rather than de-emphasised given the demobilisation that occurred in civil society from the late 1980s. An attempt to wipe the slate clean between old and new movements might be useful in carving out this fresh and dynamic image for contemporary social movements, but is it truthful? It is perhaps all too easy to detect a strength and even a Stalinist tendency within the ANC rather than to identify inadequacies of strategy from *Old* social movements and how they play out in the *New*. [82]

There is perhaps a danger in ascribing a common identity to political leftist movements under the banner of anti-globalisation or anti-imperialism when they come to encompass elements which have a dubious commitment to democracy and social justice.[83] Specific questions related to the configuration of these networks and the role played in them by actors with a different structural location and different centrality, are rarely addressed.[84] However, despite being conscious of

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[79] Diani, M. (2003), *Direct Democracy and Leadership in Social Movement Networks*, in *Social Movements and Democracy*, (ed.) P. Ibarra, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 47
[80] Diani, M. (2003), op. cit. p. 48
[81] Bond, P. (2000), *Against Global Apartheid: South Africa Meets the World Bank, IMF and International Finance.* Cape Town: UCT Press p. 282
[82] Naidoo, P. & Veriavi, A. (2004), *Re-membering Movements: The Trade Union Movement and New Social Movements in Neo-Liberal South Africa*, Centre for Civil Society Report, Durban, p. 6
[83] For example within the global Anti-War movement.
[84] Diani, M. (2003), op. cit. p. 53

these problems within new social movements, the opportunities of a *globalization* of the struggle have injected hope and substance to the belief that *another world is possible.*

Possibilities for change

"Today's social movements are seen as playing a central role in producing the world in which we live, its social structures and practices, its meanings and cultural orientations, its possibilities for change. Social movements emerged out of the crisis of modernity; they oriented themselves towards the constitution of new orders, and embody a new understanding of politics and social life itself. They result in the formation of novel collective identities which foster social and cultural forms of relating and solidarity as a response to the crises of meanings and economies that the world faces today."[85]

- Antonio Escobar, 1992

Our task is to examine the extent characteristics we ascribe to the *new* social movements of South Africa correspond and break with the features of anti-apartheid struggles of the 1980s. Taking from our definition of the fresh dynamic nature of social movements, their "inspirational and creative" qualities, we seek to detect how they have taken shape in post-apartheid struggles around rights, land and services. [86] It is such struggles in South Africa that have attained the status of forging the "cutting edge" of contemporary politics and debates. [87] To what extent is this analysis fair and accurate?

We will find continuity between the struggles against apartheid and that of communities resisting neo-liberalism, but also important differences within the structure, ideology and dynamics of such movements which have once again come to attention from a renewal of grassroots struggle in post-apartheid South Africa.

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[85] Escobar, A. (1992), "Culture, Practice and Politics: Anthropology and the Study of Social Movements" in *Critique of Anthropology*, 12, 4, p. 396

[86] Vally, S. (2002), *The Political Economy of State Repression in South Africa*, Centre for Civil Society, Durban

[87] Bond, P. (2004), Talk in Pretoria; *Sub-imperialist South Africa*, June 15th

PART 2

DEMOCRACY, RIGHTS AND ANTI-CAPITALISM: PEOPLE'S POWER AND CIVIL SOCIETY UNDER APARTHEID



Soweto and After

"Ever since the 1976 township revolts, South African politics has been dominated by urban social movements."[1]

- Mark Swilling

There is a consensus across South African historiography that Soweto marked a watershed for South African struggles. People excluded from dominant society found the voice, expression and defiance which sowed the seeds of resistance that catalysed the urban social movements of the 1980s. Armed with revolutionary philosophies imbued from Black Consciousness (BC) and galvanized by the total rejection not just of Bantu education but of Bantu identity, black South African youth shattered any illusions that they were in any way passive subjects of apartheid.

Prior to 1976, there had been considerable exasperation within and towards the banned liberation movements (PAC and ANC). They viewed armed struggle as the only paradigm in which the racist state could be defeated. Yet, the apartheid system seemed stronger than ever, buoyed on by international capital and an array of wealthy and powerful supporters. The internal paralysis of the main liberation movements meant they were in no position to provide the vanguard for a successful guerrilla war with hundreds of activists detained throughout the 1960s and all opposition political activity stifled. Although the Durban strikes of 1973 had rocked Vorster's regime, it was the Soweto township uprising of 1976 which marked the success of collective conscious action by a defined group around immediate interests and grievances driven from below, rather than party-led politics directed from above. The emergence of BC philosophy had been the fundamental component, even if any "realisations" of systematic exploitation, liberal (white) paternalism and artificial ethnicity were not new phenomenon suddenly "discovered" in the 1970s. Nevertheless, BC thought was gaining in sophistication and currency across a wide section of society, taking in all activists who considered themselves anything but *White* as new strategies, tactics and structures sought to overthrow apartheid. Multi-racialism was seen to foster and reinforce hierarchical (white-black) relationships, compared to the self-reliance, determination and self-liberation connected to BC thinking. The 'multi-national' perspective of the Congress Alliance gradually lost much of its political resonance as the inspiration and

[1] Swilling, M. (1987), *Social Movements and Apartheid's Urban and Regional Systems: An East London Study*, in "Regional Restructuring Under Apartheid: Urban and Regional Policies in Contemporary South Africa", (ed.) R. Tomlinson and M. Addleson, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, p. 138

solidarity of BC sliced through the negative connotations of separate organizations of oppressed people. Soweto reflected a new confidence and defiance that left both the apartheid regime and the liberation movements shocked.[2] Moreover, this new political milieu was spurred on by regional events as Mozambique attained national liberation in 1975, and the struggle in Zimbabwe intensified to reveal the vulnerability of white power in Smith's regime.

Collectively driven social movements that articulated popular grievances and demands from townships, schools, rural communities and the workplace did so "in response to the oppressive conditions of daily life."[3] Yet, the vision of these movements (or *civics)* should not be downplayed. Non-racial democracy and rights centred ideology had economic redistribution at its heart. Civics took root in the late 1970s, the confluence of worker and community struggles in the Eastern Cape, forming particularly vibrant and effective organisations. These new structures mushroomed during the early and mid-1980s, at a time the Botha regime was attempting to locate township allies for its 1983 Black Local Authorities (BLA) legislation and elections.

By 1983 the civic movement was transformed into a truly mass movement. This transformation was led by groups such as the Cradock Residents Association (CRADORA), a group responsible for enlisting the vast majority of township residents into the street committees. Thereafter such committees proliferated in various townships and became a characteristic feature of civic associations throughout the country.[4] National liberation began to take on new meanings, moving from notions of protracted guerrilla war to autonomous and spontaneous eruptions of defiance against the symbols of the regime and towards the destination of *People's Powe*r. This was reflected in social unionism as trade unions forged links with community-based struggles.[5] Murray suggests unions such as the Orange Vaal General Workers Union (OVGWU), the General and Allied Workers' Union (GAWU), South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU), and the Motor Assembly and Components Workers Union of South Africa (MACWUSA)[*] "were distinguished by their regional base and active involvement in local-issue campaigns in the

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[2] Just as they were to the uprisings of 1984.
[3] Rantete, J. & Swilling, M. (1991), *Organization and strategies of the major resistance movements in the negotiation era*, in "Transition to Democracy: Policy Perspectives", (eds.), R. Lee & L. Schlemmer, Cape Town: OUP, p. 201
[4] Shubane, K. (1991), *Black Local Authorities: a contraption of control*, in *Apartheid City in Transition*, (ed.) Mark Swilling, Richard Humphries and Khela Shubane, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, p. 73
[5] Webster, E. (1988), *The Rise of Social Movement Unionism: The Two Faces of the Black Trade Union Movement in South Africa*, in Frankel, P. Pines, N. Swilling, M. (eds.), "State, Resistance and Change in South Africa", Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers, pp. 174-196
[*] A breakaway from the Federation of South Africa Trade Unions (FOSATU) automobile-based affiliate

townships".[6] Unions worked with the employed and the unemployed and sponsored township campaigns (such as payment boycotts) in forming the impetus for partnerships that secured the integration of social unionism in grassroots movements.

The UDF, Civics and People's Power

"Some critics of civics trumpet divisions (class, ethnicity, gender, generation) and focus on the difficulty of achieving a unified community movement. But in our history I believe the AAC represented a new dynamic approach. We were able to harness the energetic youth, who helped set up structures by which the AAC could function … the people began to ask for, and consider, alternative ways of living their lives."[7]

- Mzwanele Mayekiso, leader of the Alexander Action Committee (AAC), 1993

On the 3rd September, 1984, the day Botha's Tricameral Parliament was inaugurated, townships across the Vaal triangle exploded in a new wave of defiance and anger. Communities throughout the country followed suit as, civic, student and youth groups, sought to mobilise residents against the official local government system and in support of other demands based around majority rule and economic redistribution. In several townships, BLA's collapsed and groups set up alternative structures to represent residents and, in some cases, to administer parts of the township. By the time the state of emergency was declared on the 12th of June 1986, struggle in South Africa had reached unprecedented heights.[8] By end of the year several thousand people had been detained, largely community and student activists, and hundreds were dead.

The United Democratic Front (UDF) had initially been formed to co-ordinate national resistance to Botha's constitutional reforms. Working hand in hand with the Tricameral system in the maintenance of apartheid had been the introduction of new forms of local government in the townships. BLA's implemented from 1982 offered a measure of control of the institutions of local government to urban communities.[9] However, these structures were totally insufficient and purely a control mechanism designed to enlist the support of conservative sections of the

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[6] Murray, M. (1987*), South Africa: Time of Agony, Time of Destiny*, London: Verso, p. 157
[7] Mayekiso, M. (1993), "The Legacy of Ungovernability", *Southern African Review of Books*, vol. 5, No. 6, Issue 28, Nov/Dec, p. 24
[8] Leading to the belief that South Africa was on the verge of an inevitable Socialist revolution. See Sweezy, P, & Magdoff, R, (1986), *The Stakes in South Africa*, Monthly Review 37, No. 11
[9] Shubane, K. (1991), op. cit. p. 64

township communities, contributing to significant class fissure.[10] Intense unpopularity, reflected in voter turnouts, was soon translated through the civics into a mass campaign to weave local resistance and defiance into the national platform of the UDF. [11]

The UDF provided organisational and conceptual links between disparate localised struggles and the overall struggle for national political change, thereby boosting local-local developments.[12] However, events tended to eclipse the UDF in terms of organization and mobilization, even if there was success in forging a Front from a plethora of civil society groups. In terms of gauging the township resistance, the UDF like the ANC in exile, remained behind events on the ground. The ANCs call for "ungovernability", made from exile in early 1985 symbolized their own surprise at having been caught off-guard by the escalating internal events of 1984 and a need to re-align with the masses. It was also not until 1985 that the UDF supported the call for the country to be "rendered ungovernable". Previously they had enacted consumer boycotts with mixed success and failed to sway any significant sector of the trade union movement into the organisation. Marais considers this initial inaction of the UDF held "grave implications for the democratic movement".[13] Yet it symbolized, perhaps, the uneasy relationship between the UDF on a national level and volatile local struggles on the ground or workplace. A change in emphasis with the rising tempo of events ensured that by early 1986, the UDF had consolidated township and civil resistance into its own structures to forge a coherent anti-Apartheid and Charterist Front.

Seekings calls it "an exhilarating period, with new organisations and protests appearing across the country", and of organisations previously wary of the UDF now joining the sub-regional structures."[14] There quickly emerged a vision of building organs of *People's Power* in the townships. While the UDF was able to exercise little control or direction over the often spontaneous expressions of resistance from the grassroots, they tried to cement what was going on into a national platform. The revival of the Charter made the UDF the first movement to revive the Congress tradition since the ANC had been banned. [15]

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[10] ibid. p. 66
[11] For township voter turnouts see Mashabela, H. (1988), *Townships of the PWV*, Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations
[12] Seekings, J. (2000), *A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa*, London: James Curry, p. 170
[13] Marais, H. (2001), *South Africa Limits to Change: The Political Economy of Transition*, 2nd edition, London: Zed Books p. 53
[14] Seekings, J, (2000), op. cit. p.175
[15] McKinley, D. (1997), *The ANC and the Liberation Struggle*, London: Pluto Press, p. 65

The UDF was structured at three levels: national, regional and local. The organization claimed its democratic nature and credibility from the fact that its operations were stemmed from local grassroots organisations which signed up to the Front. Coovadia describes the nature of such organisations:

"Civics are local social movements accountable to local communities. They have elected executives, formal constitutions, and their organizational structures are based on active grassroots participation by their membership."[16]

With the collapse of the BLAs, such civic associations became the de-facto local civil administration in many parts of the country. Murray states that in some cases civics assumed full or partial responsibility for the development of school curricula, the administration of justice through people's courts, community policing, rubbish collection, the allocation of licenses for businesses, and the granting of permits for housing sites.[17] This portrayal of the civics, one in which the ideology of *People's Power* is hinged upon, is itself contested within Apartheid historiography. Certainly the state's brutal repression made the civics in most parts of the country little more than short-term experiments. Although, it is impossible in a study of this scope to gain a thorough insight into the many moments of insurrection and hope of the 1980s, it will be useful to try and etch out the kind of common experience which shaped this era of struggle.

Mamelodi, 40 km east of Pretoria population is perhaps a microcosm of township resistance in the 1980s. With a population of 320,000, Mamelodi was typical of the medium sized townships that sprawled across the Pretoria Witwatersrand Vereeniging (PWV). Artificially constructed to create a pool of cheap black labour, Mamelodi was one of apartheid's numerous and infamous dumping grounds. Initial uprisings in 1984 that led to the breakdown of the BLA brought the terror and security apparatus into Mamelodi, serving to sharpen the focus of civics on further insurrection and ungovernability. In the wake of police shootings, various civic groups (among them the Mamelodi Parents' Action Committee, the Mamelodi Youth Organisation, the Mamelodi Students' Congress, the Mamelodi Civic Association and the Mamelodi Women's Group) all of them affiliates of the UDF, set up street and section committees in an attempt to organise residents to support demands for the removal of troops from the township. Mashabela

[16] Coovadia, C. (1991), *The Role of the Civic Movement*, in "Apartheid City in Transition", (ed.) Mark Swilling, Richard Humphries and Khela Shubane, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, p. 336
[17] Murray, M. (1994), op. cit. p. 170

notes: “It was not clear whether the committees were elected or nominated”, and that although “weakened by the emergency regulations, they do appear to have survived them.”[18]

While details differ from area to area, the ideal of *People’s Power* emerged around the street or yard committee. This structure was an executive of ten to twelve people elected at a meeting of all the people on the street, and according to the UDF was “not just those from one political tendency”. [19] Again within ideal functioning, street committees would meet at least once a week and attend to the social, economic and political issues that emerged in the polity. They sent representatives to zone, area or section committees that would represent upwards of twenty-five streets. Finally a township civic executive would be chosen at a meeting of all the sections.[20] Certainly some of the rhetoric and ideology behind grassroots forms of democratic expression matched the classic NSM theory we outlined in **Part 1**, and was to provide the backbone for the renewal of grassroots activity ten years into “freedom”.

It is worth pausing before we analyse the distinctions between the rhetoric and reality of *People’s Power* to note that it was not the exclusive territory of the UDF (and the ANC). In May 1983, shortly after the emergence of the UDF, the National Forum (NF) Committee was formed outside of the Congress tradition proclaiming a more leftist, BC direction. Charges that the UDF, which had around 200 affiliates, was top-heavy and undemocratic formed the major impetus for the organisation. Murray notes that, “While it adopted a strongly-worded Manifesto of the Azanian people, it retained a federated structure in which all affiliates continue to operate without centralized coordination.”[21]

What distinguished the Forum from the UDF was an avowedly class analysis and identification of black working class interests as the mobile, and beneficiary, of genuine liberation. The UDF made vague allusions to the working class throughout the 1980s but always retained that the struggle against apartheid was a struggle first and foremost for deracialisation. Petit-bourgeois tendencies within the UDF formed the crux of outside criticism, which came from the left, which also had strong concerns of the “stagism” of the national democratic revolution.[22]

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[18] Mashabela, H. (1988), op. cit. p. 105
[19] Morobe, M. (1987), “Towards a People’s Democracy: The UDF view”, *ROAPE* No. 40 December, p. 84
[20] ibid. and Swilling, M. & Shubane, K. (1991), *Negotiating Urban Transition: The Soweto Experience*, in “Transition to Democracy: Policy Perspectives”, (ed.) R. Lee & L. Schlemmer, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, p. 235
[21] Murray, M. (1987), op. cit. p. 221
[22] See Hudson, P. (1988), op. cit. for discussion of the SACP and NDR.

For example the Cape Action League (CAL) fundamentally rejected the strategy of mobilizing the popular masses solely on the basis of opposing racial discrimination. Armien Abrahams, the media officer of CAL noted:

"This is the argument of the two-stage position, that once you've got an equal franchise all sorts of other things become possible. It is deceiving people to claim that mere mobilization against racial discrimination is going to bring about national conventions, negotiated agreements. It may be that some of this can happen, but it will be for the strengthening, rather than the erosion, of capitalism."[23]

Generally, the preoccupations of the NF mirrored those of the UDF: method and place of organization, the nature of links with civic associations and local-level bodies, and the character of tactical alliances sponsoring a variety of local or regional mass campaigns. While we will suggest that there were groups outside of the UDF who made an important contribution to notions of *People's Power*, they lacked the popularity and influence the UDF was able to build across national and local levels. Although many local civic affiliates of the UDF were often sceptical and critical of the national movement, and particularly the intentions of many of its leaders, the organisation retained magnetism seeped within the symbols of liberation and a militant image. Social movements formed an uneasy alliance with the hierarchical, top-down leadership structures in which political discourse was contested. However, the goal of national liberation and the sharing of militant and revolutionary symbols and slogans provided unity.

Such magnetism took time to take root within the trade union movements. While the UDF received support from the Congress aligned unions such as South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), some of the social unionist factions we have already highlighted were unwilling to affiliate during the first years of the UDF. This position was enunciated by the Municipal and General Workers' Union of South Africa (MGWUSA) who had clearly broken with the traditional union conceptions of essentialist economism in their article in 1984 as to why they would not join the UDF:

"No "working class party" is ever composed only of workers. Anyone who is prepared to fight for the kind of fundamental changes that would enable workers to be free would be welcome in

[23] Quoted in Murray, M. (1987), op. cit. p. 228

any working class party. This also points to the mistake of assuming that all workers are somehow automatically committed to the struggle for fundamental change. It is true that a progressive political direction can most naturally take root amongst the working class – it is not true that a political leadership composed of workers is automatically progressive. Nor is it true that a political leadership composed of workers will guarantee that the interests of the workers are promoted by that leadership."[24]

Certainly the Union had perceived strands within the UDF associated with the Charter that forged their deep scepticism as to how the interests of not only workers, but the unemployed, retired and so on would be reflected in any UDF victory in South Africa. Although they welcomed the formation of the UDF in the battle against apartheid, their analysis of the goals of struggle politics prevented affiliation: "We believe that it is impossible to separate off Apartheid from the capitalist system it has fed. A truly committed opposition to Apartheid (and its consequences) will lay the foundations for a fundamental change in the entire system of South Africa."[25] Nevertheless, many of the social unionist movements were to subscribe to the organisation during the turbulent years of the mid 1980s, and community based Unions played an important role in stay-aways, strikes, boycotts within a variety of local movements that were affiliated to the UDF.[26] Again the dialectic between the national movements, its leaders and the activities on the ground saw "ungovernability" driven from the bottom-up and only incorporated in leadership rhetoric afterwards.

South Africa had a strong tradition of industrial workerist and syndicalist leaning Unions. The Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) stressed the creation of democratic, factory-based structures around the principles of worker control and accountability of leadership.[27] These elements of union activity were also critical of the reformism and class analysis of the UDF. However, the formation of a broader Union movement was to provide the important catalyst in changing this. While the trade union left shifted the focus of opposition from rhetorical challenges to the apartheid state to nurturing autonomous social institutions in civil society, the pace of events combined with larger questions around political power created a

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[24] Municipal and General Workers' Union of South Africa (MGWUSA) on the UDF (1982), *SALB* 9 no. 2, p. 73
[25] ibid. p. 75
[26] COSATU, *Years of Forging Unity: The Stormy Road to Union Unity*, http://www.cosatu.org.za/shop/ss0406-5.html, accessed January 2005
[27] Murray, M, (1994), op. cit. p. 144 and see MacShane, D. Plaut, M. & Ward, D. (1984), *Power! Black workers, their unions and the struggle for freedom in South Africa*, Nottingham: Spokesman

milieu in which Unions were pushed into assimilation. As the dialectic unravelled it was presented as choice of 'political' or 'non-political' unionism. [28] Fine notes: "This was really no choice at all: it meant the assimilation of the unions into the political frame of the national liberation movement and the suspension of any 'third road' project."[29]

Thus the Union unity talks initiated in 1981, until the formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) on 29 November 1985, created an important ally for the UDF. The UDF had stated in 1982 that: "It would be easier to take decisions and to take action if the trade unions had already established themselves into a single federation."[30] Certainly COSATU, as fragile as it was in the first years, was a welcome boost to the growing constituency of the UDF

Rhetoric, reality and ideology of People's Power

"The time for shouting socialist slogans is over. The time for implementing socialist programmes is now."[31]

- Jay Naidoo, Free Mandela rally in Mitchell's Plain (1986)

Leftist critique of the UDF has tended to concentrate on the concerns we can see outlined by the MGWUSA. That the nature of the organisation might result in a conciliatory movement and onto a trajectory of elite-pacting whereby dominant classes and structures would retain their position and strength, to the detriment of the interests of South Africa's masses, has clearly been identified by many analyses of the UDF and the Congress Alliance from mid 1980s.[32] In New Year of 1986, ANC and UDF leaders met in Stockholm, with the ANC instructing the UDF to "expand the democratic movement among white South Africans."[33] By 1987 McKinley asserts that "the UDF leadership was now focusing substantial attention and organisational energy on wooing white capital and political liberals bore testimony to the defeat of any genuine notion of an insurrectionary implementation of *People's Power*."[34]

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[28] Fine, R. (1992), op. cit. p. 78
[29] ibid.
[30] The UDF on The Unions (1982), SALB 9 No. 2, p. 84
[31] Murray, M. (1987), op. cit. p. 417
[32] Saul, J. (1993), *Recolonization and Resistance in South Africa in the 1990s*, New Jersey: Africa World Press and McKinley, D. (1997), op. cit.
[33] Seekings, J. (2000), *A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa*, London: James Currey, p. 167
[34] McKinley, D. (1997) op. cit. p. 75

The narrative of the usurping of grassroots struggles by leadership elites neatly explains a narrative of betrayal carried out by the leadership of the Congress Alliance and their petit-bourgeois interests. While the possibility of an insurrectionary seizure or transformation of power was fundamentally undermined by the strategic vision and practice of an externalised liberation movement, did local struggles really lay the foundation for the potential extension of grassroots empowerment and a vision of transformation centred on a materially located struggle?[35] This requires us to look at the interests of the leadership before assessing what features of the local movements we might be romanticising in the realities of *People's Power* and grassroots movements. For if such visionary movements and a culture of democracy had taken root across South Africa, how was economic redistribution so obviously ignored in the eventual South African transition, and not transformation, to "democracy"? Were there not features within local movements, many of them mirroring national and vanguardist party structures that paved the way for their own demobolization together with the nature of a populist alliance.

Lodge defines three streaks within the leadership of the UDF: nationalist, national democratic and socialist.[36] Certainly the Socialist leadership held much prominence within the organisation and its propaganda. Such rhetoric was vital in countering claims from civil society and working class groups that the UDF was reformist or petit bourgeois in nature. Morobe provides a typical position of the left in the UDF:

"When we speak of majority rule, we do not mean that black faces must simply replace white faces in parliament. A democratic solution in South Africa involves all South Africans, and in particular the working class, having control over all areas of daily existence ... This for us is the essence of democracy. When we say that the people shall govern, we mean at all levels and spheres, and we demand that there be real, effective control on a daily basis."[37]

However, the unswerving adherence of the UDF to the Freedom Charter and to the notion of the national democratic revolution meant any socialist or radical aims were always open to contestation by liberal and bourgeois thought, particularly that within the leadership circles of the ANC in exile.[38] This stems from the necessary recognition that the Freedom Charter

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[35] As suggested in McKinley, D. ibid. p. 73
[36] Lodge, T. (1989), *The United Democratic Front, Leadership and Ideology*, in "Can South Africa Survive: Five Minutes to Midnight", (ed.) John D. Brewer, London: Macmillan Press p. 213
[37] Morobe, M. (1987), op. cit. p. 82
[38] Thabo Mbeki in particular arguing from the early 1980s that the ANC was not a socialist organization.

"accommodates the aspirations of a broad range of groups; small businessmen, professionals, peasants, and of course, workers".[39] Thus while the UDF made frequent reference in its rhetoric to the clause in the Charter which stated that "The People Shall Govern", it wasn't clear which "people" they meant and in which way. The Charter, rather than forging a set of universals that could carry forward a blueprint based upon economic and participatory democracy, was located in a 1950's reading of British socialism, parliamentarism and welfarism.[40] Peter Hudson's elaboration on FOSATU'S concerns of the Freedom Charter fleshes out the danger a common Front around a Charter could have if it did not firmly commit to certain principles and positions which would be non-negotiable.[41] Moreover, there was nothing intrinsic within the accomplishment for the first part of the national democratic revolution (ending racialized apartheid) for the next to take place (socialism). Indeed, by opening up contestation from a variety of perspectives in the quest to destroy apartheid first, deal with capitalism later, worker and social movement interests could be seriously undermined in a *war of position* with dominant structures and classes in some form of negotiated settlement. Nevertheless, the document was enormously popular amongst South Africans, many of whom held great expectations about the transformative effects the Charter would enact. It was a potentially useful document for the grassroots movements if it could be implemented in justice based visions. Yet, liberal or bourgeois control of the Freedom Charter threatened the deep transformative qualities it might yield.

UDF ideology came to focus on the political goal of removing Apartheid, leading to the assumption that the dismantling of the Apartheid state would lead to a free, democratic united South Africa with the question of class domination by the bourgeoisie negated. There was little or no attempt to develop a sophisticated class analysis of the society and to illustrate inequalities, domination, poverty and unemployment that ran at a racial and economic level. As Silver and Sfarnas noted in one of the first critiques of the UDF, their primary impulse flows from "the belief that race is to be concentrated upon as the most overt form that domination takes in South Africa."[42]

The consolidation of a range of interests, most of whom had a goal of going beyond removing the political system of apartheid, into a movement that was vulnerable to bourgeois and liberal

[39] Lodge, T. (1989), op. cit. p. 215
[40] Ideologically similar to the RDP.
[41] Hudson, P. (1988), op. cit.
[42] Silver, I. & Sfarnas, A. (1983), "The UDF: A 'Workerist' response", *SALB 8*, 8/9, Sep/Oct, p. 101

interests provokes, as we will see in **Part 4**, important questions to activists in today's South Africa around the purpose and function of the Social Movements Indaba (SMI).

We now turn to the question of features implicit at the local level of UDF affiliation and the nature of *People's Power*. As Lodge states: "Any analysis of the UDF, though, should not be limited to the bureaucratic boundaries of its often patchy organisation, for the UDF functions more in the fashion of a social movement than a deliberately contrived political machine."[43]

We cannot possibly hope to attain anything that comes close to an intricate analysis of the moments, spaces and visions of *People's Power*. Instead we seek to explore the milieu of social movement politics of the 1980s on the basis of Marais' suggestion that for "a while, the variety and sweep of initiatives, broadly gathered under the canopy of the anti-apartheid struggle, offered hints of Giles Deleuze's concept of rhizomatic phenomena: a flowering of autonomous activities, linked laterally and not subjugated to hierarchical ideological and strategic conformity."[44]

While we have noted the surprise in which the external liberation movements witnessed the initial townships rebellions, it was not long before much political capital was being made out of the widespread insurrections of the 1980s. The ANC publication *Sechaba* asserted that:

"In the Eastern Cape, the Reef, some areas of Natal and in the Orange Free State, whole districts have been liberated by the people, and both civic government and administration of justice have become the business of the people." [45]

It was through these civic organisations that people have, we are told, "at last discovered" direct participation in democratic life and are busy "developing political self-responsibility."[46] That the masses had somehow "discovered" their historical purpose underpinned the continued hierarchical approach the ANC in-exile held for the seizure of state power and the active (but ultimately passive) role of the subject within it: "These organs of *People's Power* should be regarded as historically inevitable, as they are clearly destined to be the embryos of our future democratic state."[47]

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[43] Lodge, T. (1989), op. cit. p. 206
[44] Marais, H. (2001), op. cit. p. 62
[45] Comrade Mzala, (1986), "Building People's Power", *Sechaba*, September, p. 8
[46] ibid. p. 8
[47] ibid. p. 13

The role of "dualism", between local and national groupings of power was to use the ANC's terminology "inevitably" weighted on one side. While the "whole conception of *People's Power* at this stage is decentralised and autonomous nation-wide People's Communes", it relied upon the implementation of "the Freedom Charter".[48] We are told these moments take part in some higher revolution, in a highly centralized seizure of power.[49]

However, even in the most militant townships the 'dual power' situations detected by insurrectionists could be more accurately described as 'ungovernable', reflecting not the usurping of power but its dispersal.[50] It has been suggested that political activity had as much to do with "constructing organisational hegemony and addressing local grievances, as it did with seeking to bolster a nascent national revolution."[51] This leads us to question whether Comrades corroded the direction and space opened by movements for the sake of maintaining ideological hegemony around the struggle.

It is interesting to note criticism that arose after the first UDF mass meetings and workshops:

"By selection of group leaders and with undue attention being paid in the report backs to minority opinions within the group, workshops function either to paralyse decision making or else to reinforce our opinion that very often these meetings are used to rubber stamp decisions taken elsewhere."[52]

Moreover there was criticism of single-issue civic groups and campaigns:

"Their programs are generally limited, e.g., agitation around the issue of rents without drawing out clearly the link to wages and hence economic exploitation at the site of production."[53]

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[48] ibid. p. 11
[49] ibid. p. 11
[50] Marais, H. (2001), op. cit. p. 58
[51] Carter, C. (1992), "Community and Conflict: The Alexandra Rebellion of 1986", *JSAS*, Vol. 18, No. 1, March, p. 118
[52] Silver, I. & Sfarnas, A. (1983), op. cit. p. 99
[53] ibid. p. 100

Part of our critical theory in **Part 1** outlined the linking up of a series of sites of oppression in the creation of a common meeting space towards transformation. Perhaps this early criticism of the UDF proved to be an unfair one given some of the space was to open up in certain spatial localities. Other observers of township politics have suggested that:

"When township street committees sprung up in 1984-86, they took one of two forms; either partisan differences were ignored or one organization took charge of the area and forcibly excluded all rivals."[54]

Such an analysis is far too simplistic and ignores the ideological underpinnings and nuances that played out across local levels. The Alexandra Action Committee (AAC) formed to unite residents after clashes between UDF and BCM.[55] While the peak of their operation lasted a few months, struggles played out against a background of rights to housing, education and services and the most intense state repression.

In 1981 the Soweto Civic Association (SCA) failed to mobilize the community in support of a call for a rent boycott to protest against increased tariffs and various local political grievances. However, by 1985-6 a fresh leadership style was evident from the efforts of a new layer of youth, working class, and intellectual leaders opposed to the old elitist methods.[56] The SCA welcomed all: ANC, BCM and PAC. Yet this did not mean that it was apolitical. Its leadership, media and messages at meetings constantly emphasized the link between socio-economic problems and the structure of political power."[57]

Neither the UDF nor the ANC could claim the credit for the formation of street committees and other manifestations of *People's Power*, but sought like other groups to further a particular political project. In the brutal and violent context of repression, utopian ideals and spaces were easy victims for the justice meted out by *comrades* in the desire for a homogenous and undivided front against apartheid or the settling of scores within local power politics.[58]

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[54] Horowitz, D. (1991), op. cit. p. 22
[55] Mashabela, H. (1988), op. cit. p. 18
[56] Swilling, M. & Shubane, K. (1991), op. cit. p. 235
[57] ibid. p. 235
[58] For how the some within the ANC looked upon any black opposition – particularly the BCM movement – *Ten Years of Soweto Uprising* by Sello Moeti reveals a seething analysis of liberation forces outside the movement, *Sechaba*, June 1986, pp. 2 – 10

Any analysis of 1980s South Africa should be grounded in an understanding that many of the ideological and practical differences that appeared significant during the relative freedom to organise of the period 1980-85, appear much less so to organisations on the run. Practical problems of pursuing campaigns, as well as sheer survival, displaced ideological conflicts.[59]

The imposition of a nationwide state of emergency in June 1986 ushered in a period of severe state repression that substantially constrained the level and especially form of township protests.[60] The regime decided to shore up the BLAs by force if need be. 26,000 people were detained in 1986 and Soweto was the only township where the committees openly survived.[61] Ungovernable moments of disrupture and insurrection continued, with and without "organisation", to shape the final years of Apartheid South Africa.

Mayekiso has taken issue with those academics, the majority of whom were white, who have criticised the people's war for its violence and bad political practice:

"The potentially revolutionary situation during this period was based on a popular association of apartheid with capitalism, not simply with a lack of civil rights. It is our response to this condition that must be clearly understood if the first democratic government aims to achieve social stability."[62]

Thus, even if struggle took brutal forms, they were nothing compared to the violence and inequalities endemic within the whole system of capitalism. Economic democracy and redistribution was fundamentally linked to any future stability, countering the position exemplified by Horowitz, which equated democracy with bourgeois control.

Mayekiso elaborates on the lessons yielded by the 1980s:

"For those of us committed to a vibrant post-apartheid civil society, the mid-1980s also taught us what we know about politics: how to organize, how to bring structural analysis to bear, how to contest both geographical and ideological turf, and how to build a national democratic movement

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[59] Catholic Institute for International Relations, (1987), *South Africa in the 1980s: State of Emergency*, 4th edition, Nottingham: Russell Press, p. 42
[60] Seekings, J. (1991), *Township Resistance in the 1980s*, in "Apartheid City in Transition", (ed.) Mark Swilling, Richard Humphries and Khela Shubane, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, p. 291
[61] Mashabela, H. (1988), op. cit. p. 5
[62] Mayekiso, M. (1993), op. cit. p. 28

featuring economic justice. We make no apologies for doing all this in the context of 'ungovernability'."[63]

For it was these groups who bore the brunt of reactionary forces to any change. Certainly any analysis of liberation groups during a period of *Intifada* needs to be grounded in the extreme conditions resistance faces. But what tactics and strategies can be justified? Can democracy be built by means which take on an increasingly undemocratic form? Throughout history the violence meted out against individuals and movements challenging dominant classes, ideology and interests, needs little elaboration. The question for new social movements, just as it was for the civics, is how to reinvent struggle under the most testing oppression without mirroring the hierarchical, top-down and elitist structures which they have challenged and recognised as the root of the problem.

In the second half of 1988, there was evidence of the re-emergence of anti-apartheid organisations in Soweto. Student activists called boycotts at some schools, youth activists acted to prevent the council evicting rent defaulters whose houses had been sold, and street committees were operating.[64] These grievances and demands of certain rights provide the continuity of struggles against apartheid to struggles against neo-liberalism.

Ultimately it was as Seekings summarised "deemed more important to ensure that the Front was effective than that it be democratic."[65] We note that some of the features of South African liberation politics of the 1970s/80s opened up new radical political terrain, creating spaces and visions which dissipated within the ANC's hegemony over the nature and form of social transformation. The local strength of civic organizations rested primarily on their campaigning over locally and immediately important grievances and their appeal diminished when they neglected this.

Progressive UDF rhetoric such as: "Our democratic aim therefore is to control every aspect of our lives, and not just the right (important as it is) to vote for a central government every four to five years", gave way to co-option and compromise as it became embroiled in power politics. [66] At the

[63] Mayekiso, M. (1993), op. cit. p. 23
[64] Mashabela, H. (1988), op. cit. p. 146
[65] Seekings, J. (2000), op. cit. p. 190
[66] UDF (1987), *Towards a People's Democracy: The UDF view*, p. 83

same time the vague nature of the Freedom Charter enabled a variety of groups to justify certain positions within the Charterist movement.

Resistance in the form of social movements was shaped by the spatial confines of the townships. It many ways it tended to perpetuate the urban/rural divide and the artificial dichotomy that existed from relations under colonialism.[67] Such an emphasis, and one that has been reflected in our exploration thus far, negated the role of rural land struggles. The challenge of identities, the narrative of land reclamation, and the struggle of exploited farm labour never received the attention that the insurrection and ungovernability of the townships and their civics received. However, and as we will explore later in the week, land was to become one of the most crucial issues leading up to and after 1994. It reflected the "right" to land that punctuated the discourse of social movements, and which gripped the aspirations of farm labourers and workers across the country.

Radical spaces that occurred outside state structures in the 1980s did so in anti-capitalist visions of access to land, housing and services. That these were not institutionalized during the South African transition, has only served to contribute in many respects to a renewed focus of struggle and resistance: from apartheid to neo-liberalism.

[67] Alexander, A. (2004), op. cit.

PART 3

STRUGGLES AGAINST APARTHEID AND NEO-LIBERALISM: TRANSITION WITHOUT TRANSFORMATION



The Great Betrayal or National Democratic Revolution?

"The nationalisation of the mines, banks and the monopoly industry is the policy of the ANC, and a change or modification of our views in this regard is inconceivable."[1]
- Nelson Mandela, February 1990

The debate regarding the transition, from apartheid to democracy, bears the most crucial questions in South African society ten years after the first elections. The first decade of independence has left activists and those enjoying citizenship for the first time to ponder: "What was the struggle for"? Moreover, interpretations of the transition in South Africa are important in the sense that they give direction, impetus, experiences and shape to the project of transformation and future development. That transformation is imperative in a society wracked by excruciating poverty, dispossession and violence is agreed upon by all developmental discourse. But let us begin by fleshing out two diametrically opposed viewpoints of how South Africa "decolonized".

The Great Betrayal

This position suggests that the ANC leadership negotiated a flawed agreement with the Nationalists, and were lured away from any socialist principles they might have held into a process of elite-pacting which sold-out the masses. Today the inequalities and injustices of apartheid have been reinforced by the subsequent class project that the ANC has pursued. That is the creation of a black bourgeoisie and enrichment programme for those with access to a new patriarchy, which has formed common interests with IFIs and capital. This has ensured important domestic and international allies remain onside while revolutionary identity, symbols and culture gives the ANC a strong social base amongst the masses. However, this popularity belies an empty rhetoric, as policy documents such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) have been deconstructed as the Ramaphosa Delivery Programme in the *great betrayal* of the liberation struggle.[2]

[1] Quoted in Murray, M. (1994) op cit. p. 19
[2] Cyril Ramaphosa (once Chairperson of NUMSA) is popularly seen as making the Unions in the 1980s only to break them a decade on.

National Democratic Revolution

Alternatively there is the narrative that the ANC secured a peaceful transition to democracy in a political milieu which threatened to spiral out of control and create a civil war in the country, with potentially devastating consequences. The legacy of apartheid is slowly coming undone as macro economic policies forged upon limited investment and trickle-down economics create growth in previously deprived areas. According to this view, tough and challenging global markets and influence of neo-liberal economics, limit the policies available to the government who have to play a tight game between maintaining stability and redressing apartheid. Therefore growth rather than redistribution has been opted for as the catalyst of social justice. This is expected to gradually take root in some of the poorest communities in South Africa. Some within this paradigm see it as a period of consolidating "working class" power in a stagiest conception of the *national democratic revolution* which will ultimately lead to socialism.[3] Moreover, South Africa seeks to use its generally positive international status to pressure institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the G8 countries, for a better deal for Africa and the "Third World" as a whole.

Ironically those who call themselves Marxists adhere to both positions. However, most interpretations are lodged somewhere in between. For example, most critiques of the ANC negotiated settlement tend not to underplay the immense pressure of international and domestic capital.[4] However, our task is to tease out an understanding of the transition to democracy that can be of value in terms of assessing the relationship of the state with civil society. We will find accommodation for both NDR and *Great Betrayal* perspectives. Through that we hope to unravel questions and critiques, which apply to social movements in the context of continuing struggle for social justice and the systemic forces of government and market forces.

We begin with an overview of civil society during the early 1990s placed in the context of the negotiated settlement. The notion that the ANC did its best with limited choices will require us to look at neo-liberalism and systemic trends within international capital generally to assess what and if alternatives existed. This might yield some starting points for perceiving roles and forms in which current movements may pursue anti-capitalist agendas.

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[3] For further reading on the SACP see Thomas, D. (Forthcoming), *Hegemonic Struggle in Post-Apartheid South Africa: the Role of the South African Communist Party (SACP)*, PhD Dissertation at Queens University, Canada

[4] Marais, H. (2001), op. cit.

Depolitization after Apartheid

The dying days of apartheid marked the dramatic re-emergence of civil society. Under the junta-like conditions of the mid to late 1980s, civil society had largely dissipated across the country.[5] Yet, by the end of 1990, campaigns aimed at the resignation of councillors had led to the collapse of 40 per cent of the countries 262 BLAs, and had revived the restiveness which characterized the townships in the mid-1980s.[6] Rantete and Swilling stated with some optimism in 1990 that around 300 civic associations were operating countrywide.[7] However, as the negotiations towards a post-Apartheid South Africa took shape, civil society underwent a re-assessment of goals, strategies and identities.

Most commentary saw that, in one way or another, the return of civil society was a crucial asset to the aspirations for a democratic transition and transformation. Yet, these conceptions were far from homogeneous. Stephen Friedman, Director for the Centre of Policy Studies (CPS) at this time, noted:

"One way of reducing the potentially destabilizing effect of partly unfulfilled expectations is to break the pattern in which the impoverished (and, at present, voteless) see economic improvement as something bestowed upon them by leaders. "[8]

Friedman's argument took the logic that bringing in as many civil society groups into decision making as possible would make feasible the important concessions that would have to be made to attain peace. "The result will be not only to broaden democracy but to increase prospects for voluntary support for difficult compromises."[9] Civil society began to take on a paradigm by which it could form corporate agreements for their own interests and perhaps establish more autonomy from top-down, symbolic politics in the future.

Mayekiso stated:

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[5] Soweto as we have already highlighted remained an exception.
[6] Shubane. K. (1991), op. cit. p. 72
[7] Rantete, J, & Swilling, M. (1991), op. cit. p. 203
[8] Friedman, S. (1991), *The National Party and the South African transition*, p. 191
[9] Friedman, S. (1992), *Beyond Symbols? The politics of economic compromise, in* "Wealth or Poverty? Critical Choices for South Africa", (ed.), Robert Schrire, Cape Town: OUP, p. 619

"A post-apartheid social movement, in seeking to engage with the new democratic local government, has to develop new methods of organisation in order to engage and cooperate or collaborate with the state."[10]

The incoming state was seen as the catalyst for *Peoples Power*, if it could be given the right kick-start by the civics. Similarly COSATU found "corporatist deal-making, represented essentially tactical compromises that in no sense jeopardized the pursuit of system-transformative ends and socialist goals".[11]

More militant groups in civil society continued to engage in various forms of defiance against symbols of the state.[12] This was no doubt influenced by a belief in the increased bargaining strength such actions would have in the future, but equally as plausible is that such movements were articulating sets of demands that would be implicit to their visions of future systems of local governance (such as service delivery).

Civic groups faced an identity crisis as a new national discourse of working with, rather than against, the future state took root across the country. Friedman suggested "many civic activists are far more comfortable with the old role than the proposed new one."[13] Dissonance to co-operation with the new state seemed to be largely symbolic and hollow.

PAC policy documents from June 1990 condemned negotiations as aimed at the protection of the "entrenched economic interest of the 'European capitalist settlers' and the co-option of the African petty bourgeois and elites into the capitalist system."[14] Moreover, it noted, "reliance on external missions of the liberation movement has undermined local initiatives by the Azanian people to liberate themselves."[15] A few years earlier the ANC's mouthpiece *Sechaba* had taken the same line. In an article titled "Dual Power", Mashinini noted: "it goes without saying that these embryonic organs of power have to be strengthened, consolidated and developed [for] when

[10] Mayekiso, M. (2003*), South Africa's Enduring Urban Crisis: The Local State and the Urban Social Movement with Particular Reference to Johannesburg*, in "Confronting Fragmentation: Housing and Urban Development in a Democratising Society", *(*eds.), Harrison P., Huchzermeye, M. & Mayekiso, M. Cape Town: UCT Press, p. 59
[11] Murray, M. (1994), op. cit. p. 162
[12] Shubane. K, (1991), op. cit. p. 72. These continued into the first post-Apartheid government around payments and boycotts.
[13] Friedman, S. (1992), op. cit. p. 617
[14] Rantete, J. & Swilling, M, (1991) op. cit. p. 218
[15] Quoted in Rantete, J. & Swilling, M. (1991), op. cit. p. 218

that moment arrives, [they] will be called upon to rise, arms in hand, and seize power."[16] That a peaceful settlement might be the only solution to end Apartheid was referred to as an "awful scenario".[17]

Yet the negotiated settlement began to reflect the desires just as much as fear of millions of South Africans. There can be no doubt the negotiations were spurred on by events in the Soviet Empire, as well as the lure of power to certain individuals. However, the genuine belief that a settlement could lead to a thorough and fair transformation of South African held resonance across anti-apartheid groups, as an outline of a new order appeared on the horizon.

Thus a lot hinged upon the relationship civil society would have with the Congress Alliance and how its visions would be incorporated into new policies. Overall, civic leaders reached a broad consensus not to simply collapse their organizations into emergent local ANC branches.[18] Behind the discussions, events on the ground were already shaping the role of future civil society form in a free South Africa. The political thaw left civic organisations to decide the extent they were local structures concerned with local problems, or were part of national formations concerned with constitutional issues. As negotiations around national socio-economic issues became increasingly within the ambit of the ANC, the UDF imploded and civic organizations concentrated on local problems in which the energies of a new state could be directed.

As they grew stronger, and with successful campaigns leading to the disintegration of many of the maligned BLAs, civics faced a more daunting decision: should they engage in concrete bargaining on material issues with local authorities? For some coercion by white councils, particularly those run by the Conservative Party (CP), played its part as councils happily slashed water and power supplies as a form of political pressure during rent and service payment boycotts.[19] In Soweto where civil society had a strong history, negotiations appeared fruitful in some of the provisions they yielded. The SCA put forward a policy framework for a non-racial and democratic urban alternative that was eventually accepted by all the stakeholders.[20] This included writing off over R500 million of arrears, and the creation of a metropolitan chamber (MC) whose mandate would be to dismantle the apartheid urban system by making sure that "an

[16] Mashinini, A. (1986), *Dual Power and the Creation of People's Committees*, *Sechaba*, April, p. 28
[17] Mashinini, A. (1987*), Dual Power (II) and the creation of People's Committees*, *Sechaba*, May, p. 2
[18] Murray, M. (1994), op. cit. p. 170
[19] Bond, P. (2004), *South Africa's Resurgent*, p. 18
[20] Swilling, M. & Shubane, K. (1991) op. cit. p. 225

appropriate new system of local government and administration for the region (is) established".[21] It led some to see the Soweto experience as a prototype of what could be achieved by elevating social movements as key players within decision-making. [22]

But Soweto proved to be the exception in the 150 or so negotiations that social movements entered into with local authorities at this time.[23] As Friedman notes, "many civics are far too weak to negotiate concrete deals on urban policy or resources – indeed, many are little more than collections of activists."[24] Many local authorities were unwilling to engage in the visions civics had for non-racial polities and the investment needed for historically deprived areas.[25] Moreover, they soon found their terrain infringed upon by the ANC. Coovodia makes the important observation that:

"There have been occasions when a political organization such as the ANC has entered into negotiations about services on behalf of the community but without consulting the civic concerned. There have been instances where rent boycotts have been called off by the ANC, again with no consultation with the civics. A recent ANC statement, which disavows boycotts of bond repayments, undermines the ability of grassroots communities to put pressure on financial institutions which are centrally involved in the provision of privatized housing."[26]

That this had severely detrimental consequences for grassroots movements needs little explanation. People were being detached from their roles as central proponents in their struggles. Questions around institutionalising the right to services as a commonality, the payment of rent in substandard housing, and the formation of just and redefined non-racial polities drifted out of the hands of autonomous organisations rooted in anti-capitalist politics to the negotiations at Kempton Park.

Within this context the UDF had become an increasingly irrelevant organisation. Peter Mokaba, a leading member of the UDF and President of South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) argued, "the UDF has no distinct platform apart from that of the ANC … It has adopted the Freedom

[21] Quoted in ibid. p. 223
[22] ibid.
[23] Bond, P. (2004), *South Africa's Resurgent*, p. 18
[24] Friedman, S. (1992), op. cit. p. 617
[25] Bond, P. (2004), *South Africa's Resurgent*, p. 18
[26] Coovadia, C. (1991) *The Role of the Civic Movement*, in "Apartheid City in Transition", (eds.), M. Swilling, R. Humphries and K. Shubane, Cape Town: OUP, p. 346, and Shubane, K. (1991) op. cit. p. 74

Charter as a principle … Its membership must become part of the ANC … Now that the ANC can operate legally, the UDF is redundant."[27] Amid criticisms that the UDF had become an over-centralised and top-down structure representing the interests of a small cabal (not new criticisms) and the site of an internal political struggle for power, collapse of UDF structures was crystallized by the departure of its leaders into the ANC.

By February 1991 disillusionment with the Front led to the creation of the National Interim Civics Committee (NIIC), by groups openly hostile to what they perceived as a reformist and centralist UDF, and by those sceptical to the negotiations. While the remnants of the UDF leadership found new homes in the ANC, another Front emerged to fill the space of a Charterist aligned civics organization. The launch of the South African National Civic Association (SANCO) in March 1992 marked a decisive step in the consolidation and amalgamation of the civic movement.[28] The transformation of the civic movement from a loosely federated body of autonomous affiliates into a unitary organization of branches sparked controversy.[29] Mayekiso, a veteran of the AAC, reflected the general dislike amongst progressive civics towards the organization:

"Instead of properly analysing the role of the civic movement within a shifting political paradigm and consulting with its internal organs for a fresh mandate, SANCO responded to these challenges by bureaucratising the civic movement … The bottom-up democracy of the civic movement was replaced by a top-down instrumentalist approach, which disempowered local civics."[30]

Initially SANCO had been set up with the PAC and Azanian People's Organisation (APO). [31] By late 1993, however, SANCO had formalised its relationship with the ANC by endorsing its 1994 electoral campaign on grounds that the ANC include SANCO positions on township and rural policies in the RDP programme, a deal agreed to by ANC President Mandela and SANCO President Moses Mayekiso.[32]

[27] Quoted in Seekings, J. (2000), op. cit. p. 260
[28] Murray, M. (1994), p. 173
[29] Murray, M. (1994), p. 174
[30] Mayekiso, M. (2003), op. cit. p. 66
[31] Bond, P. (2004), op. cit. p. 19
[32] Not to be confused with his brother Mwazanele Mayekiso.

Arguably the seeds for the co-option of elements of civil society had been sown in the structuring of the UDF in the 1980s and the nature of "dualism" within revolutionary discourse of the struggle. However, SANCO bore little resemblance to the dynamic organisations of the 1980s. Consequently civics in many parts of the country, choose not to participate with the organization.[33] By 1996 the SANCO NEC allowed government officials to participate as leaders in the civic movement and "SANCO became more of a business organisation in its style of operation than a civic movement accountable to a constituency."[34]

Increasingly civil society had little room to manoeuvre outside of the hegemonic development paradigm that took shape in the ANC. Such pressure led some civics to disperse, die a slow death within SANCO, or re-emerge in a series of corporatist agreements alongside official local government boards.[35]

Yet how much was this demobilization a result of a contrived effort on the behalf of the ANC and the new state deliberately co-opting civil society into a development paradigm? How much was there a concerted effort to bring in civic groups to adjust to particular visions of development which have had minimal impact in transforming South Africa? How much was slowly becoming conceivable, to paraphrase Mandela, that had once seemed inconceivable? Behind the criticisms of corporatism and selling-out, were there not genuine visions within the government for a vibrant and autonomous civil society, a more benevolent vision of the dualist theory?

John Saul has highlighted the, "ANC leadership's tacit support for the demobilization of those popular energies that had been so crucial to the weakening of the apartheid state in the first place."[36] McKinley states the strategic failure "to prioritise the will and leading role of the base constituency within the liberation movement", and that the ANC, "guided by its leading members, has been unwilling to trust the very people it claims to represent; it has, in effect, been unable to trust real democracy."[37] Both analyses play upon a particular machination on behalf if the ANC in demobilizing civil society. But just as much as strategic decisions were important, we suggest the series of events catalysed by negotiations created and re-created the very terrain in

[33] Murray, M. (1994), op. cit. p. 174
[34] Mayekiso, M. (2003), op. cit. p. 68
[35] Murray, M. (1994), op. cit. p. 174
[36] Saul, J. (1993), op. cit. p. 6
[37] McKinley, D. (1997), op. cit. p. 134

which both civil society, the Alliance and the NP were contesting, and in which ultimately the power of grassroots movements dissipated.

Expectations were high in the early 1990s. A variety of redistribution and social justice goals in the RDP characterized a project of transformation that sought to unite groups. Almost like an extension of the Freedom Charter, the RDP had broad aims connected to redressing the injustices of apartheid. The discourse forged a mandate that stated: "Above all, we must pursue policies that enhance national self-sufficiency and enable us to reduce dependence on international financial institutions."[38] Civil society became a buzzword validating diverse experiences, local initiatives, and new organizational forms that had been previously subsumed under the "highly centralized, etatist visions of emancipation from apartheid which characterized the dominant communist and African nationalist currents of opposition."[39] The project for change appeared on the surface to empower and rely upon a strong and vibrant civil society to turn social justice into reality. Yet, it required civil society to work with the state and government agencies as a junior partner, and to make numerous concessions on the goals of its constituents. Let us trace how such a scenario had come about.

Civics which relied on their ability to resort to mass action to strengthen their hand at the local-level negotiation tables found the spaces for autonomy and action increasingly confined during the CODESA years. Coovadia notes how:

"The South African government is doing its upmost to separate the ANC and national negotiations from mass action which it characterizes as 'violent' and contrary to the spirit of constitutional negotiations."[40]

A paralysis gripped those movements whose rhetoric fell on the fringes of developmental discourse within the Alliance, but could sill locate their interests in the framework of possibilities in the milieu of negotiations. Multilateral dialogue and political compromises forged a growing pragmatic realism within the trade union and civics. Radical ideas, the politics of confrontation and of "building socialism now" were on hold. The Nationalists had set upon a course of events

[38] ANC, The RDP Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994), Johannesburg: Umanyano, section 6.5
[39] Fine, R. (1992), op. cit. p. 178
[40] Coovadia, C. (1991), op. cit. p. 347

that had closed some of the radical spaces, reflecting the resilience of the capitalist economic order and their own military-political might.

Within such a context, alternatives failed to crystallize. In 1990 attempts were made to bring together a Patriotic Front from Socialist, AZAPO and BC activists. However, this "faltered before it got off the ground, amid charges of 'bad faith' and backroom dealings."[41] Nothing better symbolizes the demobilization that characterized this period than AZAPO's absence from the 1994 election, with their re-emergence in the 1999 elections on a far weaker and dilapidated base. BC movements were thought to account for at least a quarter of township citizens prior to the first election.[42] AZAPO had initially mobilized for a boycott of the elections, maintaining a principled opposition to the parliamentary democracy.[43] Concurrently, little emerged within the movement around notions of working class power to transgress ideas around liberal democracy. Fundamentally, AZAPO offered no alternative in a period in which radical political spaces collapsed while enthusiasm for the elections grew.

Movements seemed to lose their voices unless they attached to the same strategic terrain and discourse of unity and transformation as courted by the Alliance. In July 1993 at the NUMSA conference a call was made for a mass workers party amid concerns that elite bargaining at the World Trade Centre would sell out the struggle. Yet it proved to belie hollow rhetoric as the currents of the national democratic revolution prevailed.

The corporate activities of the civil society groups, some of whom had been vehemently anti-capitalist, mirrored what was going on at a national level. We need not debate an exhaustive list of the various moments when the ANC seemed to nurture or coerce such a process. It is perhaps, all too easy to suggest the Alliance demobilized and usurped the grassroots without accounting for the decisions taken by local leaders and the processes undertaken by the organizations themselves. Placing the entire agency on the ANC, and none on the grassroots movements and their constituents, is to perhaps overplay the significance of Stalinist traits within the ANC. While such elements do exist, we cannot apportion to them so much influence without consigning elements of civil society to passive players in the demobilzation process.

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[41] Murray, M. (1994), op. cit. p. 13
[42] Personnel Communication, Salim Vally (2004), November 25th
[43] Cherry, J. (2000), Kwazekeke - The Politics of Transition in South Africa: An Eastern Cape Case Study, PhD Dissertation at Rhodes University, Chapter 6

An analysis of markets and neo-liberalism will help bring out how much evidence there is for agency in the Alliance shaping post-Apartheid society. Moreover, an understanding of the structure behind such events can give light to what, and if, alternatives were available then and how new social movements might seek to elaborate upon them now.

Neo-liberalism in the Transition and Beyond

"The neo-liberal project conceals its own massive use of state power, transnational and local, for the purpose for constructing a civil society according to its own image."[44]
- Bjorn Beckman (1993)

On the period of 1980s insurrection Mayekiso has written:

"This period of *Intifada* was the most sophisticated ever in either the national liberation struggle or any urban social movement in South African history, and the regime, not only locally but also nationally, was near collapse."[45]

He echoed the sentiments of Sweezy and Magdoff who had noted in 1986 that South Africa was:

"The only country with a well-developed, modern capitalist structure which is not only 'objectively' ripe for revolution but has actually entered a stage of overt and seemingly irreversible revolutionary struggle."[46]

Despite all of the novel forms of organization that had emerged in resistance and struggles which had anti-capitalist conceptions around access to land and services, the potential for institutionalizing socialist aims and goals existed not on some irreversible trajectory of history but within the context of a hegemonic contestation with a variety of dominant structures and interests.

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[44] Beckman, B. (1993), "The Liberation of Civil Society: Neo-Liberal Ideology and Political Theory", in ROAPE, No. 58, p. 30
[45] Mayekiso, M. (1993), op. cit. p. 25
[46] Quoted in Saul, J. (2002), *Cry for the Beloved Country: The Post-Apartheid Denouement*, Paper Presented at Development Studies Seminar, RAU, 30th August, Johannesburg, p. 89

In reality the ANC and other liberation movements never came close to ensuring these could be institutionalised in a military victory.[47]

We seek to tease out such a contestation within the parameters of what Beckman has outlined as the "neo-liberal project". In 1992 the ANC noted:

"Once again, working class movements in government had, in fact, proved unable to sustain social transformation through state intervention, therefore throwing into doubt the capacity of the state to fundamentally alter property relations through state mediated social ownership of the means of production in the context of *advanced capitalism*."[48]

Hein Marais documented the ANC's own experience within this experience as the party became "assimilated into a web of institutional relations, systems and practices tailored to service the interests of [in the first instance] white privilege and [in the final instance] the capitalist class."[49]

But where had these forces come from? What was neo-liberalism or advanced capitalism, or globalization as it has been referred to? Veriava and McKinley have suggest it is "not the neutral presensing of a new spirit of global cooperation, but the extension and intensification of the rule of the market over all spheres of life"[50] We have outlined the homogenizing features this takes on the social in **Part 1**. This intensification of the rule of the market – *biopower* – has been seen in the context of crises within capitalism that began in the 1960s. These were shaped through worker struggles (most emphatically France 1968), declining profits, and overproduction. The need to search for more markets and areas for investment involved the active participation of the state in removing obstacles to the rule of the market over all aspects of production processes. This should not be mistaken for the creation of *free markets* in any sense of the semantics we tend to relate to the term "free". The asymmetrical nature of capitalism in global markets, and the role of the state as a facilitator of this, has been shown within various work.[51] Neo-liberalism is a political

[47] Lodge, T. (1989), op. cit.
[48] ANC, 'Theory of transition: ANC input to the ANC/COSATU bilateral' held in Feb 2002 and quoted in Macozoma, S. (2003*) From a theory of revolution to the management of a fragile state*, Development Update, p. 17. My italics.
[49] Marais, H. (2001), op. cit. p. 96
[50] Veriava, A. & Mckinley, D. (2004) *On Neoliberalism*, Forthcoming Publication, pp. 1-2
[51] Harvey, D. (2003), *The New Imperialism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, and Harvey, D. (1996), *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*, Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, and McDonald, D. (ed.) (2002), Environmental Justice in South Africa, Cape Town: UCT Press

discourse which impels rather than reduces state action. Such a process tends to be conceptualised as one of accumulation through crisis.

The term primitive accumulation was used by Marx to account for the separation and dispossession of people in relation to the social means of production and reproduction. This created a section of the population with no means of survival but their labour power. Foucault has described the force and coercion implicit in such a process for the industrial working class. It was not a passive and smooth process but one wracked by social destruction and conditioning.[52]

While we recognise there is nothing implicit about a trajectory of the dialectic between capitalism and labour power (and with all the multiplicity of relations across the social), working class struggles shaped the conditions in which capital existed after World War II. Declining profits, inflation and overproduction in certain areas led to the creation and reproduction of capitalism in new spheres and spaces. Such a narrative can be encapsulated in a straightforward manner:

Call centre workers in the north east of England have emerged as one of the main forms of wage labour in the 1990s, filling the void left by steel and energy industries. These industries were downsized or closed from the early 1980s as cheaper products could be sourced from overseas. Strikes and resistance from these communities characterized the period but proved to be unsuccessful. With plenty of new service and financial activity focused around immaterial production and communications, and given the available labour, the call centre became a major phenomenon in this part of the country. Despite dissatisfaction around the monotony and mind-numbing nature of the job, workers take home pay which is within the countries minimum wage, and conditions at work are regulated by a series of labour laws (from work breaks, fire exits, visor screens for computer monitors and so on). That such regulations are enshrined in law comes as a result of previous disputes and victories throughout union and worker history. For communities who have experienced long periods of unemployment, such work is considered to have provided some stability and improved living standards and investment in the area (consider in terms of there being any implicit antagonism between wage labour and capital that makes socialism a given outcome). However over the last few years, companies such as Lloyds TSB have relocated from these call centres and set up operations in India. Workers in this part of England have once again turned to the ever-diminishing capacity of the welfare state for their survival. The

[52] Foucault, M. (1977), *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, London: Penguin

technology, pool of labour which speaks English, and the cheaper operating costs in a country without the same standards of living and labour laws, provides the logic for move. Workers in India are happy at the opportunity for employment. Many of them are the first generation children of rural migrants to cities like New Delhi and Calcutta, and whose families live (and still live) in abject poverty. One of the many major investments which the Bank has made is in a chemicals company involved in the privatization of agricultural land that had once been considered part of a commons-based system. At one point the ancestors of the call centre workers in New Delhi relied on the diversity and bounty of these commons which diminish with every inroad that neo-liberal capitalism makes.

The narrative is, albeit simplistic and romantic, perhaps indicative of the neo-liberal economic accumulation process. It encapsulates the term neo-colonialism as the activities and resources of previous colonies become the source of benefit to markets which operate under asymmetrical international capitalism. Whether it is clothing companies from South Korea relocating to the cheaper Vietnamese and Cambodian markets, or the buying up of entire reservoirs of water in India, the process technocrats label "economic realism", has seen capital take a free rein to subsume and totalise the remaining commons, bio-world and global ecology. Social costs and exhaustion of resources are ignored in short-term considerations and normative assumptions of "profit" and "efficiency". Attempts to fix this in management strategies, essentially finding modernist controls and regulations to make capitalism fairer/greener, by IFIs and governments have reinforced top-down hierarchies and Northern-Southern identities of producer and consumer, of colonialist and colonized.[53]

We should note that accumulation is not the only term to have been used to describe systemic trends. Giovanni Arrighi sees: "the financialization of capital, rather than persistent 'over-capacity and over-production' in manufacturing, as the predominant capitalist response to the joint crisis of profitability and hegemony."[54] Downplaying the 'race to the bottom' theory, Arrighi weaves together the immaterial aspect of production and investment. Without dismissing the important differences in strands of interpretation, what remains crucial to our study is the strength of these forces – whether in terms of accumulation or financialization capacity – within

[53] Goldman, M. (1998), *Inventing the Commons: Theories and Practices of the Commons Professional* in Goldman, M. (ed.) "Privatising Nature: Political Struggles for the Global Commons", London: Pluto Press
[54] Arrighi, G, (2003), op. cit. p. 67

neo-colonial (neo-empire) systemic trends which the ANC have come to grapple with since gaining power.[55]

The notion that the ANC, within the web of such a system, did not have a full deck of playing cards available to it in 1994, is a view which holds much sway. That capital was one of the elements responsible for bringing the ANC in from the cold has been shown across the historiography. [56] The apartheid state was forced to implement economic, political and social policy changes in response to structural crises experienced by capitalism (with its specific manifestations under apartheid such as international boycotts) as well as to growing resistance from black workers and communities (unions and/or the civics) internally. Policies with a neo-liberal nature began to shape South Africa from the early 1980s.[57] This was sealed by the regime at the end of the 1980s as important sections of big business began implementing elements of a neo-liberal accumulation strategy.[58] It is a mistake to see neo-liberal politics suddenly being "implemented" with the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policies of 1996 but as a stream which ran from Apartheid South Africa into the new one.

In 1993, the Transitional Executive Council (TEC), of which the ANC played a leading role, signed an IMF loan for $750 million. It was a reflection of the pressure from the developmental "experts" from IFIs who sought to make sure the continuity of neo-liberal economics prevailed. Given with the milieu in which the SACP tearfully saw its comrades in Eastern Europe disappear, and without any other imagination of socialism from the left of the party, options were limited.[59] Lewis noted:

"Capital does not appear to have articulated a new and imaginative economic policy for South Africa. On the contrary, to the extent that one is able to glean an economic direction from capital

[55] For further reading see Negri, A. & Hardt. M. (2000), *Empire*, New York: Harvard University Press
[56] Saul, J. (1993), op. cit. p. 4, Marais, H. (2001) op. cit. and Thompson, L. (2001), *A History of South Africa*, 3rd edition, London: Yale University Press
[57] Nattrass and Seekings quoted in Bundy, C. (2004), *The Presence of History*, Paper presented "Looking at South Africa Ten Years On", School for Oriental and African Studies (10-12 September 2004)
[58] Marais, H. (2001), op. cit. p. 104
[59] SACP (1989), a few months before the fall of the Berlin Wall stated: "Socialist countries today represent a powerful international force. Some of them possess highly developed economies, a considerable scientific base, and a reliable military defence potential … A new way of life is taking shape in which there are neither oppressors nor the oppressed, neither exploiters nor the exploited, in which power belongs to the people." *The African Communist*, No. 3, p. 118. When that "new way of life" disintegrated the SACP could provide no alternative outlook other than integration into the global capitalist system as part of the stagiest conception of change.

it comprises a conservative melange of cuts in government expenditure; privatisation; reductions in corporate and high income taxation rates; and deregulation."[60]

Habib suggests however, "corporatism has emerged simultaneously with the ascendancy of the neo-liberal macro-economic strategy". Yet it wasn't so much the ascendancy of neo-liberalism than the emergence of new symbols. Neo-liberalism needed new vehicles if it was going to ride the wave of radical ideas around socialist transformation which held considerable hegemony. This took the form, as Habib noted, in the institutionalizing "corporatist arrangements, including NEDLAC."[61]

Thus the features of 1980s policies, which slowly sought to shake off "racial exclusion" from the role of markets, became a process pursued with considerable vigour in the 1990s. Yet, in a society characterised by the dynamics of racial inequality and exploitation, are we right to emphasise an economic, class based analysis? Is there not a danger when deploying phrases such as 'from apartheid to neo-liberalism' of undermining the structural racial inequalities that were so embedded within apartheid, and which given the nature of reform and transformation, continue to shape, reinforce and re-create South African society.

Race and Class

"We must work to ensure that there emerges a black bourgeoisie, whose presence within our economy and society will be part of the process of the deracialisation of the economy and society." [62]

- Thabo Mbeki, 1999

The logic of neo-liberal policies for growth and development rarely require complex deconstruction. Bethlehem provides a typical approach grounded in the economic realism of good governance theory:

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[60] Lewis, D. (1986), *Capital, Unions and Liberation*, *SALB* Vol. 11, No. 4 Feb/Mar, p. 35
[61] Habib, A. (1999), in Fullinwider, R.K. (ed.) "Civil Society, Democracy, and Civic Renewal", Oxford: Rowman and Littelfield Publishers, p. 152
[62] Mbeki (1999), quoted in Barchiesi, F. (2004), *Classes, Multitudes and the Politics of Community Movements in Post-apartheid South Africa*, Paper presented at Annual Congress of the South African Sociological Association, Bloomfontein, University of the Free State, 27-30 June p.13

"In short and to repeat, South Africa's growth would be from a low base and therefore, would offer possibilities of aggregate expansion which countries with mature or saturated markets could not match. All South Africa needs to do … is to get its political house in order now."[63]

Bringing out the real semantics behind such a statement requires little imagination:

South Africa has a lot of poor people (black). They form a massive pool of cheap labour (base) which investors can profit from. Capitalists from countries which have higher living standards and over-accumulation, find South Africa ripe for investment in areas which capital has yet to take root (e.g. water, electricity). All South Africa needs to do is to make sure trade unions such as COSATU don't get restless and bring instability to the country. Co-option will be useful. Those who resist co-option can be branded ultra-leftists, reactionaries, racists or apartheid era spies. If it starts to get out of hand some orthodox state repression should do the trick.

Social commentary in South Africa tries to downplay the continuing structure of racism that permeates the country to the core. Typical arguments include: "But the shopping mall is full of black people", "I saw poor whites begging for food" or "Affirmative Action (AA) and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) are working." That poverty is somehow deracialized forms the most serious and disturbing myth in post-Apartheid society. While it is correct to note that being rich is no longer the preserve of whites only, and that some white communities have suffered increasing levels of poverty, the millions of people who are landless in South Africa (increasing in number after ten years of democracy), have a common denominator in that they are black.

To continue the analysis purely in terms of economics and class, eclipses the racism so embedded within structures that continue to perpetuate land ownership policies which can be judged in no other guise than a vivid continuation of racist relations, demographics and geography. The need for a strong undercurrent to BC thought is needed more than ever if the exploitative economic structures which are deeply entwined within racist realities are to be transformed.

The 'retreat' from egalitarianism, social justice and anti-capitalist practices emerged as the outcome of a *war of position* which the left lost and rarely articulated at least within the Alliance. The left included, not just the elitist ANC leadership and vanguards, but some of the civil society

[63] Bethlehem, R. (1992), *Issues of Economic Restructuring*, in *Wealth or Poverty? Critical Choices for South Africa*, (ed.) Robert Schrire, Cape Town, OUP, p. 547

and social movement groups who struggled to find identities in the interregnum and immediate post-Apartheid milieu. Such a viewpoint is substantially more plausible than "Great Betrayal" narratives because it examines policies and actions as the outcome of contest amongst various forces. To suggest otherwise robs some of the grassroots organisations of any agency whatsoever and negates the leadership within such organizations who make real decisions. As Lodge noted: "Any efforts to genuinely confront South Africa's glaring class and racial divisions requires uprooting and immobilizing entrenched power centres."[64] Here, behind the rhetoric of national democratic revolution, there remained continuity rather than discontinuity in the journey of neo-liberalism in apartheid to post-apartheid.

Any analysis, which recognises this role of agency within some confines of the structure, requires finding a delicate balance between the two in establishing a historicity. As Mafeje notes on liberation movements generally:

"Many of the heroes of the independence movement in Africa turned the same, joined the imperialist exploiters, and made pariahs of their own people. Was it simply an act of betrayal and capriciousness on the part of those concerned; or was it a result of certain objective factors."[65]

This captures the dialectical relationship between the subject and structure which cannot be simply bifurcated in an analysis. However, as we move on to consider the role of new social movements post-Apartheid, the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela, which also took place in the mid-1990s, throws up interesting questions as to other policy routes available to the ANC and its civil society allies. Where the confines in terms of Empire and capitalism have persisted in Venezuela since Chavez came to power, there has also emerged considerable space for civil society and local, grassroots autonomous movements to gain access to power and resources for the first time.[66] The state remains openly conscious of the contradiction pursuing policies on the one hand which enable access to markets, while attempting to nurture and empower civil society to weaken that very relationship. It is a journey into unknown territory and in which social movements will need to fight the pressures of co-option and the lure of adopting an NGO style presence and organization. Whether the ANC is capable of dismantling some of the institutions

[64] Lodge T. (1991), African studies review, vol. 34, no. 2, 1991, p.134-5

[65] Mafeje, A. (1992), *In Search of an Alternative: A Collection of Essays on Revolutionary Theory and Politics*, Harare: SAPES Books, p. 73

[66] Bolivariana: People and Struggle of The Fourth World War, (2003) Venezuela: Cally Media

and tools of exploitation together with its own class interests is unlikely. Whether, the people can facilitate such a change is another matter. For South Africa to pursue a similar path to Venezuela requires the visions and development of anti-systemic alternatives of a project that will come to de-link from the ANC and grand etatist narratives of the past, placing comrades on a trajectory that is influenced by, but broken with, the past.

PART 4

NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: REVOLUTIONARY SUBJECTS AND DISRUPTURE IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA



Commodification in "Ten Years of Confusion and Poverty"

"They don't want South Africa to be free. In Harrismith it is just a song to say that South Africa is free. We are not free. This ten years of democracy has not been ten years of democracy to us, it has been ten years of confusion and poverty, more poverty."
- Nehu Mdowu, Chair of Harrismith Concerned Residents (HRC) and ANC member, 2004

Presentation of ANC policy since May 1994 has centred upon goals which have a broadly social-justice and transformative outlook. Rhetoric behind it does not take a fixed form and has fluctuated around nationalist, populist, black empowerment and socialist positions. McDonald and Pape have suggested that from GEAR onwards:

"While policies and laws often maintained some populist rhetoric, the underlying economic and political principles were informed by neo-liberal principles of globalisation: fiscal restraint; export orientation; privatisation and corporatization; financial and trade liberalization, and cost recovery."[1]

The notion that the ANC "talks left, walks right" succinctly captures this process.[2] It is a term which has taken on much resonance with the social-democratic administrations across Europe since the early 1990s. However, another strain of thought has emerged (particularly within the SACP) which perceive various discursive juxtaposing within the Alliance as a reflection of genuine hegemonic struggles within the ANC. This is used as justification for unity in the Alliance and that pursuing the interests of the poor and working class within this framework can, and will, ultimately lead to socialism.[3] Indeed, we will see how such a position is used to cajole social movements into co-option, as opposed to increasing confrontation with the state.

It was clear from the macro-economic strategies formed by Congress working groups in the early nineties, and crystallized in the visions put through in the RDP, that the ANC could not articulate a coherent challenge to the growth path of neo-liberalism.[4] However, retaining a revolutionary identity, whether seeped in nationalism or socialism, and ensuring it was digestible to various

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[1] McDonald, D. & Pape, J. (2002), *Cost Recovery and the Crisis of Service Delivery in South Africa*, London: Zed Books, p. 2
[2] Bond, P. (June 15th, 2004), Talk in Pretoria: *Sub-imperialist South Africa*,
[3] Outlining the general SACP position, see Thomas, D. (2004) op. cit.
[4] For an overview see Marais, H. (2001), op. cit.

social groups was vital for electoral and constituent purposes. Moreover, it provides the cement to bind what we can call the "left" to the party. Yet beneath the rhetoric, the full impact of neo-liberal macroeconomics was to shape the experiences of millions of poor and landless South Africans. While the government spoke the language of *People's Power* – a term stretched beyond all possible imagination in some discourse – the high expectations from the struggle around rights, services and land failed to materialize.

Neo-liberalism and *commodification*, as we argued in **Part 1**, have a multiplicity of relations between subjects and the social. What we recognized as an increasingly totalized social throws up possibilities for change, moments of resistance and new struggles, just as much as it can fuse the logic of capitalism into life. A brief overview of policy from 1994 will provide us with the backdrop necessary to view anti-capitalist alternatives that have re-emerged in NSM politics.

Boycotts over rent and services infused the struggle against apartheid in two ways. Firstly, there developed a deeply engrained notion of common rights denied by the system. Secondly, withholding payment was used as a means to attack the legitimacy the regime. From this we can conclude that people saw an intrinsic human right to common goods, necessary for the reproduction of life such as water, shelter, and power.

Any payment for the spheres of life (such as housing or municipal services) was thus only acceptable within a justice-based paradigm.

Such a paradigm featured slogans such as "one city one tax base", and was rooted in an understanding that the wealth of white individuals and businesses would be used to subsidise deprived black areas. Central to this were ideas around the formation of non-racial communities and replacing racial *separateness* with economic and social *inclusiveness*. Payment for the privilege of living in one of apartheid's dumping grounds, or for the up-keep of the BLA system, had been continually contested with the state. The decision faced by the post-Apartheid state was thus, how to institutionalize these alternative visions, or how to revive a culture of payment in the vein of individual responsibility, cost recovery and private profit.

Operation *Masakhane* ('lets build together') was implemented from February 1995. Communities were actively encouraged to start paying for basic services as 'responsible citizens' contributing to the 'good governance' of 'our democracy'. While many apartheid arrears for services were

cleared, the emphasis was on a clean start for service payment. Resistance was portrayed as the persistence of 'a culture of non-payment'. The language of ungovernability in the fight for free basic services for all had dissipated. Operation *Masakhane* marked the first major step to reinvest people in the market and for the new state to maintain the set of relations which had undergone such serious contestation during the struggle. It was perhaps not surprising that payment rates for municipal services (and rent) declined throughout the 1990s.[5] By the end of the decade the state responded with millions of cuts-offs and evictions.[6]

Behind the cut-offs lay the grim ideology of economic realism. Free-market liberalization, privatization, restructuring of industrial relations, deregulation and embryonic corporatism were not just ad-hoc, momentary responses to international and local pressures, but part of a developmental paradigm based upon accumulation and IFI-style structural adjustment. Playing by the rules of global capitalism also meant a commitment to repaying (mostly Apartheid era and odious) debt. In some years this accounted for just under a quarter of government spending. [7] The obvious implications for social spending led activist and writer Ashwin Desai to state, "we have reached a situation where paying the debt has much graver implications for South Africa than repudiating it."[8]

Attaining social justice was synonymous with investment and growth. The asymmetrical nature of investment and development within a paradigm of market systems has been revealed at length elsewhere, revealing how existing conditions of inequality become further entrenched.[9] In South Africa the simple reality was that the legacies of apartheid were being reproduced: blacks got poorer and whites got richer.[10]

While policies at a macro-level followed a broadly typical IFI structural adjustment plan, local government came to epitomize the logic of the market and investment, making South Africa an archetype for private public partnerships (PPPs). Corporatization within a wide range of services and, and in some cases outright privatization, continued the neo-liberal trajectory of cost-recovery

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[5] McDonald, D. & Pape, J. (2002), op. cit. p.2
[6] ibid.
[7] Desai, A. (2002), *South Africa,* p. 14
[8] ibid. p. 15
[9] Ruiters, G. (2002), *Race, Place and Environmental Rights: A Radical Critique of Environmental Justice Discourse,* in McDonald, D. (ed.) (2002) pp. 112-126, and Harvey, D. (1996), *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*, Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell
[10] Bond, P. (2004), Talk in Pretoria, op. cit.

with private. We don't have time to catalogue this process as it has been pursued extensively elsewhere.[11] However, let us look at the ramifications and the vivid forms it was to have in defining people's lives.

From the pre-paid water metre, which effectively acts as a cut-off until you pay, to private security companies evicting (and in several cases killing) rent defaulters who live in some of the most underprivileged communities. From the bulldozing of shacks deemed undesirable, and the removal of township and squatter camp dwellers into new dumping grounds such as Bram Fischer outside Johannesburg; the brutal and devastating impact of neo-liberal economics for South Africa's growing poor took on an increasingly common narrative. The numbers of unemployed have climbed to record levels, almost doubling between 1995 and 2002.[12]

Meth's study of poverty from 1998-2002 found disturbing evidence that contradicted government claims that social-economic transformation of South Africa was well underway. It noted: "With the possible exception of water and electricity, the social wage barely addresses income poverty."[13] Moreover, the government's claims to have made massive progress in tackling poverty and neglect were said to "look a little weak in the face of this massive rise in human misery".[14] In 2001 the government brought in minimum free household lifelines of 6000 litres of water and 50kwh of electricity per month, as a result of widespread condemnation and resistance to the corporatization of the service industries. Yet it was only a *Pyrrhic* victory in that the lifeline volumes were woefully inadequate; they enhanced the individual rather than collective responsibility; and in a variety of cases were not applicable anyway.[15]

Yet, the impulse of South African policy is best captured within an ideological framework, not within the manifestations of GEAR, but in the encompassing notions of African growth and

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[11] McDonald, D. & Pape, J. (2002), op. cit., Veriava, A. & McKinley. D. (2005), *Arresting Dissent*, Forthcoming report for the violence in transition project centre for the study of violence and reconciliation, Johannesburg and Bond, P. (2002), *Against Global Apartheid: South Africa Meets the World Bank, IMF and International Finance.* Cape Town: UCT

[12] Bond, P. (2004), Talk in Pretoria, op. cit.

[13] Meth, C. & Dias, R. (2003), *Increases in poverty in South Africa, 1999-2002, Paper presented at the DPRU/TIPS Forum*, 8-10 September, Johannesburg

[14] Meth, C. & Dias, R. (2003), *Increases in poverty in South Africa, 1999-2002, Paper presented at the DPRU/TIPS Forum*, 8-10 September, Johannesburg

[15] In that millions of landless South Africans don't have electricity with many living in township/squatter communities where water facilities are shared with dozens of other residents. Moreover, free services have been cut off to those who refuse to sign up to the water metres in Gauteng, see Anti-Privatisation Forum & others, (2004) Nothing *for Mahala: The forced installation of prepaid water meters in Stretford, Extension 4, Orange Farm, Johannesburg – South Africa.* Centre for Civil Society Research Report 16: Durban

Renaissance as defined within the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Given the prominence of South Africa in drafting and promoting the document, it encapsulates the "modern" and utopian visions held within the ANC leadership not just for South Africa, but also for the entire continent.

NEPAD notes that it "differs in its approach and strategy from all previous plans and initiatives in support of Africa's development, although the problems to be addressed remain largely the same".[16] The problems we can loosely summarize as: endemic poverty; corruption; top-down hierarchical relations of power, nepotism and subordination; gender violence and oppression; artificial urban/rural divides and the re-colonisation of economic structures for the benefit of dominant classes (internal and external).

In response, NEPAD makes several overtones towards internalised and self-sufficient modes of development. The challenge is posed as one:

"For the peoples and governments of Africa to understand that development is a process of empowerment and self-reliance. Accordingly, Africans must not be wards of benevolent guardians; rather they must be the architects of their own sustained upliftment."[17]

There is the need for a "discretionary preferential trade system for intra-African trade" and role for domestic resources "to be *substantially increased* (with) more effective tax collection … to increase public resources, as well as the rationalising of government expenditures.[18] In terms of the trajectory on development, NEPAD shares some of the domestic and internal concerns of the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) of 1980, but adds the components of good governance and global market orientated economics into a melting pot of discourse that seems to be responding to a variety of needs.

The following characteristic statement of the programme reveals this: "Democratic regimes that are committed to the protection of human rights, people-centred development and market-orientated economies are on the increase".[19] These three notions are enmeshed within the

[16] New Partnership for Africa's Development (October 2001), Strategic Framework Document: African Union, paragraph 59
[17] ibid. paragraph 27
[18] ibid. paragraphs 171 and 145. My italics.
[19] ibid. paragraph 7

paradigm of development, and the ascendancy of the latter component throughout the document swamps any narrative over preferential internal trade systems or self-sufficiency. It is not necessary to highlight every example but to gain a sense of the dominance of an Africanised neo-liberal philosophy that seeks to engage in the continued export-orientated policies still propagated by the IFIs.[20] It is in order to compete and link-up within this system NEPAD suggests:

"These economic conditions point to the need for African countries to pool their resources and enhance their regional development and economic integration on the continent, in order to improve international competitiveness"[21]

Criticism that it is Africa's continual exploitation within this system, forms questions as to why such procedures (solidarity and pooling resources), cannot be put into place for meeting the social and environmental needs of people. Moreover we are told that:

"The world has entered the new millennium in the midst of an economic revolution. This revolution could provide both the context and the means for Africa's rejuvenation. While globalization has increased the cost of Africa's ability to compete, we hold that the advantages of an effectively managed integration present the best prospects for future economic prosperity and poverty reduction."[22]

This economic revolution – the traits of which we have seen through new forms of empire and colonialism – is expected to bring about prosperity if Africa can only just integrate more into the system. This takes a benevolent perception of capital, failing to perceive the massive investments into countries like Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where capital is attracted by cheap, fast profits and not any social concerns over development. Consequently NEPAD reflects the dominant philosophy within the ANC that meeting social justice comes second, and as a trickle-down effect, of meeting the requirements of international capital and the *Washington consensus*. That "responsible capital" can exist harmoniously with meeting social and economic needs is a central part and myth of such project. Although there are a variety of discursive moments in the document, which conjure populist and self-sufficient visions, the core reference point of the policies reflect top-down, export-orientated structural adjustment.

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[20] World Bank, (2002) *Building a Sustainable Future: The Africa Region Environment Strategy*, Washington, DC
[21] NEPAD, op. cit. paragraph 94
[22] ibid. paragraph 28

That this developmental paradigm has emerged in South Africa with considerable hegemony has partly emerged due to the lack of clearly articulated alternatives, and any serious political opposition. Shubane noted in 1991 that: "An influx of such personnel into other social institutions might be so large that in effect it will lead to the demise of civic organizations."[23] This prediction correctly perceived the process in which various figures active in civil society took up positions within the administration. The grassroots organizations left behind faced an identity crisis in the new drive for Unity post-1994, as confrontation was replaced with co-operation. This evolved to often marginalize local structures rather than empowering them. With Local Labour Forums (LLFs) mandated by the Systems Act (2000) to participate in Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), such structures tend to be stripped of any real power and act as the facilitator of policies and directives made from central government.[24] This is reinforced by the experiences of many activists within SANCO or with local Ward Committees that such institutions prove to be little more than rubber-stamping facilitators of central government directives.[25]

However, South African politics in an era of continuing neo-liberalism and *commodification* has not yet forged hegemonic identities outside of the ANC. Those that exist do so in an embryonic form. Indeed for many of the poorest and most vulnerable South Africans, the Alliance is seen to protect the rights of the people, a continuation perhaps of what Freidman identified as the culture of reliance on leadership politics.[26] However, the frailty within the Alliance is beginning to emerge and unravel as civil society and grassroots movements regain some of the autonomy that dissipated throughout the 1990s. The principles of neo-liberalism transgressed the imaginations of the struggle. They took guise in the shape of a development paradigm that would be unimaginable in the 1980s, "inconceivable" in February 1990, and smacked of hypocrisy, injustice and cruelty to millions in 2005.

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[23] Shubane, K. (1991), op. cit. p. 74
[24] McDonald, D. & Pape, J. (2002), op. cit. p. 187
[25] Personnel Communication, Sam Hargreaves, LPM – Gauteng, May 2004 and see the experience of campaigners in the Western Cape in Veriava, A. & McKinley. D. (2005), op. cit.
[26] The general formed from all the residents I spoke to in Harrismith and Khayelitsha conveyed this. The ANC's strong electoral support base in poor areas also backs up this notion. In addition see Sachs, M. (2004) *The Poor Believe in the Poll*, Mail and Guardian, May 23rd.

The Resurgence of Rights: Politics of decommodification and anti-capitalism

"My name is Pauline Tsotetsi ... I was the mother of Teboho as his parents had passed away. The first one is Oupa Mkhosa, the second one is Teboho and the third one Nsaki. They came here because their parents had passed away and their grandmother had passed away. There was no one who could take care of them. They started school here and Tebobo was doing standard 8 until he was shot. The day Teboho went out of this house it was on the 31st. He was going to school in the morning and then when they got to school they [the Harrismith Concerned Residents – HCR] said they must go out from the school. They were going for strike. They went to the N3; this is the place where there was the accident. And then we went to the hospital because he was bleeding, he didn't stop bleeding. This was the place where Teboho passed away in the hospital […]
The thing that makes us sad is the children like Teboho did not throw stones at anybody. They were just singing. They don't do anything wrong. The police just shoot them. I blame the police. If there is a strike everyone is given warning. They must say five minutes you must be out if this place. But they didn't do this. They just shoot. That is why Teboho died."
- Pauline Tsotestsi, Harrismith, November 2004

The issues which surround the shooting of Teboho Mkhosa by police, symbolizes a common narrative for millions of poor people in South Africa. Teboho's "accident" brought the full glare of a media circus to Harrismith. The stereotype of the violent and lawless township was beamed across the nation. It seemed even ANC Premier Beatrice Marshoff was in danger of being shunned, and at worst attacked, by the seething mobs of township agitators. Yet the underlying tensions which catalysed the series of eruptions across the Free State during the winter of 2004 – and which have continued into 2005 – appear to have finally spurred a debate around service delivery ten years into South Africa's freedom. Moreover, it is not so much "formalized" social movements such as the APF or the LPM at the forefront of this discontent, but disparate "community crisis" groups, the recreation of 1980s civics, such as the HCR which are breaking out in new moments of defiance, organization and mobilization across the country. While we note the formal social movements cited above were born out of these types of "crisis" formations, there are important distinctions between the groups. Community crisis groups tend to have a strong identity and affiliation to the ANC at the grassroots level. This poses interesting questions as to how disparate movements might come together, operate at a local level and ultimately contest power. Their integration with more formalized social movements could play a role in determining this process.

Pauline agreed that community anger was concerned with the lack of service delivery across the municipality, noting the ANC "did promise that they are going to bring us things, but they do not do those things, that's why they end up going to strike." There was a strong sense of continuity from old struggles into new:

"Did you remember in 1994 we were still looking for freedom, even now it seems like freedom is not there because they promised us things but they are not there, that is why we see the people are busy toyi-toying. They promise us things but they are not won."

The general feeling of dismay, of not having "won" the fruits which lay behind the symbols of freedom, became unravelled in the demands of a new civic: the HCR. Their memorandum to the local authorities highlighted a series of demands rooted in the discourse of *People's Power* of the 1980s. From access to land, an end to nepotism and corruption, for the delivery of adequate housing for all, the document was constructed upon a set of community rights, consciousness and existence.[27] Pauline concurred with the idea that dissatisfaction across for country from the slums in Durban to the townships that sprawl across Gauteng were fighting for the same rights:

"Yes it's the same thing that we are fighting for. The services are poor, the services they don't do them, instead of opening work they just close them."

Meanwhile the "lifeline" held up by the ANC as the evidence that there are free basic services for all had not been implemented in Harrismith. Electricity had been introduced to Harrismith during apartheid and had been the subject of fierce payment boycotts during the 1980s. It appeared that in 2004 those people in the community who worked did not receive the lifeline and had to contribute towards the payment for power as well as for water. Harrismith residents noted that even though they worked, wages were so low, and with school fees to pay, they could not afford extra costs for electricity. Cut-offs ensued and sparked some of the anger and discontent that has contributed to various township uprisings in the Free State since Winter 2004. Nuhu Mdowu noted that:

"The problem of the electricity is meaning that some of the people are just making, I mean, stealing the electricity. If you come to my house you can find that I am stealing electricity, maybe

[27] HRC Memorandum, (2004) op. cit.

you can find that problem is that these people are corrupt, it is the councillors who are causing these things."

On the issue of elections Teboho's relatives reflected a disdain towards the electoral process. Pauline stated:

"On my side I can't say I am going to vote, because I am going to vote for someone who is not going to do anything because the one that we vote for does not do anything ... even in the local municipality it is a waste of time."

Nuhu Mdowu gave the historical background to the HCR:

"We have started the concerned residents from the 27th of May and the aim is simply because the lives of the people have been taken away by the people who are calling themselves the leadership [ANC] while they are violating the rights of the people. Most of the members of the concerned group are from ANC. But we have felt that most of the other people are not represented. If you are not a member of ANC, or SANCO you will just be admitted. So we call upon the whole community seeing the poor service delivery and that the councillors representing us, they are not doing."

The HCR made it clear their affiliations, at least symbolically, were to the ANC believing that if President Mbeki was privy to the failures of ANC structures at a local level he would rectify the problems. However, it was also clear, and reflected in the membership intake, that the HCR identified as the community.[28] Meanwhile identities to the ANC were lodged around *People's Power*, broadly Socialist aims of the Charter and the social justice goals of the RDP. Against these visions were nepotism and corrupt agencies within the ANC that were preventing and holding back the transformation of the community.

"And when it comes to the RDP houses, favouritism has been practiced by the local municipality and the local leaders and we have discovered a lot of corruption. And the issue of nepotism, you can go to the municipality, only one surname or two which is ruling our municipality, people are

[28] Although Inkarta supporters in the nearby hostels had not joined the group.

not employed, its just a question of who are you and where do you belong and then you know that the gates are closed. That's the main problem."[29]

Meanwhile, Mdowu implicated ward committees into the structures of patronage:

"Leaders are using ward committees to see who should be given first preference when it comes to jobs especially within the project but there have been no changes, we just see people being employed over night by the councillors, going door to door."

The strongly articulated position of the HCR, highlighting the failure of the ANC to deliver on its core promises, had clearly rattled the party at a provincial level. The HCR had evidence revealing substantial bribes offered to its leadership in order to buy their silence and co-operation. This has been a common experience for activists from a variety of social movements. Given the desperate socio-economic conditions under which people survive, such tactics can serve to demobilize movements outside of the Alliance. However, it has also worked to harden the resolve of the most committed groups. The HCR, incensed by the attempt to pay them off, were resilient in their opposition:

"When I disclosed this bribery to the community on Sunday they decided they are just waiting for the children to finish their exams. After that Harrismith will be an ungovernable place."[30]

Confrontation looks set to increase the repression which has already left Teboho dead. Most of the HCR leadership have already been targeted by the state at a local level, receiving criminal records which prevent them from contesting elections. Given their popularity at the grassroots level they would stand a good chance of winning.

The HCR noted some of their demands around electricity had been won despite the fact that local councillors had not engaged with the community to inform them. It appeared free services had been restored to the township after the uprisings at the end of August and beginning of September. However the task team set up by the ANC to look at the residents' grievances had done little to win back the confidence of the HCR:

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[29] Personnel Communication, Nuhu Mdowu (2004), op. cit.
[30] ibid.

"We see that this thing [the task team] that was established by the Premier and the minister for municipal and local government it was just an attempt to silence us … [they said] the RDP will be taken back. Those were the things which the task team has started about. The task team has been established. Nothing has changed. Everything is still operating in the way it was before. The RDP was never reviewed until today."[31]

While some commentators and activists might point to a "lack" in analysis, and perhaps even a naiveté within the HCR's stance that the ANC leadership in Gauteng has their interests at heart, the crucial conclusions we can make is in the defiance, commitment and zeal which the community are pursuing within particular interpretations of the Charter. That a critical examination of neo-liberalism didn't shape part of the HCR's grievances should not be seen as a weakness, a pervasive feature of a considerable amount of leftist and elitist intellectual analysis. What mattered was that the community was fighting for an alternative vision. The Charter was also to be reflected in the social justice goals of the RDP and in the *People's Contract* pledge made by the ANC at the 2004 elections. While we have noted the frailties in Charters or Fronts around policies that can be contested from a bourgeois/liberal perspective, they can also serve to have highly politicising effects when articulated in alternative visions. What catalysed the various uprisings across the Free State in the last year have been clear demands around the broad re-distributional goals of the Charter which have not yet been implemented. It is in many ways similar to the approach taken by the LPM in relation to land.[32] Appeals of a legal or moral nature may characterize the first step of demands, but these give way to more direct attacks on the symbols seen to be perpetuating injustice. The process, from a co-operative to confrontational relationship, is perhaps indicative of things to come and will pose serious concerns for the ANC unless it can begin to embark on policies which genuinely transform not just the hot-spot of Harrismith and the Free State, but South Africa as a whole.

Khayelitsha

"To a dispassionate architectural correspondent of a local newspaper, it is a 'bizarre creation of yet another vast, remote, racial ghetto, with its flattened dunes and militarily securable borders'. To one resident we spoke to, "Khayelitsha is the last grave of Blacks in the Western Cape."[33]

- ANC *Sechaba*, 1986

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[31] Personnel Communication, (2004), HRC Leadership in Harrismith
[32] Personnel Communication, (June 26th, 2004), Mangaliso Kubheko, LPM National Co-ordinator
[33] *Khayletisha – The Wasteland*, Sechaba, August 1986, p. 32

"Please show this footage to as many people as possible so they can see how we are forced to live. No-one should have to live through this."
- Site C Squatter Camp Resident, 2005

Today Khayelitsha is home to tens of thousands of tiny metal and cardboard shacks crammed together across vast dunes of sand and swamps of stench water and waste. The squatter camps, many of them known simply as "Site", followed by a letter, are cut up by Cape Town's network of highways. Bridges between sites are meshed and enclosed with razor wires. Giant walls prevent access to the highways. Squeezed into Khayelitsha's borders are over 1 million inhabitants. Literally meaning "Our new home", Khayelitsha is South Africa's second largest township after Soweto, although it is primarily made up of squatter camps. In the 1980s it was one of apartheid's largest dumping sites for blacks, situated about 30km from Cape Town. Many of its residents are migrants from the Eastern Cape, seeking to escape poverty and land dispossession by finding work in Cape Town. There they hope to find employment in the decaying textile and manufacturing and construction industries, or as housekeepers, gardeners or cleaners for Cape Town's wealthy.

Interspersed amongst the thousands of shacks are houses. Many of them are concrete structures built during apartheid and financed by banks through PPP arrangements with Botha's regime. Some RDP subsidized houses have been built but their numbers have thus far been totally inadequate for the volume of people in this sprawling township. It is on the fringes of Khayelitsha, in Mandela Park, where some of the fiercest struggles against evictions have been fought by the local branch of the Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC), and as documented by Ashwin Desai and Richard Pithouse in the story: 'But We Were Thousands: Dispossession, Resistance, Repossession and Repression in Mandela Park'.[34] Their narrative need not be retold here, other than establishing the background to the AEC's struggle and how issues over the right to housing interplay with the Khayelitsha community at large.

Banks built houses in Mandela Park at the end of the 1980s. Payment took shape in the form of bond payments. As we have already noted, struggles throughout apartheid attacked the legitimacy

[34] Desai, A. & Pithouse, R. (2003), *But We Were Thousands: Dispossession, Resistance, Repossession and Repression in Mandela Park*, Durban, *Centre for Civil Society Report* No. 9. For another thorough analysis see Chapters 2 and 3 of Veriava, A. & McKinley. D. (2005), op. cit.

of such arrangements and Mandela Park was no exception. The township was the site of intense boycotts with residents refusing to pay for the privilege to live in one of apartheid's dumping grounds. Evictions failed to materialize with the regime believing such actions would politicize communities further. Similarly, the banks played a waiting game, holding out for a more suitable time in which they could reap the profits from their housing ventures. The dreams of non-racial polities and of communities themselves being "involved at all levels of decision-making and implementation" soon dissipated after 1994.[35]

Discussions between the banks and ANC led to the creation of SERVCON in 1995 which aimed to facilitate payment of bonds to the banks. SANCO became co-opted into this arrangement when it became clear that resistance to the payments was continuing on a local level. SANCO structures cut a deal with some of the banks and subsequently become part owners in a new joint housing venture called *Khayelethu Home Loans*, which took over many of the housing bonds in Mandela Park. Residents who "refused" to pay were presented with three options; re-structuring of the payments; relinquishing their house; or being right-sized under an initiative designed to place residents in more "suitable" housing. The RDP houses offered were many miles away and referred to as "dog kennels" by residents. That the payments to the banks exceeded the original cost of the houses several times over, together with the moral implications of paying such odious debts from apartheid development, did not lead to any justice based approaches to housing in Mandela Park. By 1999 failure to keep up with payments led to wide-scale evictions and new forms of resistance.

Working with the newly formed Western Cape AEC, residents launched the Mandela Park AEC and began to call mass meetings in the community in order to build an organisation for representation. This was independent of existing political parties and the 'civic' formations that had become part of the establishment.[36] The events of the next few years have been chronicled in the accounts we have already cited. Essentially various attempts made by the MPAEC, to engage the state into conducive dialogue failed leading to increasingly defiant identities and actions. Typically these revolved around putting evicted families back into their houses in often violent confrontations with private security firms and police. The AEC was the target of enormous repression of several years leading to increasing energies being bound up within defensive tasks

[35] RDP, (1994), op. cit. sections 22-28
[36] Veriava, A. & McKinley. D. (2005), op. cit. p. 23

such as bail, court cases (including prison sentences) and fighting harassment. [37] Nevertheless, the movement opened new spaces and possibilities for some of the "rights" that had been so intrinsic to earlier struggles.

For a brief period of time a *People's Power* school opened. Demands hinged upon a rights base discourse reminiscent of the mass meetings of the 1980s, evoking notions of direct democracy that sharpened the focus of activists across the world onto Mandela Park.[38] The typical demands made were: "a) structural problems with houses must be fixed; b) government must buy back land from the banks; c) the government housing subsidy must be used to pay for houses and outstanding debts."[39]

Although the AEC has called for housing for residents at large, it never became the core issue in its strategy.[40] Nevertheless, solidarity with the group extended beyond the immediate community and from activists whose housing situation was even more ominous than those who lived under the constant threat of eviction. The fundamental issue around housing problems for the majority of Khayelitsha residents didn't revolve around eviction, but in replacing squatter camps and shacks, with sustainable and just forms of housing. One resident from Site C stated:

"As a result of that actually many people are criticizing the organisation, they feel that at least it shouldn't have been the way it is, you understand that. And also with the campaign and the campaign at large I think also they could have dealt with the question of inadequate housing even though they called themselves the AEC."

Certainly one of the major problems of NSM politics is expecting a moment of insurrection, defiance or resistance to transgress into some kind of more "progressive" or "revolutionary" moments. Struggle does not unwind in predictable stages, but in the creation and re-creation of positions attained through their own agencies and interaction with the site of (and structure of) subordination. These are expressed in moments of various intensity, space and time. In Khayelitsha the decline in the rate of evictions represented a major victory for residents, but left the AEC severely strained. Indeed a quick analysis would suggest that the organisation is a shell

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[37] 'Case of the 5' against Khayelitsha Anti-Eviction Campaign activists withdrawn, http://southafrica.indymedia.org/ (22nd Oct, 2004)
[38] *The Fourth World War*, (2003), New York, Big Noise Films
[39] Desai, A. and Van Heusden, P. (2003), quoted in Veriava, A. & McKinley. D. (2005), op. cit. p. 24
[40] Memorandums frequently include demands such as "decent housing for all now!"

of its former self, riddled with allegations of elitist leadership and corruption, and unclear in its relationship within the SMI. However, as Veriava and McKinley point out, while the "basic conditions of life for many community members remain precarious and hostage to the dictates of an unresponsive state/private sector, so too will the struggles of the MPAEC continue to be waged."[41]

Evictions perhaps only represented the tip of an iceberg of sites of subordination that can be traced throughout various communities in Khayelitsha and South Africa. However, the emergence of the AEC brought into play a variety of questions around what the goals of such a movement should be. Despite the criticism that the movement retained too narrow a focus, it proved successful in opening moments and spaces over certain grievances. Moreover it opened up discussion within the movement itself around the right to housing. Was it necessary for the movement to embrace that issue? Can single-issue movements forge links of solidarity, with other single-issue groups within civil society to create a pluralistic anti-capitalist movement? Such a scenario would involve an anti-eviction campaign working hand-in-hand with pro-housing campaigns throughout the wider community. That such a phenomenon didn't take off can be traced from the overall decline of politicized civil society since the early 1990s. In Khayelitsha, SANCO became a bankrupt organization, little more the "development" arm of central government, while other types of civil society operated within social capital roles. The militancy and vision associated with civic-style structures had evaporated. The AEC symbolized the birth of a renewed spirit of defiance and resistance which has characterized subsequent uprisings from the poorest of Cape Town's communities.[42] In Site C, a community crisis group was in the making. Comrade News elaborated on what has started:

"We the residents here, we have tried to organise ourselves and resist these conditions in which we are living because we could not tolerate the situation. The first thing that we have done is to register all the names of the various citizens in the area but anyway during our door-to-door campaign we heard other peoples views that there must be a meeting where we discuss about others being registered in the municipality system so that we can be able to access the basic services and privileges for the people who are living in the informal settlement. We don't have toilets, we don't have nearby water facilities, so then we have organised a meeting the people

[41] Veriava, A. & Mckinley. D. (2005), op. cit. p. 26
[42] See for example, Victory for Cuba Heights Land Invaders, in Indymedia, http://sa.indymedia.org/news/2005/03/7742.php, (March 11th, 2005)

have shown support for this action to organise and mobilise because we also do need these basic needs but they don't know as to how they can access these rights."

Activists noted how the constant flux of families and individuals in and out of the settlement made any sustainable organization and mobilization a much harder task than in more stable communities. Nevertheless, the meetings enabled residents to air grievances and begin to form visions in which they can gain access to services which they felt were intrinsic to human rights.

Such local community crisis groups, although very much in an embryonic form, appear to be slowly marking their impact in South Africa. In Greenbury, Phoenix outside Durban, the death of Marcel King marked another new moment against cut-offs in post-apartheid struggles. His mother noted:

"He died a hero. He was protecting me and standing for his community. We must not live in fear because we think they are going to shoot us. We are stronger. They may have killed Marcel but that is only one, they cannot kill all of us."[43]

Certainly the events in Harrismith, and across the Free State since 2005, bear testimony that the demands of the struggles have emerged in rights based discourses which have begun to cut across a variety of social classes. Memorandums include the redistribution of land for all, the creation of non-racial polities to challenge the geographical realities left by apartheid, and access to a variety of services and employment. Such a discourse, forming an alternative pole of reference, will face as it grows stronger, the "logic" immersed within the ANC project of transformation embodied by neo-liberalism. This example from the Cape Times highlights how such a culture has permeated mainstream South African discourse:

"A pair of blue and black electrical wires illegally strung between shacks has robbed a Khayelitsha family of their five-year-old son, Lindani Ncalo […] Police say Lindani was electrocuted when he stepped on an illegal wire connection, since cut."

The article, without any background to the struggle faced by millions for electricity ended with the plea for: "To report illegal connections, contact Eskom's crime line on 0800 11 27 22."[44] It

[43] See the moving film, *Marcel King Is Dead*, (2004), Indymedia Durban
[44] "Illegal electricity connection claims life of Khayelitsha boy" in Cape Times,

symbolizes the mockery and emptiness of claims made in 1994 that communities would be "involved at all levels of decision-making and implementation."[45]

Alex and the APF

"Instead of talking about formal bourgeois rights, which have not been realised anywhere in Africa, the South African revolutionaries should strive for participatory democracy, i.e. the right of the people to act on their own behalf, as they are already doing in their present spontaneous struggles. Here, the term "the people", should be understood as referring not to the undifferentiated mass so beloved of liberals but to popular classes, name workers and peasants."[46]
Archie Mafeje – 1992

Any discussion around the nature and formation of new social movements requires an analysis of the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) and its various affiliates.[47] The APF reflects various interests which have assumed a broad coalition with its own distinct identity. On one level the APF has put into place structures and layers of communication that mirror any regular political party. Yet there are also strong undercurrents to the movement that challenge the types of organisation associated with party politics, whether they are working class or bourgeois. One of the over-riding features of the movement is the drive to be "democratic" and open. In some ways this is a legacy of the culture of mass meetings of the 1980s, but with a conscious desire to maintain that they do not become purely rubber-stamping mechanisms for leaders and vanguards.

The visions we outlined in Part 1 around NSM democratic theory appear to be well established within the movement. Largely autonomous grassroots organizations form equivalences of interest. These community groups across the Gauteng province develop their own singularities within a rights based discursive paradigm finding common cause with other affiliates. Typically the rights-based approach has taken on two forms of political activity. One is a legal or moral approach to the state, often around service delivery, right to protest and social justice. In similar

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http://capetimes.co.za/index.php?fSectionId=271&fSetId=158&fArticleId=2411025
(February 15, 2005)
[45] RDP, (1994), op. cit. paragraph. 22-28.
[46] Mafeje, A, (1992), op. cit. p. 65
[47] There are currently around 25 affiliates to the APF. Many of them take are crisis committees or concerned resident groups and come from across the Gauteng region. The APF is also active in Cape Town, but on nothing of the scale of Gauteng activity.

ways to which the concerned residents in Harrismith used the Charter, People's Contract, and so on, the APF has used the South African Constitution (1996) in its discourse.

The other approach congeals around direct action which challenge and at times bypass the state pursuing what Mafeje noted as the "right of the people to act on their own behalf". This has taken shape in "illegal" electricity connections, the destruction of pre-paid water metres by APF members and forms of community-led development.

A veteran member of the AVCC affiliate of the APC stated:

"When we saw that we were in trouble, we did join the APF. It's the one which takes us out from the prison. Even now we still have cases and going to court, because of this electricity. This APF is the one which helps us."[48]

But the APF is far more than any social capital organisation. In Alexandra members sought to institute development practices at a local level, for themselves and by themselves:

"We saw the flats in 1999. We came to those flats and then we stayed here till now. There was no water, no toilets. There were no doors; we put them ourselves. After that we asked for electricity. They refused. We take it illegally and then *Citipower* cut off the electricity."[49]

The AVCC is engaged in a running battle to maintain electricity. The residents who make up the flats had all been denied access to RDP housing. Their action is evidence of the community being "involved" in at least some fundamental levels of "decision-making and implementation". [50] The organization provides an inspiration as to how commitment and co-operation can bring about empowerment which challenges the top-down enrichment project for Mbeki's bourgeoisie. Across Alexandria living conditions have deteriorated to the most appalling levels. A group of various families who sheltered within a giant dilapidated tent all had various stories of dispossession or eviction to share. A young mother noted:

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[48] Personnel Communication, Alexandra Vukuzenzele Crisis Committee, (10th November, 2004) various interviews and film footage
[49] ibid.
[50] RDP, (1994) op. cit. paragraphs 22-28.

"I can't see anything that is like democracy as we are still staying in this horrible place. Even if it's raining the water is coming over us while when it's hot there are rats. We can't even put out our groceries as the rats are there […] I don't see any point to the procedure of voting as even if I can vote I will still stay here, we always vote and stay the same."[51]

Such despondency with the electoral system appeared to have taken root with all activists in civil society who were interviewed. Any analysis of the voting turnout in the 2004 elections suggests this is a growing national phenomenon.[52]

Victoria Bambiso, a leading member in the AVCC stated:

"On my side I don't think that in the elections next year we need to vote. The reasons we are voting for, we don't see them. We did vote for Mandela and then we said that freedom is coming and then we didn't see it. And then we voted for Mbeki and instead of better it was worse. We were suffering. They were selling water to us, people were being taken out of houses, no electricity, everything. Instead of things getting better we are just suffering."

She went on to note why the official Alexandra Renewal Project (ARP) is popularly labelled the Alexandra Removal Project:

"Mbeki, he gets to the high chair and then we he arrives at the Parliament he just forgets about us. He has got a thing called get rich, get richer, get poor, get poorer. I don't see that the voting system is going to do anything. Even this renewal project, it's not a good thing in Alex. I just see people suffering because they renew Alex but they take people to Diepsloot and Braam Fischer. What are they renewing this Alexander for?"

Lavie Mdakane had been evicted from central Alexandra under the promise that suitable RDP housing would become available by October 2004. In the meantime citizens live in matchbox concrete blocks:

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[51] See Indymedia film footage, (10th November, 2004)
[52] McKinley, D. (20th May, 2005), *A Disillusioned Democracy: South African Elections Ten Years On*, Mail and Guardian

"We don't see any movement because instead of renewing Alex they remove. They said they would build houses for us on the other side and then when we go there they are full of other people and these houses which they promised us are not there. We didn't see anything there they are people who we don't know in those flats. They are not people from Alex. Instead of taking us back to the flats, they take us to Bram Fischer. I don't think I am going to vote for the local government, I don't see any need to vote because since they started there is nothing accomplished which I can see."

The justification is that shack residents are not losing anything because their housing situation is the same as it was before, and yet their removal from existing community networks removes any local input over the development of non-racial polities. Meanwhile changes to Alex appeared to be largely cosmetic:

"They clean the streets while on the other hand people are still staying in the shelters, and on the other side the drains are still coming up and they are still dirty but they said they are cleaning the streets. We don't know what is this renewal project which they are doing? That's why we with the other people have decided to take the flats. We as AVCC we are going to be fighting with the government and we as a community are going to fight with our government until they do the things we want them to do … the things that we didn't get done with the first government. The politics, we have to fight for the politics."[53]

Apathy with parliamentary democracy should not be seen as extending to any passive acceptance of the way in which local development has taken shape. The whole issue of participation within parliamentary elections goes to the heart of debates within the APF and the SMI generally.[54] While activists from the AVCC questioned in this research were opposed to such participation, other voices, particularly within the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC) and the Socialist Bloc of the APF have argued in favour.[55]

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[53] Personnel Communication, (11th November, 2004),Victoria Bambiso, AVCC and APF
[54] It formed the main issue when social movements met at The Rosa Luxemburg Seminar, 3-5 March 2005, Workers Library and Museum, Newtown, "The Left: Participation & Engagement with Bourgeois Institutions"
[55] AVCC, (2004), Focus Group Discussion, November 10th, and Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC), *Ideas for running Candidates in the Local Government Elections*, Johannesburg, http://www.apf.org.za/article.php3?id_article=69 (December, 2004)

Groups such as the SECC, who are preparing to field candidates in the forthcoming elections, are sensitive to this debate surrounding participation in bourgeois democracy and see the attainment of power through elections as a form of protest against that very system.[56] This leads to questions as to if such action forms part of a protest tool, what is wrong with a boycott or spoilt ballot approach? Furthermore, even if groups contest elections and are genuine in their suggestions that they will opt out of he system, how might attempts for co-option and the lure of power play out? Despite our concern here with "local" politics we are reminded of Mafeje's reflection on liberation movements generally:

"Many of the heroes of the independence movement in Africa turned the same, joined the imperialist exploiters, and made pariahs of their own people. Was it simply an act of betrayal and capriciousness on the part of those concerned; or was it a result of certain objective factors."[57]

If the left becomes engaged in electoral politics, could this forge the beginning of a broader alliance? Would it develop a sense of "realism" to "objective" factors which would stifle revolutionary possibilities for change? Certainly there are elements of the SMI who see the formation of a mass working class movement, that will eventually contest the ANC on an electoral level as a future goal. In terms of our historicity of social movements and their relations to capitalism and vision of democracy, as laid out in **Part 1,** we need to be aware of what kind of dangers such developments might pose? How would such a movement institutionalize *People's Power*? How could it avoid resembling typical forms of elitist structure and leadership which have been at least partly responsible for demobilization of "democracy" as we have explored throughout previous eras. How could power be diffracted in a political machine where impulses are tendencies are for the congealing of power in the centre? Could a party structure seek ways in which it is undermined and defrayed without being defeated by liberal, conservative and bourgeois forces? As we have noted these shape the debates throughout Venezuelan society as the *multitude* attempts to engage in forms of *People's Power* while the structures under which it is protected (Chavez and Movement of the Fifth Republic) seek to consolidate the Bolivarian revolution from the very real reactionary forces of imperialism and *Empire*.

That the construction of South Africa's social movements might form a new *multitude* movement that will be drawn into bourgeois political institutions, need not spell gloom that such structures

[56] ibid.
[57] Mafeje, A. (1992), op. cit. p. 73

will coalesce into totalitarian, anti-democratic projects. Indeed, given the nature of the South African transition and the spaces opened up in previous struggles they are well armed, equipped and prepared to resist co-option and totalitarianism, just as much as they could be drawn into existing bourgeois institutions, policies and structures. Indeed such logic pervades the "left" of the ANC, particularly the SACP in its justification for its part in the Alliance, that a *war of position* can entrench and protect working class power. This would appear unlikely given the class forces, which have become, and are, dominant in the ANC project. Yet in a new political formation, especially given the civic and direct forms of resistance that are growing, the genuine search for alternatives could still emerge and be institutionalized (within the initial phase) through a dualist direct/parliamentary democratic route as being played out in Venezuela.

It is too simplistic to suggest the APF is marked by two political tendencies on a spectrum from autonomist thought to Marxist-Leninism. Positions are far more fluid than such a reading. While some feel the APF should be reaching out to the community and resident crisis groups in the Free State, some activists within the APF see the eruptions that have taken place in the Free State as more than capable of sustaining their own features of struggle that can find commonality with the APF without having to come under its umbrella.[58]

Moreover, the ideologies of ex SACP, ANC, workerist trade unionists are now placed on an entirely new "trajectory" of struggle where revolutionary subjects of the APF are a distant cluster from the orthodox conceptions of the "working class". Membership of the APF resembles the *multitude* in its composition of a variety of "social classes". They share grievances formed from their hostility to the sites of subordination arising from *commodification*. Thus the unemployed youth, pensioners, landless, and evicted join forces with the urban and politicised activists. This forms an interesting dialectic in terms of those who are present in the central structures of the APF, mostly from the suburban and wealthier areas of Johannesburg. They are defined and affected by *commodification* and neo-liberalism across the social in ways which cut away the distinction of purely a petty-bourgeois status as we argued in **Part 1** (subjects being defined by the multiplicity of relations). Yet amongst the subjects of resistance defined as the "poors" what can be the role of activists within stuggles?[59] Clearly they represent distinct social classes but with features of politicisation that give potential for finding commonality with a variety of others in the *multitude*. It leads us to question - should certain groups be elevated within the struggle? To

[58] Personnel Communication, Nicolas Dieltens, (November 15th, 2004) APF
[59] Desai, A. (2002), *We are the Poors*, op. cit.

what extent can whites play any form of leadership roles in struggles which we have identified in **Part 3** as having a clearly defined racial component of exploitation to them? How these issues are resolved will obviously determine the direction of the movement. In terms of fleshing out some kind of "trajectory" of liberation politics we can identify three broad phenomenon which are likely to shape and be contested in the next decade:

1 – autonomous and closely linked crisis groups which find a loose central structure throwing up increasingly viable and dominant alternatives to capitalism and the free market
2 – a formalized political party that seeks to entrench the power of poor and emerging in both parliamentary and direct democratic forms
3 – top-down Marxist-Leninist party that will serve to centralize the democratic expressions and spaces that are emerging

However, to see such processes as distinct and unique to one another is an over-simplification of the fluidity in which NSM politics and discourse operates in South Africa. They serve to hint at the broad outlines in which social movement and civil society based politics are moving. In coming towards our final conclusions of NSM, we turn our attention to the largest social movement in South Africa, the LPM.

Landless Peoples' Movement

"The national wealth of our country, the heritage of South Africans, shall be restored to the people; […] Restrictions of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land re-divided amongst those who work it to banish famine and land hunger."
- The Freedom Charter, 1955

The entrenched property clause in post-apartheid South Africa's Bill of Rights (1994) made it virtually impossible to implement an all-embracing agrarian reform programme.[60] Negotiations may have secured majority rule but beneath the transition laid fundamental compromises. Just as the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) found little space for manoeuvre at Lancaster House in 1979, so too did South Africa's major liberation movement face powerful forces which sought to moderate and control the terms of majority rule and property rights.

[60] Without access to massive financing.

Any understanding of the LPM requires an elaboration of the history of dispossession of Africans to the commons. This is not the place for a detailed exploration of colonial and apartheid South Africa, but rather, a brief understanding of relations within the country pre-1994, and an outline of land policy in the new democracy.

The infamous Land Act of 1913 confined blacks to around 13% of the total land of South Africa, and prohibited land acquisition in "white" areas. Tenancy and sharecropping were outlawed. The law mirrored and enshrined the land thefts and general disenfranchisement of blacks across three centuries of colonial settler aggression.

Apartheid idealized the visions of colonial states to the north. It crystallized the settler population as the guardians of the most fertile, productive land seeking to split the African population into constructed ethnic and tribal patterns of divide and rule. Bantustans would remain dependent upon the stewardship, dominance and guidance of white South Africa.

Demands for cheap labour could not be satisfied by market forces as long as people had access to independent resources and livelihoods, and the state intervened to create such a labour supply in both rural and urban areas.[61] Industrialised South Africa "developed" in the capitalist logic of the term, from the destruction, death and dispossession of Africans. By the 1980s intense urbanization was reflected in that about 50% of the total population resided in, but mostly around, cities. Forced relocation of millions of people intensified deep social dislocation in urban and rural areas.

Liberation revolved around narratives of grievance and dispossession. It was rooted in themes of resistance and defiance. Above all it necessitated a strong state and social justice based strategy for reversing past injustices. The two major contributions the LPM has made to struggles in post-apartheid South Africa is in its role in breaking down the artificially constructed rural/urban divides of apartheid, and in articulating rights based discourse immersed in the Charter, which cuts across social classes on the issue of land.

The new South African government had a mandate that was self-created and driven by expectations that arose out of the liberation struggle. The reinforcement of the land question

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[61] Hallowes, D. & Butler, M. (2002), *Power, Poverty and Marginalized Environments: A Conceptual Framework* in McDonald, D. (ed.), "Environmental Justice in South Africa", *Cape Town*: UCT Press, p. 61

was forged by the personal experiences of many within the ANC, warranting the land question precedence in the attentions of the new South African state. The *Back to the Land* Campaign of 1993, a network of various local communities, maintained the presence of land access in notions of South African transformation. How the state would tackle and ensure redistribution was at the heart of debate within the ANC, and the general milieu of a country shedding its apartheid past.

In 1993, the World Bank had put forward its own model for future land redistribution in South Africa, pegged at 30% of medium to high quality land. This was envisaged to be from large-scale white commercial farmers to around 600,000 small-scale black farm households.[62] The programme retained the integrity of the markets while aspiring to deliver social justice to those marginalised and excluded during apartheid. The World Bank looked to draw more of the populace into trade, as defined within its own agricultural export development paradigm.

This goal of 30% emerged in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) policy document of the ANC of 1994, reflecting the policy links which had emerged between the ANC and the IFIs during the CODESA years. Within five years, land reform was expected to take on three broad policy components:

Firstly, land restitution was designed to restore land ownership, or at least adequate financial compensation, to those who were dispossessed after 1913. Tools included provincially based restitution commissions and a Lands Claim Court to act as an arbiter.

Secondly, the land redistribution programme aimed at providing the poor with access to land for both productive and residential purposes. Settlement Land Acquisition Grants (SLAGS) were one means by which the state envisaged an African smallholding class would emerge.

Thirdly, housing projects to provide adequate shelter set targets designed to radically re-shape the shacks and shanties into urban areas with access to services such as water and electricity. ANC policies advanced private-public partnership (PPP) as the most effective and efficient mechanism by which investment could begin to take shape.

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[62] World Bank, (1993), *Options for Land Reform and Rural Restructuring in South Africa*, Land and Agricultural Policy Centre Conference, Johannesburg

The overall approach to land took on a market-based approach to redistribution and development, with the state playing a central role in facilitating the shape of a transformed South Africa. The willing-seller, willing-buyer model was in consensus with the ANC's vision of reconciliation which included the maintenance of property relations. We can draw comparisons with common patterns of immediate decolonisation in Africa such as in Kenya and Zimbabwe. The rationale behind these policies was the retention of investor confidence and part of an overall development paradigm to achieve growth and social justice through neo-liberal capitalism. Economic "development" it was hoped, would redress previous injustices.

The Labour Tenure Act (1996) and Extension of Security of Tenure Act (ESTA - 1997) sought to tackle the insecurity of farm tenants who had been reliant on paternalistic relationships with farmers. Throughout apartheid, paternalism had forged dependency relationships and identities based upon farmer "goodwill" and tenant "passivity". Yet, despite new legal guarantees for tenants and the introduction of a minimum wage for farm-workers, it has been shown that in many instances this legislation served to worsen the plight of the rural poor and vulnerable serving to entrench inequalities along racial lines.[63] Farmers responded to the various acts designed to increase tenure or security by increasing evictions.[64] This was compounded by the socio-political networks, which particularly in rural areas involved the police, private security companies, farmers and the courts.[65] That farmers continually find creative solutions to avoid paying the minimum wage, often by over-charging for access to grazing or provision of basic services, has been well documented.[66]

By the ANC's second term, the settlement of only a handful of the almost 100,000 cases which had been lodged with the department, contributed to a sense of despondency and disillusionment with the handling of the land transformation. From the projection of 30% redistribution, the state had managed less than 1%. An official review of the departments work in 1999 noted the DLA as "a highly centralised and fragmented bureaucracy... with poor race relations ... and a high black staff turnover."[12]

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[63] James, D. (2003), *Clientalism and the moral economy of land: the farm-dweller conundrum*, Manuscript prepared at London School of Economics, London, p. 11

[64] ibid. p. 12, Greenburg, S. (2004), Post-apartheid development, landlessness and the reproduction of exclusion in South Africa, *Centre for Civil Society Research Paper*, Durban, and Isaacs, A. (2003), Trapped Farm Labour: Obstacles to rights and freedom, *Development Update*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Interfund, Johannesburg, p. 47

[65] Personnel Communication, Samantha Hargreaves (May 22nd, 2004), LPM Organizer

[66] See Greenburg, S. (2004) op. cit.

It signalled the entire redistribution policy being put on hold shortly after the 1999 elections, and a lengthy period of internal policy adjustment. In 2000, new minister Thoko Didiza introduced a fresh redistribution policy: an Integrated Programme of Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development in South Africa (IPLRAD).[67] It marked a shift away from rhetorical concerns of alleviating the rural poor to the promotion of agricultural production and commercial farming through the establishment of smaller group of highly productive, elite black farmers.

The programme extended the timeframe for the redistribution of 30% and was now inclusive of land transferred to black ownership through ordinary market transactions. Compensation, increasingly become a "statistical escape mechanism" for the ANC.[68] Analysis showed cash settlements were having no impact upon the racially distorted patterns of land ownership and were not challenging the demographics of apartheid.[69] SLAGS now required beneficiaries to make a minimum R5000 contribution, from which the state would make a grant payment. The DLA noted: "The chain of progress is thus one of increasing scale, commercialisation of inputs and outputs, and commitment to full time farming."

Moreover further wage legislation passed in 2002 has had little effect on the actual conditions of workers. Farmers continue to make big deductions for various services and recent. The exposure of this exploitation tends to be limited in the press, and when is highlighted only covers the tip of the iceberg of employer exploitation.[70] Furthermore, the Communal Land Rights Bill of 2002 offers traditional authorities (particularly those identified in the former homelands) even greater control over land use and administration than under apartheid.[71]

The role of civil society around land, and particularly a number of NGOs, reflected the general approach we have identified of cooperation with the state post-1994. Work centred on carrying out the technical work of information dissemination, capacity-building, legal support, research, mediation, and other forms of intervention aimed at identifying and closing the legal and

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[67] After a series of future drafts became known as the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD)
[68] Hargreaves, S. & Eveleth, A. (2003), *The land restitution programme: Advancing real reform or delaying it?*, in "Development Update", Vol. 4, No. 2, Interfund, Johannesburg p. 91 and Greenburg, S. (2004), op. cit. p. 12
[69] "The State Lands a Role" (28th September, 2001), Mail and Guardian.
[70] Bos, J. (February 4th, 2004), *Farm workers still get a raw deal*, *The Sowetan*, p. 13
[71] Greenburg, S. (2004), Op. Cit. p. 20 and see Alexander, A. (2004), op. cit.

bureaucratic gaps in the new land reform programs.[72] Rather than highlighting some of the major issues with the policies, such as whether redistribution of 30% of the total land and the creation of 600,000 small scale black farm households went far enough, or the fact that most land dispossession in South Africa occurred before 1913, did not feature in the "developmental" ideas of most NGOs in their discourse and outreach.

Yet while the ANC-led government conceived its land policy, the landless simultaneously developed their own demands, attitudes and expectations based on the expectations of the struggle. The LPM emerged in 2001 as a fusion of the crisis style civic groups (largely, but not exclusively rural and in Mpumalanga), Gauteng based activists and the National Land Commission (NLC). Since its emergence it has grown steadily, and come to embrace a wide variety of concerns around land access creating a meeting place for a wide range of groups. Diverse experiences of individuals occupying over-crowded apartments in downtown Johannesburg, living in informal settlements surrounding the city, and working on rural farms form a melting pot of classes divided under apartheid's demography. Moreover, the definition of "landless" is dissociated from orthodox views of only rural, black peasants requiring land for small farming, a notion pervading IFI and developmental discourse.

Though the LPM is calling for changes in national land policy, their efforts are largely symbolic, and at times defensive. In the first instance they focus on preventing evictions from rural farms, peri-urban settlements and downtown apartment complexes. Symbolic forms of protest typically revolve around "land invasions" or occupations, together with publicised campaign stunts such as "No land, No Vote" in the 2004 general elections.

Demands are woven into a populist and nationalist agenda, which explicitly addresses the plight of urban and rural poor, and challenges the overall paradigm of neo-liberal policies. The LPM takes the position that South Africa has achieved only a "ballot box" democracy. Under this system, the poor and landless are called "citizens" but do not own land. It recognizes the importance the Freedom Charter has within its discourse. Mangaliso Kubheko, a national co-ordinator of the LPM stated: "It doesn't matter which political party is in power. What we want is the implementation of the Freedom Charter".[73]

[72] Alexander, A, (2004) op. cit. p. 14
[73] Personnel Communication, Mangaliso Kubheko, op. cit.

Within this context, the LPM has sought to engage the government into a national land summit over the last few years, and hold it to account on the basis of the Charter. At the end of 2004 the LPM engaged with the SACP around the "Red October" campaign, to highlight the inadequacies of land redistribution and continued exploitation amongst black farm workers. This has been an uneasy relationship which for the present appears to be under strain.[74]

Structurally the organization has relied on funding and direction from the NLC, with a core group of activists having worked, or currently working for, the group. This has caused friction within the NLC which has been the constant attention of the media. Furthermore, the LPM often operates on two levels. Activist leadership in Gauteng perform outreach programmes, form policy and seek to engage in dialogue with other groups. On the ground (where sections of the leadership are located) meetings continue to raise awareness and consciousness of land and housing rights and access. The LPM has grown to become the largest new social movement in South Africa.

Consequently, and as a sign of their growing strength, the LPM has gained the attention of the state. It has sought to co-opt them, and also, to attack the organization. In a press statement before the 2004 elections the ANC noted:

"South Africa is a constitutional democracy that enshrines the right to demonstrate and freedom of expression, but such rights do not include a right to perpetuate lies, violate the law and act in a manner calculated to polarize society ... The ANC indeed respects the right of the Landless People's Movement to choose to forgo their right to vote, but will not tolerate any act calculated at intimidating people and stopping them from exercising their right to vote."[75]

Indeed, its lack of "tolerance" to the organization manifested in ugly incidents after the LPM staged a "No Land, No Vote" protest on election polling day. Detaining several activists, police abuse bordered on torture during interrogation, recalling ugly methods used by the apartheid regime. While the issue of land and housing remain unresolved for the majority of South Africans, the LPM's rhetoric is likely to increase in popularity and resonance. In her thorough analysis of the LPM, Alexander notes:

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[74] Landless People's Movement Gauteng Reponse to SACP Call for Co-operation, (2005) Press Release, February 25th

[75] African National Congress. "ANC Keeps to Land Reform Commitments." Press Statement, http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/pr/ 2004/pr0304.html, (March 4th, 2004)

"As the new social movements develop their class ideology and pursue a more rigorous structural analysis, they will take democracy into their own hands."[76]

The link between a "rigorous structural analysis" and the emergence of "democracy" perhaps seeks more cohesion and co-ordination in moments of defiance, insurrection and alternatives, than shape the realities of social movement politics. Events in the Free State are not hinged upon a thorough analysis of neo-liberal theory, but rather upon the visions and alternatives deemed to be the right of the people. This appears to be true of a wealth of uprisings which are marking 2005 and sweeping across the country. Do such insurrectionary moments require more sophisticated elaboration, and a unity of class to gain hegemony? We have argued for weaving back in the dialectic based around the *multitude* and *commodification*. Sensitivity to exploitation and the destruction to the commons from neo-liberal policies, across all levels of the social, is one area where the LPM could become an increasingly significant player. However any form of "class unity" between South Africa's social classes is a distinctly different project to orthodox leftist models. Success is not hinged upon movements becoming formalized. Visions, rather than "structural analysis", take form and shape in vibrant and justice based streams of ideology that are fermenting into that meeting point of possibility for communities across South Africa. Communication and partnership between them, in a space and focal point such as the SMI, may well provide a launching pad for a sustained and effective challenge to the policies which have shaped the first ten years of South Africa's freedom.

[76] Alexander, A. (2004), op. cit. p. 84

CONCLUSION

FROM AFRICAN RENASSAINCE TO RESISTANCE



Identities of defiance

"I notice people always say 'under Socialism'. They look forward to being on top – with all the others underneath, being told what is good for them."
- George Orwell

"This democracy. We can see it in the urban areas, but here we cannot see anything, since it came I can say that people that get houses, democracy has been only for those ones. Instead of going forward we are dying."
- Lavie Mdakane, APF member, Alexandria 2004

The South African Communist Party, a few months before the Berlin Wall was torn down stated: "Socialist countries today represent a powerful international force. Some of them possess highly developed economies, a considerable scientific base, and a reliable military defence potential. […] A new way of life is taking shape in which there are neither oppressors nor the oppressed, neither exploiters nor the exploited, in which power belongs to the people." [1]

The SACP, and the Alliance "left" in general, were shattered by the tumultuous events of 1989-1991. Those alternatives to neo-liberalism, based upon totalitarian systems, in no way resembled some of the remarkable moments which opened up during the struggle years of the 1980s. This was the result of work by communities and individuals, some of whom were distant to Congress thought, and some of whom placed all their energies and identities within such politics. During the transition period such demands became consolidated, co-opted or isolated by a developmental discourse that was shaped not just by the agencies of the ANC, but also by the pull of other structures such as IFIs, international capital, and the remnants of the white apartheid forces. Nevertheless, subaltern demands re-emerged at the turn of the century in new political formations, many of which bore remarkable similarities to the civics of the 1980s and notions of *people's power*.

The nature of the transition period had drastically demobilized and depoliticized these forces. This was reflected on a global scale with the velvet revolutions of Eastern Europe forging complicity within civil movements for neo-liberal policies of political economy. George Bush, Samuel Huntingdon and Francis Fukuyama alike lauded this as some kind of end of history. The

[1] The African Communist, (1989), No. 3, p. 118

dramatic resurgence of anti-capitalist movements has initiated a new set of challenges to systemic forces and the left. Hinged upon a rejection of totalitarian state socialism, neo-liberal politics and parliamentary alternatives of social democracy, the awkward assembly of anti-globalisation forces engage in pro-active visions of alternatives.

Implicit to this process is a fundamental overhaul of some of the normative terms around development, democracy and good governance. It counters mainstream assumptions which fail to perceive the democratic aspirations beneath the surface of "official" civil society, government institutions and NGOs. Horowitz's statement in 1991, that South Africa was suffering from an absence of "a strong, autonomous civil society with a stake in maintaining democracy" could not have been further from the truth.[2] South Africa had a rich history of civil society, and grassroots movements, which had played a fundamental part in shaping the alternatives people believed the struggle could institutionalise.

If new social movements are to enjoy further success, they will need to continue injecting life and vitality into the semantics of "justice" and "democracy". While this at times has invoked pressure on the state (whether it be moral, legal), the defiance and insurrection symbolized throughout the Free State, in various land occupations, in the destruction of pre-paid water metres, and in the community empowerment projects across townships and squatter camps; all herald a new trajectory for struggle in South Africa. Activists and ideologies steeped in Marxist-Leninism have been thrown into an identity crisis. The composition and democracy of the "working class" has moved away from crude economist perceptions. A focus on the de-globalisation of capital and the globalisation of people has thrown up new paradigms of development and organization currently at an embryonic stage. Some of the examples we have considered in South Africa have a conscious and ideological critique of forces which they seek to contest. However, this need not be a determining factor in assessing the ability of movements to challenge the state and capital. The resurgence of civic structures and community crisis groups – many of which retain identities to the ANC and the Charter – has been based around a proactive system of ideals, commonalities and visions which have begun to place very real demands and grievances upon the state. Together the moments of disrupture across South Africa may yield significant potential in presenting anti-capitalist, commons based approaches to development, services and land.

[2] Horowitz, D, (1991), op. cit. p. 241

South African new social movements have an imbued culture of democracy, linked strongly to the 1980s. However, they transgress movements which to some extent placed the result, above the means of struggle. Even if parliamentary means are developed within the SMI, or a new leftist-front, to challenge dominant power structures, it need not symbolize a familiar narrative of further elite-pacting, reinforcement of top-down hierarchies of power, and assimilation into the international capitalist order. Venezuela provides at least one example where contestation of the state and "development" is being played out in creative and imaginative forms.

The debate as to whether people are worse off now than under apartheid is not necessary. No critical analysis can see the regime facilitating what the ANC has. However, the ANC's attempts to deliver social justice have given way to dominant class interests and capital, initiating a system of trickle-down economics to alleviate past injustices. This has only served to sharpen and refine the racialized aspects of post-apartheid society. The Constitution, the RDP and Charter have become fetishized and brandished by Mbeki and the Alliance as part of this class project. Yet, a new discourse, serving to be a weapon of the poor, disempowered and landless is emerging in moments of disrupture and struggle. The granting of human rights at a constitutional level has never brought an end to the exploitation of the multitude. Yet a *war of position* around the semantics of such documents, yielding anti-capitalist interpretations, pose real challenges to the logic of neo-liberalism and *commodification* of life and relations.

This means asserting control over the journey from comrade to citizen so that the process doesn't become synonymous with continued dispossession and poverty. This is undoing the hegemony elite and dominant classes and structures have over notions of change in South Africa. Those for who experiences with freedom have meant little more than "ten years of confusion", symbolizes what millions of South Africans are beginning to consider: what was the democracy we fought for and where do we go from here?

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