

RE-MEMBERING MOVEMENTS: TRADE UNIONS AND NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN NEOLIBERAL SOUTH AFRICA

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Re-membering ...

As we draw nearer to the Senate House entrance to Wits, anger wells up at the turnstiles and in the long queue we now have to join to gain access to this place we once staged long battles for, right here at this entrance. In those early days of the 90s, we were together, security guards, workers, academics and students from organisations broadly affiliated to the United Democratic Front (UDF), raising our fists and shouting slogans at the helicopters overhead and the police line before us. Our campaign was part of a national campaign under the broad banner, 'The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall Be Open'... Today, Ahmed has to have his photograph taken by sheepish security guards who are familiar from past mass meetings or the like. As we enter, we meet Trevor, a new-found comrade in our fight against privatisation. Together we walk through Senate House concourse, tensing up again at the wannabe accents and feigned disinterest of the student couples and groups lounging around. As we approach the Great Hall, the venue for the closing ceremony of Urban Futures (and our target), we get excited at the sound of singing (our comrades are here). But the singing is coming from a mass of workers spilling out of a lecture hall – there has just been a memorial service for a NEHAWU member who recently passed away. We quickly spread the word that we are about to disrupt the final ceremony of the conference that we've been protesting all week, the showcasing of the privatisation plans of Wits University and the Johannesburg City Council. Someone asks whether there'll be food again. Laughter and quick retellings of the action earlier in the week, when we took over a water discussion of the conference in Newtown, ensue. We walk on to the Great Hall, now a sizeable number, to meet other comrades who've gathered. The session has begun inside and the doors have been shut. There's a little bit of confusion as to what's to be done. Do we just stand here outside and sing quietly while their conference closes or...? And who is supposed to decide? In little groups it's agreed that we will try to force our entry into the Great Hall. We bang on the doors, scuffles break out with security guards, and finally the doors are kicked open – Colin Bundy and neoliberalism's legion of consultants, academics, and policy experts gathered cannot believe their eyes. A motley crew of student activists, academics, workers, unionists and political activists take over the stage as Bundy is hurriedly ushered out to a press conference next door. They are not going to get away with proclaiming that their neoliberal projects are the answers to the needs of the poor. We choose comrades to represent our positions, and over a loudhailer delegates are reminded of the role they are playing in selling out the lives of the poor. Toyi-toying continues. Someone shouts that Bundy shouldn't be let off the hook and we move, almost instinctively, to the press conference next door. Security guards are already well positioned at the doors. A few comrades make for the doors. As fights begin between us and the security guards, Bundy emerges – his press conference has had to stop. Comrades at the door threaten him. Someone grabs him by the scruff of his neck. Another comrade intervenes. Bundy breaks away and makes a run for his office. We chase after him... back into Senate House concourse, by now deserted... but

at least the feeling that we're strangers in this place has disappeared for a moment. For the first time in a long while it feels like we're a force again, like there is the possibility for further struggle. We leave Wits through the same turnstiles – we mock them, laughing with comrades, arguing with security, patting each other on the backs, a new energy to fight on...
(Prishani Naidoo and Ahmed Veriava, July 2000).

In the novel, *Beloved*, the term 're-memory' is used by its characters in a manner that highlights the ways in which narrative and history (in this case, of slavery) are always processes of enacting or constituting realities or truths. As such, every act of re-memory invokes particular choices, focuses, priorities, omissions, styles and everything else that goes into the fictioning of other histories. Re-memory becomes the means through which the silences and omissions of the dominant order are animated for the living present, the process through which subjugated knowledges become reinserted into history. It is finally a way of re-inscribing affect, emotion and subjectivity as central to the ways in which meaning is constituted in the world.

For Gustavo Esteva this process of 're-membering' is a way of undoing capitalism's process of 'dis-membering'. Esteva argues that the capitalist system dis-members communities and collectivities and works on the individual self so as to lock us into individual ways of coping with living under capitalism. He proposes a process of re-membering that celebrates local knowledges, values and ways of relating to life that is oppositional to the dis-membering tendency of capitalism. In this way, the concept of 're-membering' also speaks to a fundamental shift in the ways that we approach change under capitalism, paying closer attention to the social relations that are able to be constituted outside of capitalist forces and drives.

Recognising the ways in which neoliberalism operates to dis-member life and struggle, and the role that academia has come to play in servicing the aims of neoliberal interests, we have made certain choices in conducting our research and writing this Report. Rather than choosing to fit our subject material to existing theories of social movements or grand theories of organisation, or to capture all statements and processes in totalising frameworks of analysis, we have allowed all aspects of the lives of organisations, movements and individuals relevant to the subject under investigation to speak through this Report. Our goal is a re-membering of movements that respects the 'local' in the research process, referring not only to a geographical location, but to the lived, immediate and subjective experiences of people living with and struggling against the 'global' system in its 'local' manifestations. The 'local' not only in economic terms but also in socio-cultural terms, resisting the violence of 'totalitarian theories' and making their own meanings in various ways¹.

¹ As activists within the movements we write about, we cannot offer the traditional space and distance that academic research requires. We believe, however, that it is precisely this positionality of activist/researcher that allows us to shape the process of re-membering new social movements in South Africa in the privileged space of academia that allows for the reinscription of 'affect, emotion and subjectivity as central ways in which meaning is constituted in the world', something that neoliberalism works consistently to prevent. As such, many of the people quoted in these pages are old and new friends and comrades with whom we are in a constant process of re-membering and making

This re-memory begins with a coming together of people affected by neoliberalism, both directly and in terms of the failure of the traditional social movements to respond organisationally to the new conditions presented by neoliberalism. If the Wits struggle points to the failure of traditional trade union structures to respond critically at a time when its members were under severe attacks, and the inability of the traditional liberation movement more broadly to offer the space for any meaningful critique and opposition to the neoliberal project, it also highlights the emergence of a new discourse of struggle emerging in the nexus between this failure of the trade union movement and the changing material realities of the majority of people living under the heavy handed reach of an ever-expanding capitalism. As such our re-memory begins within a moment of tension or danger, when the exhaustion of the old opens up a space to be filled with new becomings - a process in which the old and new lose all identity in service of the here and now.

Neoliberalism's entry into South Africa is such a moment of danger, a moment in which we come to experience the exhaustion of the old, opening into ever-extending acts of re-memory. The emergence of this new discourse of struggle is explored in the context of the challenges posed by neoliberalism for traditional movements internationally and for organising generally, with specific reference to South Africa's neoliberal transition. This Report will explore the new forms of organising that emerge in these movements, at the same time showing the ways in which many of the political tendencies, traditions and styles of the old become transformed by their new environments. With new social movements providing the space in which these new forms are able to emerge – outside of the trade union and the party, linking the factory with the community – this Report points to spaces for possible reconstitutions of social relations and life. It will explore these issues with specific reference to the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF), one of the movements that has emerged in this nexus between old and new.

Spaces

While the end of apartheid brought with it possibilities and promises of 'a better life for all' for a united and strong civil society mobilised against the apartheid state, the reality of the transition in South Africa has been a neoliberal one presenting several dangers for its citizens. The greatest of these dangers has been an attack on those resources and products that came to be seen as common to all South Africans (such as water), as all that is common is made commodity and humanity itself is subdivided, packaged and sold off to the highest bidder.

For social movement activists, this transition has been lived in the context of change within the traditional 'organs of people's power' and society generally as a result of the negotiated settlement of apartheid and South Africa's entry into the world economy and neoliberal order. With the banning of political parties and the imprisonment of many of the

life. In doing this, we are conscious of the requirements and framing theoretical models that academia expects us to respect. We use this space of privilege and power, however, to allow a re-memory of new social movements that resists closure in terms of its imagining and to speak this new discourse of life that has emerged within new social movements.

leaders of the liberation movement from the 1960s on, strong community-based civics developed to take up struggles against Black local authorities, representatives of the tricameral system of government, payment of rates and services and so on. These came to be organised under the banner of the United Democratic Front (UDF), with the clear enemy being the apartheid state, and the tactics of the movements being determined by the strategy of 'ungovernability'. Although the UDF brought many civics and structures under its umbrella, there were also other civics and structures that remained independent and outside of it, in particular those aligned with the tradition of Black Consciousness and the struggles of 1976, which saw youth in schools in Soweto, Langa and Nyanga rise up against the introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in Black schools. These activists argue that the UDF became a way for the ANC to bring all structures under its control and create the impression that nothing significant existed outside of it.

With the unbanning of political parties, the release of political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela, the return of the exiled leadership of the ANC, and the entry into negotiations with the apartheid government by the ANC (within an international context of neoliberal restructuring), enormous challenges were placed on these 'organs of people's power' to redirect their focus from contesting state power and moving towards the building of a democratic state. For activists interviewed, this manifested itself in various recognisable 'shifts' in the liberation movement from the 1990s on.

All vibrant structures that had been built up in the '80s (women's, youth, and other UDF structures) were swallowed up under the rubric of the exiled ANC. This process of demobilisation started in the early '90s as a political strategy of the ANC to take away any possibility of any independent working class movement outside of its own framework, so as to politically control everyone and bring them under its own umbrella. In addition, many leaders of movements were given positions in government.... By the time of the 1994 elections, the scene had been set for the institutionalisation of the power of the bureaucracy, particularly of the exiled ANC structures and the demobilisation of the grassroots that had brought the ANC this far. (Dale McKinley, interview).

In addition, activists interviewed pointed to the changing discourse of the ANC Alliance:

What became significant with the ANC coming to power was the removal by the ANC from the collective consciousness of the masses any thought of entitlement, even entitlement on the basis of a history of oppression, entitlements to social welfare, education as a means of redress. People were told to work. So, I can remember a whole period from around 1992 to 1994 when the discourse became 'people are not going to get handouts'. So 'our people don't need handouts' was really saying 'our people don't need redress, don't need reparations'. The type of redress that they want is a job. And, then in comes GEAR, promising jobs but clearly not designed to deliver jobs. (Nhlanhla Ndlovu, interview).

The ANC government continued this line in the Masakhane campaign, aimed at encouraging people to pay for services and to undo the collective memory of ungovernability, helping our democratic state to deliver.

While many social movement activists argue that the beginnings of these shifts can be traced back much earlier within the liberation movement than 1994 and the election of a democratic government, the clearest articulation of the ANC government's commitment to the neoliberal agenda came in the form of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR), adopted in 1996. Based on the advice of the World Bank and a group of

policy experts, GEAR became known as South Africa's 'homegrown structural adjustment policy'. Through its prioritisation of export-led growth and reduced national spending, GEAR ushered in attacks on two broad fronts: on people's access to basic needs for their survival, e.g. basic services and health care (relating broadly to issues of distribution), and on people's ability to make a living as producers, e.g. jobs (relating to production). GEAR prescribed measures for enhancing exports, trade liberalisation, fiscal restraint in the interests of servicing the national debt, tax breaks for big business, cuts in social spending, cuts in the public service, privatisation of state assets, privatisation of basic services, the flexibilisation and casualisation of labour, job-sharing and lower wages for youth. Despite mass mobilisation and critique of GEAR, the ANC government went ahead with its implementation, with ex-President Mandela's statement that 'GEAR is non-negotiable' being remembered with contempt by activists.

The effects of GEAR on poor communities have already been widely documented². The delivery of basic services has been an area of particular significance. David McDonald and John Pape argue that with the adoption of GEAR, the role of government shifted from a redistributive one to an 'enabling' or 'facilitating' one (McDonald and Pape 2002: 4). The responsibility of government was thus to put in place mechanisms for increasing access (e.g. through creating suitable conditions for investment or the formation of private-public partnerships) rather than delivering access directly. Under this model, real access has come to be determined by market forces, and the state has been allowed to renege on its responsibility to provide free basic services to all.

While the period immediately after 1994 saw substantial gains being made in terms of infrastructure development, 'cost recovery and bureaucratic inefficiencies' have led to the gradual demise of many such projects (ibid:4). For example, while 2 million households may have gained access to water between 1994 and 1999, a substantial number of them have since had to endure the pressures of cost recovery. The Department of Provincial and Local Government's Project Viability survey data shows that almost half a million people have had their water cut off for non-payment and 1 million people experienced electricity cut-offs for non-payment in the last three months of 2001, a period after the launch of the state's free basic water campaign. Today, more than 6 million South Africans are still without access to piped water and 4 million people (37 per cent of all households) still have no access to electricity. More glaring is the fact that only half of the country's population has access to flush toilets, many of which are outside the house and/or shared with many other families (McDonald 2002: 6). With the number of those without access to services already high, the logic of cost recovery puts an end to access for those who cannot keep up payments for services, and makes gaining access for those without even more difficult. While cut-offs have thus far served to retrospectively measure consumption levels and so regulate payments, more recent developments have seen the introduction of pre-paid meters for the reading of water and electricity and the gradual phasing in of means for individuals' and communities' self-regulation of consumption based on the ability to afford services – the beginning of the restructuring or re-ordering of the lives of the poor based on affordability of services.

² Barchiesi, 1998; Bond, 2002; Fiil-Flynn, 2001; McDonald & Pape, 2002.

Job losses and the introduction of precarious forms of work have exacerbated the problem. For large sections of the unemployed, for example, seasonal or casual work does not always allow for long-term planning around services based on income.

Despite GEAR's stated goal of creating 409 000 jobs by the year 2000 (Khanya College, September 1997: 14), unemployment has increased, accompanied by the introduction of new forms of work under the regime of flexibilisation. This has led to the diminishing of the fulltime, permanent workforce and the slow growth of a casual, seasonal, flexible, low-paid, unprotected, feminised workforce with the accompanying growth of informal economic activity as people struggle to survive³.

This 'crisis in work' came about as a result of the neoliberal policy changes that began even before GEAR. Trade liberalisation, which began with South Africa's signing of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) on 9 April 1994, had some of its worst effects on feminised work sectors, such as textile and footwear. In 1994 the South African government cut clothing tariffs by 50% more than the GATT regulations and reduced the phase-in period for the complete set of GATT regulations from 12 years to 8 years. Similarly, in the footwear sector, tariffs were lowered, the phase-in period reduced, and, in addition, special quotas were eliminated targeted at (targeting?) Chinese imports. Between 1990 and 1999, over 80 000 jobs had been lost in the footwear sector alone. Between 1992 and 1999, the number of workers in the footwear sector dropped from 35 637 to 22 992. This continued into the millennium with 9 611 jobs being shed in the formal clothing and textile industries in the first 8 months of 2000 (Macquene and Jansen in ILRIG, 2002: 70). This has been accompanied by job losses in other significant sectors in the formal economy. According to Haroon Borhat, 'Since 1993 all sectors except the retail and finance sectors have yielded significant job losses. There could be three possible reasons for this – the onset of tariff and trade liberalisation, the greater adoption of new technologies and the restructuring of state-owned enterprises. (Bhorat in *New Agenda*, Issue 4 Fourth Quarter, 2001: 25). In particular, mining has lost 187 000 jobs between 1993 and 1998 and manufacturing 50 000. Between 1993 and 1998, a total of 360 000 jobs were lost, and between 1994 and 1998, 284 837 jobs were shed (ibid: 23).

³ The overall expanded unemployment rate for 2002 is 41%, an increase of 6% from the unemployment rate of 2000. Data from the 2000 and 2002 Labour Force Surveys show that unemployment rose by 9% for African women and by 6% for African men in the years 2000-2002. This reflects an increase by 757 122 unemployed African women and an increase of unemployed African men by 528 474 (Watkinson and Orr, *South African Labour Bulletin* Vol. 27 No. 3 June 2003: 43). In the Wholesale, Retail and Motor Trades, between 1987 and 1997, full-time average employment fell from 88% of total employment to 81%, while part-time and casual employment increased from 11,8% of total employment to over 19% (Kenny in ILRIG, 2001: 92). Kenny argues that other independent research shows rates of casualisation as high as 45% in certain sectors or regions. Analysis of the Labour Force Survey of 2002 also shows that informal employment represents 34% of total employment, if informal employment is taken to include informal enterprises, informal agricultural jobs, and domestic work. Women make up approximately 60% of workers in the informal economy in South Africa, as compared to 38% of workers in the formal economy. If, however, domestic workers were excluded from the definition of informal work, women would make up 49% of the informal labour force. If informal agricultural work were to be removed from the definition, women would account for just 45% (Heintz, *South African Labour Bulletin* Vol. 27 No. 3, June 2003: 46).

The introduction of neoliberal policies in South Africa has prevented the realisation of the lives imagined and fought for in the liberation movement against apartheid. The liberation movement, while fighting against apartheid and all it stood for, also spoke of a new way of life, a new humanity, a new world in which South Africans would share certain ‘commons’ as citizens. The neoliberal agenda has seen the erosion of these commons (in both the spheres of production and distribution) and the re-deployment of notions of the commons to the ends of profit and the market. This has presented real dangers for organs of civil society, such as trade unions and political parties, which have been drawn into neoliberal processes.

Exhaustion

We have come out of political struggle in which we struggled for specific things – social justice, democratisation of the workplace, broader democracy in society. But we also struggled against the sort of institutional arrangements which made it very difficult for workers or employers to interact more productively. We have to try and manage those seemingly contradictory objectives. The world tends to see globalisation in terms of you down-size, you reduce democratisation of the workplace, you tighten things, and increasingly disallow unionisation and so on. We need to liberate productivity from that kind of perspective. The success of the South African experiment depends on how determined business and labour are to move along a new path.

Tito Mboweni, then Minister of Labour, interviewed by Karl von Holdt in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 19 No. 1, March 1995: 24.

The transition was underpinned by corporatism. This involved big unions, big business and the state. Conflict was to be institutionalised. The political had to be controlled by the ANC or its allies in the tripartite alliance – COSATU and the SACP.

Ashwin Desai, *Monthly Review*, January 2003: 6.

With neoliberal policies taking root in South Africa through structures of the tripartite alliance and with organs of people’s power becoming geared towards ‘good governance’ and ‘responsible citizenship’ under the regime of GEAR, spaces for the formulation of alternatives to and critiques of neoliberalism closed down within ANC Alliance structures. The labour movement, in particular the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), is a significant space to observe the increasing inability of the trade union movement and traditional political formations to meet the needs and demands of ordinary people in their daily lives. These needs have deepened as a result of changes in the forms of rule and governance under neoliberalism, in particular those changes regarding the nature and forms of labour, both productive and reproductive.

While COSATU has continued to be cast as the left-most member of the tripartite alliance -- critical of and sometimes oppositional to the ANC -- it has been unable to escape becoming part of the process of neoliberal ‘democratisation’ in South Africa. Being part of the alliance has meant its adoption of and participation in corporatist models of governance that seek to find ‘best solutions’ for organised labour within a neoliberal macro-economic

framework. The National, Economic, Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), the statutory body bringing labour, business and the state together in partnership around the formulation of national economic and labour relations policy, is one such model. While COSATU has been extremely critical of GEAR and privatisation, it has been unable to reverse the macro-economic trajectory of the state through such structures. At best, it has been able to argue for small changes within a still unchanged neoliberal framework.

This has been most evident in the manner in which debates around the adoption of GEAR and privatisation have been contained within COSATU and the alliance more broadly. With regard to GEAR, labour was told in no uncertain terms that the policy was 'non-negotiable'. Despite several mass demonstrations against GEAR by the trade union movement, its implementation has gone ahead. COSATU today consoles itself that it is still able to contest this framework in which all other policies are implemented through the Alliance and NEDLAC. This was unsuccessfully attempted with the Growth and Development Summit (GDS) held on 7 June 2003 in Midrand. Prior to the GDS, the Alliance held the Ekurhuleni Summit to try to develop common positions for the GDS. However, the Alliance was not able to carry out the Ekurhuleni agreement and government officials refused to push through a commitment to halving unemployment by 2012 and avoiding job losses through state restructuring at the GDS.

Neva Makgetla, COSATU's economist, writes,

Critics correctly argue that the GDS agreement is not going to bring about a sudden transformation toward greater equity and full employment. Nonetheless, COSATU signed because the agreement will bring real benefits to workers and the poor in general. Some real gains were made. Above all, the agreement consolidates a shift in government policy away from the free-market policies of the GEAR. They reflect a commitment to more developmental positions, which recognise both the need to restructure the economy and the importance of more open and democratic policy making. True, this does not add up to a radical programme to transform society. Generally, it just consolidates a shift taking place in government and business already. But it does promise to bring some immediate benefits, especially to the unemployed. If the democratic movement maintains pressure, the GDS can initiate gradual reforms that, in the long run, should bring about a substantial improvement in equity, employment and economic growth. (Makgetla in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol, 27 No. 3, June 2003: 30).

These 'gains' include an agreement that economic policy issues may still be discussed at NEDLAC, an increased emphasis on jobs, and a commitment to enhance certain economic sectors through sectoral strategies. Makgetla argues that for the first time there is a commitment to support priority sectors based on their ability to create jobs. These sectors include clothing and textiles, agriculture and agro-processing, tourism, call centres and back-office processing, and cultural industries (including music, film, publishing, craft and other media). Later on in the same article she writes,

Government refused point blank to permit a review of current policies to assess their impact on employment. It would only consent broadly to continued engagement on how to address the unemployment crisis. In these circumstances, fiscal and monetary policy fell off the table. Moreover, government initially resisted any agreement on basic services and education, on the grounds that they are not critical for growth and development. Generally, government simply refused to discuss any proposal that would lead to increased expenditure. A related problem was government's tendency to argue that it was there to work with all the 'social partners', rather than to empower the ANC's constituencies – above all, workers and the poor. Too often, government officials tried to mediate between business and labour. They seemed to see their role as seeking to mobilise more private funds for public

infrastructure. Since business can only invest, in the long run, where it will make a profit, this approach can limit the ability of government to provide services to the poor. Finally, because government is not driving development, the GDS ended up pushing developmental tasks onto NEDLAC constituencies. (ibid: 31).

In addition to the role played by the Alliance here in preventing COSATU's positions from gaining substance, Makgetla's celebration of the sectoral priorities proposed by the GDS as a gain for workers illustrates just how far COSATU has gone in the kinds of compromises it is prepared to make within the current political-economic paradigm of neoliberalism. These sectors are the very sectors that thrive on the new forms of exploitation of labour through casualisation and flexibilisation. In this way, COSATU falls into the trap of suggesting the very forms of exploitation that have become predominant under neoliberalism as solutions to the problems of the exploited.

In entering corporate models of governance, COSATU has also participated in a process of policy formulation around labour laws that have both sought to protect certain rights of organised labour and contributed to the implementation of a regulatory framework for labour that has made the introduction of neoliberal policies in the sphere of labour (e.g. flexibilisation) easier. Several critics have argued that the combination of the 1995 Labour Relations Act (LRA), the 1999 Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) and the system of corporate governance under NEDLAC provides the institutional regulatory framework for the implementation of neoliberal policy changes prescribed by GEAR. It does so in a manner which binds labour to a set of processes that prevent industrial action and binds workers to the vision of enhancing productivity in the interests of growth as defined by GEAR (market-oriented, export-driven). This new regulatory framework has meant several limitations on labour in terms of the power it is able to wield in the 'partnership' between government, business and labour – a partnership clearly directed towards increasing productivity within a neoliberal framework. These limitations have also brought several changes in the organisational culture of COSATU unions, with many activists and unionists speaking of the emergence of 'a bureaucracy' at various levels within COSATU. This has led to several failed attempts by COSATU and its affiliates to contest the implementation of neoliberal policies, resulting in a present-day COSATU that seems exhausted – tired of trying and failing, tired of arguing and being silenced, tired of losing jobs and protections for workers, tired of failing to understand....

While the LRA and BCEA are today celebrated by COSATU as victories for organised labour, there are several concessions that were made by COSATU in negotiations prior to their finalisation. For example, the LRA does not contain an unprotected right to strike for workers or a duty to bargain for employers. In addition, the procedures that it sets in place for seeking redress completely prevent any meaningful industrial action on the part of workers. The procedures also separate issues of production from reproduction (e.g. workplace forums) thus preventing any meaningful challenge from workers to the making of profit. The BCEA represents even bigger concessions, with employers being permitted to vary basic standards of employment downwards based on individual agreements with employees.

At a practical level, the new regulatory framework makes it difficult for unions to organise in sectors where workers are not permanent or fall into the category of 'atypical

worker'. Here, the collection of union membership fees and worksite organisation are hindered as workers are not permanent and do not necessarily work from a single workplace or a workplace at all. The law is also often abused by employers who play with definitions, such as 'worksite', to prevent organisation by workers. For in order to be covered by the laws, a union has to prove that it is 'sufficiently representative'.

In a report presented to the COSATU central committee meeting of 14-16 April 2003, it is stated,

Massive increase in unemployment has led to pressure on the employed and rising casualisation. In that context, slow recruitment in the formal sector means that job losses lead to membership losses. Yet, we seem to lack effective strategies for dealing with casualisation and outsourcing. As if this is not enough, we are also confronted by the exponential growth of the informal economy, which in some ways under-cuts the formal sector as companies source goods from the informal economy. (COSATU, 2003: 18).

COSATU's principle of 'one industry, one union, one federation' seems ill-suited to the needs of a changing working class, in the face of steady growth in the number of casual, seasonal, and flexible workers without a single or permanent worksite. While it recognises openly that it is failing to organise these new workers, it still sticks solidly to its position of focusing on the formal sector and building the industrial form of a trade union.

The loss of employment is one of the biggest challenges facing South Africa today and it erodes the gains made by the regulatory frameworks because people are outside the formal sector to whom the laws apply. But, that is why we are saying that we need to grow the formal sector and we call for job creation. That's why we also say we need to find new ways of organising. But, the priority should be on organising in the formal sector because not all workers in the formal sector belong to a union. But it also means rethinking strategies to organise workers in non-standard employment, like casuals and temps, who are not unionised but are somehow in the formal sector. I think the real change in the long term for the trade unions is to represent a tiny minority that is protected by law, has a minimum wage, has better conditions...while the majority of people fall outside of that framework. But, I think this is a rising problem. We are not there yet... but, you can certainly see developments towards that. And I think that's the real danger we face here. (Oupa Bodibe, interview).

This 'real danger' seems to have already arrived. In an organisational report of COSATU (to the Central Committee meeting, 14-16 April 2003), it is stated that

COSATU's overall membership has declined by 112 171 members. Although the precise reasons for membership loss still has to be investigated, on the whole it is caused by job losses and inability of some of our affiliates to penetrate their sectors. (COSATU, 2003: 16).

The COSATU of today thus faces not only a very different set of conditions in which to operate, but also the challenges of responding to the pressures to change placed on its organisational form, which it is clearly not responding adequately, by its own admission, to these new conditions. As Ashwin Desai states,

The very composition of the working class is changing while these organisations remain the same. So, there's a problem in the sense that unions increasingly can't come to represent the very nature of its workforce. (Ashwin Desai, interview).

In addition, the kinds of routine and rhythm of the trade unions have come to be set by the policy framework. Layers of leadership that have developed at plant level, at industry level, and at the level of the national regulatory framework have become divorced from the base or membership of the unions. In addition, all processes within the union have come to be defined within the parameters of the new discourse of corporate governance and managing the excesses of the capitalist economy rather than changing the system completely.

There's no more the question of pushing or breaking the boundaries of the capitalist system. That's not the platform from which the South African labour movement is moving. And that's expressed in terms of its attitude to the existing ruling government, the ANC government, in terms of the alliance, but also just in terms of practices such as setting up investment companies, the way the trade union movement is taking up collective bargaining – it's institutionalised, routine, you get whatever you can at the negotiating table and once it's finished you move on to the next issue. There's no kind of revolutionary perspective that informs the various processes, even at the level of basic trade union training. I remember when we used to run basic shopsteward training, we first used to talk about the nature of the South African revolution before you even start to deal with recognition or wages, etc. You know, you start looking at the nature of society and the revolution and all of that – for shopstewards now. Now, that is not part of any kind of training today. Nowadays, you train shopstewards about labour laws, legality and knowing your rights. These are important, but they show some of the kinds of changes in the trade union movement. (John Appolis, interview).

Many activists argue that the changing conditions of work have also resulted in the changing organisational culture and form of trade unions. John Appolis, for example, says,

To a large extent the membership base of the trade union movement is still largely your permanent fulltime workforce. Over the past 5-6 years, casualisation, contracting and outsourcing have grown. What has happened is that this base of the labour movement has been encircled by the casuals, contract workers, etc. which, in some senses, also makes the base of the union movement somewhat conservative – because they are surrounded by these vulnerable workers. They are also themselves faced with relatives in casual work or unemployed and are often sole breadwinners in large extended families. And this tends to make them conservative in terms of how they relate to issues of struggle and even to bureaucracy within the trade union.'

With the increasing vulnerability of the working class in general under neoliberalism, trade unionism begins to offer opportunities for individuals which tie them into relationships with capital that make them less able to be critical of their exploitation and that of other workers. For example, the layer of shopstewards in many big plants is not subjected to the daily grind of working and being exploited. They have time off from work, access to cars, and attend union meetings and are therefore 'not workers in the real sense'. However, there are still layers of workers who are dissatisfied. As John Appolis points out,

It's just that they haven't found their expression through the formal apparatus or machinery of the trade union, mainly because of the control of this machinery by the trade union bureaucracy. So, you don't get that sense of discontent finding formal expression in terms of resolutions, positions or challenges to the leadership. Because the leadership controls the apparatus, they set the rhythm of how the union works and what the union does.'

In the above context, the struggle of workers at Wits University (with which we opened this piece) suffered many defeats – 613 workers were retrenched, with only 250 being re-employed on contract with the new service providers (Van der Walt, et al., 2002: 29). Working conditions of these rehired workers are worse than their previous ones. The

National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU) lost over 400 members, with 3 shopstewards losing their jobs (Van Der Walt, et. Al, South African Labour Bulletin, Volume 25, Number 4, August 2001). Attempts by workers in the new service providers to organise themselves in the absence of NEHAWU support have failed.

The irony is that it has been in these defeats that a new discourse of struggle has emerged.

Becoming

The APF was not someone's great idea, but you could say it was an idea whose time had come because it was born directly out of struggle...during our first days we were just campaigning in the streets, militantly, visibly through direct action. The idea was that we did not want to debate privatisation. We wanted to take action against it. And, at that time privatisation was still a debatable issue. It was still being contested by the ANC, nothing had started practically yet. But, those comrades who came together had made up their minds that privatisation was unacceptable. The APF was therefore born as a militant organisation, not a talk-shop.

Trevor Ngwane, interview

Largely, the people who compose the APF and other new social movements are people who are directly affected by some of the neoliberal policies like the cut-offs and evictions, and that in itself provides a catalyst for people to form organisations and to develop ways of resisting these kinds of attacks immediately. And, I think what happened is that process of experiencing these attacks and a radicalisation of people through those issues, has intersected with a layer of activists who are remnants of the past. (laughs). They are also people who came mainly from outside of the trade unions.

John Appolis, interview

The Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) was formed out of the struggles of workers at Wits University organised under the banner of the NEHAWU, students and academics at the University fighting privatisation of the institution, and members of the Anti-iGoli Forum (which included the South African Communist Party [SACP] Johannesburg central branch). Students, workers and academics at the University had formed the Wits Crisis Committee as a result of the failure of the union and the South African Students' Congress (SASCO) Wits branch to effectively take on the issue of privatisation. As a result, many of the current members and leaders of the APF come from long histories within structures of the liberation movement, in particular structures of the UDF and the Congress tradition. Many of them have suffered for attempting to address their concerns within these structures through disciplinary hearings, expulsions and the like. While many APF members have adopted new approaches to old questions as a result of these histories, many also still reflect old ways of thinking and strategising in approaching new questions. This play between the old and the new is played out in terms of debates and discussions happening currently regarding its organisational form, priorities and strategic orientation, as well as in the immediacy of

struggle at various points. In its early days, several discussions that took place in the APF were discussions that had been silenced or contained within ANC Alliance structures.

As such, the APF provided a space through which those problems not able to be addressed through the traditional spaces came to be discussed and dealt with outside of the organisational discipline of the party, the union and the Congress tradition. Instead, people's immediate problems were dealt with outside of the constraints of 'governing responsibly' or being 'disciplined comrades', allowing for new relations and processes to emerge in and through struggle against neoliberalism's effects.

When the Urban Futures conference came up in July 2000, it presented the perfect opportunity for all those who had begun to feel the effects of the implementation of GEAR (at the university, in the city, in Soweto, in the unions, and in the ANC and Congress-aligned structures such as SASCO, SANCO and the SACP) -- and the exhaustion of trying unsuccessfully to fight it from within the ANC Alliance -- to come together in a symbolic show of the willingness to fight privatisation at all costs, whether this meant taking on the ANC Alliance or not. Electricity cut-offs had started in Soweto under the policy of cost-recovery, workers had been retrenched at Wits, the South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) was fighting the privatisation plans for Johannesburg contained in iGoli 2002, students in SASCO were finding it increasingly difficult to be openly critical of the ANC's policies within the organisation, ANC members were coming under fire for criticising GEAR, and ANC-dominated civics were failing to mount any resistance to the government's attacks on the poor through its policy of cost recovery. In addition, new spaces had provided the sparks for discussion and debate about neoliberalism. One such space was the Campaign Against Neoliberalism in South Africa (CANSA), which had brought many left-leaning students, workers, academics, NGO workers and activists together in the 'political vacuum' left after 1994 (George Dor, interview). Another was the Debate journal collective and on-line discussion group, which provided the space for debate about neoliberalism as well as the networks for initial mobilisations in the run-up to the formation of the APF. Many activists also attribute special significance to the protests against the WTO, which took place in Seattle in 1999, as having an influence on the thinking and imaginations of many South African activists who participated in the formation of the APF. While the APF may have been born in struggle against a specific issue then, it is also the result of a number of other contingent factors, which go beyond the issues of privatisation at Wits University and in Johannesburg.

In its early days, the APF served as a beacon of resistance against the new government's neoliberal policies. As more and more communities came under the heavy hand of cost recovery and privatisation more generally, the APF provided the space for such communities to come together to share experiences, to elicit support for campaigns, and to develop common programmes for resisting privatisation in its various forms. It also became a space for learning about neoliberalism in its various forms and the various responses that people had developed to it. Today the APF has 18 affiliates in communities on the East Rand, the Vaal, Potchefstroom, and Johannesburg (including Soweto, Alexandra and Orange Farm). Affiliates include mainly community crisis committees, which have evolved in different ways depending on their specific circumstances. For example, while the electricity crisis in Soweto

provided the immediate problems around which the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC) emerged, unemployment was the problem that brought people together in Orange Farm in the establishment of income-generation projects. In turn, it was through these income-generation projects that the problem of water arose and a group from these projects formed the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee (OWCC). Affiliates therefore have programmes separate from the APF and often have different priorities depending on the nature of their formation, the people who compose it, and the specific circumstances of that particular geographical location.

Antagonistic

Something that unites all affiliates and members of the APF, and that has contributed to the identity it has evolved, is its opposition to the ANC Alliance and the policies of GEAR, and its difference from the ANC Alliance. This has involved campaigns against GEAR, privatisation, the installation of pre-paid electricity and water meters, evictions and forced removals, and more recently against the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). These campaigns have involved affiliates taking on the ANC at a local level and the Alliance at a national level, and have included marches, petitions, graffiti and so on.

In its opposition to the Alliance, the APF has not only provided a space for discourses critical of and antagonistic to the ANC's, but has also provided new ways of organising and imagining struggle that go beyond the narrow confines of corporatist models of governance and reiterate the belief in alternatives to capitalism. Where COSATU and traditional political formations have failed to provide the imagination of a world outside of the constraints of neoliberalism, new social movements, such as the APF, have allowed people to see themselves as active members of a collective body fighting for the life promised by the victories of the liberation movement. Emerging from the old, these spaces fashion the new from the remnants of the old.

Self-reliant

APF members see themselves as different from the old liberation movement because of the discourse of self-reliance of the APF and its affiliates, as opposed to the old discourse of dependency on leadership or other external forces for liberation. 'The aim of people joining the struggle was that they were looking for the alternative, thinking that after destroying the apartheid government there will be a better life for all. People thought the release of Mandela will bring changes, the unbannings were the demands.

You know, the demands of the 80s were 'Release Mandela', 'Unban All Political Organisations', and people were taught about their political leaders...If you were at a meeting you had to know how to chant the slogans...there was a list of names. You'd start with 'Viva Mandela!', then 'Viva Sisulu!', 'Viva Motsoaledi', 'Viva Kathrada!'...All these names you know. Now they were teaching people more about their leaders than about their liberation. They were taught that these are your leaders, if they are released, you'll be free. That was dependency – to lead people to depend on Oliver Tambo, in exile; if he comes back, you will be free. So people learnt to put their trust in leaders more than understanding what liberation is... We don't believe in leaders in the OWCC, we believe in the people. (Bricks Mokolo, interview)

It might be correct to say that some people, especially the old leadership on the ground, is schooled in the old traditions and have this idea of Mandela, the Messiah, so now John, the Messiah. But this is something we are fighting. It's a challenge and one of the areas to which autonomist thinking can make the biggest contribution. (Trevor Ngwane, interview).

This tendency towards self-reliance or self-organisation manifests itself in two ways in the APF: in the income-generation projects that are part of the activities of some of the affiliates (e.g. in Orange Farm and Motsoaledi), and in the illegal reconnections to water and electricity that occur across all affiliates.

It [reconnections] is a tactic, but it is also part of an overall strategy that we're now calling 'working class delivery' because it's based on the experience of the working class. No one thought it up. It just came about. I remember a time when in the SECC meetings people who were illegally connected would be asked to raise their hands and almost everyone's hands would go up. There'd be this sense of relief as almost everyone would be illegally connected. The only thing was that they were doing it as a criminal act individually. So, it was a question of turning what was a criminal act into a collective act of defiance. It is also different from marches in that it is proactive – we're doing it for ourselves. And this is a strong mobilising tool because it delivers then and there and it shows the power of organisation right there. It's not a theory about winning socialism one day. (Trevor Ngwane, interview).

Activists also re-tell reconnections as an undermining of private property and the control of private owners like ESKOM. They also argue that reconnections by ordinary people are 'a demystification of the bourgeois power structure' as they 'show the potential for self-organisation of the working class. (Trevor Ngwane, interview).

More recently, with the introduction of pre-paid water and electricity meters in certain areas, like Soweto and Orange Farm, activists have begun to destroy these meters and to actively prevent their installation in acts of disobedience. On Wednesday, 20 August 2003, 6 members of the SECC were arrested in Soweto and charged with 'malicious damage to property' for preventing the installation of pre-paid water meters. On Saturday, 23 August 2003, 2 more members of the SECC were arrested – 1 was given the same charge, the other (Trevor Ngwane) was charged with 'incitement to violence'. The SECC expects more arrests in the upcoming months during which the plan is to install water meters in Soweto.

In providing the context in which people feel safe and 'natural' resisting the commodification of basic services, affiliates have also sometimes gone a step further in ensuring that communities become 'no-go zones' for ESKOM and Johannesburg water.

Most ESKOM subcontractors are ANC people. We told them that we are going to beat them and make sure that they can't operate in the community. Luckily the contracts were withdrawn and ESKOM wanted to negotiate with us. We said to them, 'No. Mandela said that GEAR is a non-negotiable policy. So, we are also not willing to negotiate about using your electricity. It's non-negotiable. You'd better go to the government, talk to them or give us electricity and send your bills to the government.' That's what we did. They said, 'No, the government is in the process...' So we said, 'O.K. Provide electricity or we'll take it.' And really speaking, we are taking it. Even today, if you go to the ESKOM offices in Orange Farm they are empty or closed down because people are not buying electricity. Very few are paying. The majority are just connected. We know how to connect. We have also developed a defense committee so that when ESKOM comes people just shout that ESKOM is around and we come out and attack their cars. (Bricks Mokolo, interview).

In Orange Farm and Soweto, as well as in other APF affiliates, the above tactics/strategies have been combined with marches, pickets, memorandums, meetings and negotiations in

campaigns around electricity, and now water in Soweto, and first water and then electricity in Orange Farm. In Soweto, with up to 20 000 households per month experiencing electricity cut-offs by early 2001 (Maj Fiiil-Flynn, 2001: 2), a group of activists, led by Trevor Ngwane, a local ANC councilor who had been expelled from the ANC for speaking out publicly against iGoli 2002, set up a telephone line to receive complaints from Soweto residents experiencing cut-offs. Through this the SECC emerged with the primary aim initially being to reconnect electricity to poor households that had been disconnected and to mount a fight against ESKOM and the ANC government in a campaign named 'Operation Khanyisa', meaning 'to light up'.

Since then, the SECC has had numerous marches, pickets, memorandums, etc. to ESKOM and state offices. ESKOM agreed to a temporary moratorium on electricity cut-offs in October 2001. However, in April 2002, 87 members of the SECC were shot at and arrested during a march on the Mayor of Johannesburg's house. After a bodyguard opened fire on the crowd, the Mayor had his water disconnected and his garden littered. After several postponements, this case, in which activists were charged with 'malicious damage to property and public violence', was eventually dismissed on 5 March 2003 on the basis that the bodyguard's testimony was not credible and that there was no consistency in the state's argument, as many of those arrested had not even been at the scene (APF Press Statement, 5 March 2003). The case of the Kensington 87 both assisted the SECC with building its strength amongst existing members and drawing attention to its struggle within South Africa and internationally.

In May 2003, ESKOM announced the scrapping of arrears in townships in Johannesburg, including Soweto, to the tune of R1.4 billion. While the SECC was not invited to talks in this regard, Jeff Hadebe, the Minister of Public Enterprises and National Executive member of the South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO), and SANCO were portrayed as brokering a deal with ESKOM. There is no doubt, however, in the minds of the SECC, the APF and broader social movements (as well as others), that the increased mobilisation by the SECC and other social movements around electricity did have an effect on even this deal being brokered. SANCO and the ANC might like to portray this as a gain made through constructive engagement between civil society and the state, but their statements against the APF, SECC and other social movements (contained in their own policy discussion documents, press statements and so on) reveal clearly that new social movements play an increasingly central role in determining the way that the Alliance in power relates to issues around basic service delivery. For social movements, SANCO was clearly being opportunist (opportunistic) in claiming this as its victory. In their experiences, people in communities fighting cut-offs and evictions have come up against SANCO as a buffer between government and communities. While the SECC celebrated this announcement as its victory, it was also clear that this was not the end of its struggle. This writing off of debts was only going to precede further implementation of cost-recovery practices in the form of the pre-paid electricity system, and did not signal a change in ESKOM and the government's policy of commodifying basic services.

In Orange Farm, water cut-offs and the installation of pre-paid water meters in one extension as a 'pilot' project of Johannesburg Water Company (JOWCO) in August 2002

sparked the formation of the OWCC. Informal meetings in the streets of the affected extension, door-to-door campaigns, flyers and pamphlets, mass meetings and an extremely effective graffiti campaign against water privatisation led to the immediate cessation of the 'pilot' project. While Johannesburg Water cancelled the public launch of the project, the following months saw the installation of prepaid meters continue and the struggle of the OWCC still continues.

Just before the WSSD, a few hundred people in Orange Farm started to experience electricity cut-offs. ESKOM had hired local ANC residents as subcontractors to do the checking for illegal reconnections as well as the cut-offs. Residents, organised under the OWCC, physically prevented the activities of subcontractors and marched on the ESKOM offices in Orange Farm to demand an immediate reconnection of all houses in Orange Farm regardless of whether they had paid or not and a cessation of cut-offs. Subcontractors were also threatened to give up their contracts. Electricity cut-offs have since ceased. The OWCC immediately recognised the limitations of its name, as it did not speak to issues broader than water. However, after a discussion within the organisation, it was decided to remain with the original name, as water is symbolic of more than just itself. Bricks Mokolo says,

Water is life. If they privatise water, what do we do? Our lives are being privatised. In South Africa, there are no longer citizens. We are all customers now. And that is why we are fighting privatisation. So, the name didn't need to change. (Bricks Mokolo, interview).

In Soweto, other issues have also been taken up in campaigns, including high food prices and school fees. The SECC has also recently re-evaluated its orientation and tactics and concluded that it has until now orientated itself mainly to the interests of the unemployed, even in terms of its practical organising. SECC meetings, for instance, take place on Tuesday afternoons when most workers are occupied. It has thus begun to include other ways of organising to try to extend its hand to workers. The SECC now visits worksites to talk with workers and holds meetings at different times.

Similarly, in Orange Farm, the issues of education, HIV-AIDS, and, more recently, worker struggles have been taken up in campaigns. Due to the profile that the OWCC has built for itself in the area as a fighting organisation, it was approached by workers in the area in 2002 who had been experiencing problems with private companies. These workers included a group of contract workers employed by Pickitup, the new private refuse removal company contracted by the Johannesburg City Council as part of the iGoli 2002 plan; workers employed by a private school; and workers from a company called SAMANCOR. The SAMANCOR workers have been failed by the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) local in their fight to improve working conditions where workers have already died due to the toxicity of chemicals used in the production process at a plant. Their employer has also retrenched a number of workers following compulsory medical examinations, the results of which workers were initially not given. In all 3 cases, affected workers have joined the OWCC where they have been incorporated into the organisational structure by way of the formation of a workers' subcommittee to deal specifically with worker issues.

The OWCC has since mounted campaigns against the 3 employers, including marches, petitions and demonstrations involving community members generally as well as other APF affiliates. These campaigns have forced employers into negotiations with workers, supported by community activists. In the case of Pickitup, the Johannesburg City Council was considered by the OWCC as part of the problem, and actions were targeted at it as well. The participation of workers and community activists has built a new sense of solidarity within the community. The OWCC and activists see it as a means to facilitating the development of new approaches to the problems of unemployment and work. These approaches jointly consider the challenges faced by the employed and the problems of the unemployed. In this way, the nature of work and the constraints that it places on life have come to be theorised and debated in a manner that does not restrict or frame the discussion in terms of old distinctions between the community and the workplace.

Alternative

The illegal forms of action described above represent ‘tactics’ when they achieve immediate gains in the form of the writing off of arrears (as in Soweto), or the immediate cessation of water and electricity cut-offs, or the cessation of the installation of pre-paid meters (as in Orange Farm). They also contribute towards a strategy of creating the space for the imagining of an alternative society in which basic services are delivered through the direct collective action of people and the reorganisation of social life outside of the framework of the market. In such spaces, talk of decommodified basic and social services once again becomes possible.

In learning from the dangers of the old, the organisational culture of the APF is one that is committed to ensuring as non-hierarchical and decentralised a structure as possible. Its membership reflects and considers the changing composition of ‘the working class’ and ‘the poor’ under neoliberalism. Membership differs according to the affiliate, and the affiliates are autonomous in defining their structure, functioning and programmes. All members interviewed stated the need for some sort of structure to ensure effective and efficient co-ordination of programmes, and to ensure that democracy does prevail.

In the absence of some co-ordinating structure those who are resourced, educated, skilled politically and so on will have greater power in the organisation than others. (Trevor Ngwane, interview).

The APF therefore has a co-ordinating committee, an organising committee, an executive committee, a media committee, a legal committee, an education committee, and a research committee. Affiliates are represented on each committee, and decisions are made at the level of the co-ordinating and executive committee meetings. Other committees play the role of implementing these decisions. There are 6 office bearers (chairperson, secretary, treasurer and their deputies), who are functionaries of the organisation. In addition, there is an appointed organiser and administrator who are fulltime, paid employees of the APF. In addition to central meetings, regular workshops are held to facilitate common understandings, approaches and debates around issues. In addition to community affiliates of the APF, there is also the space for political formations to join. Affiliates in this category

include the Socialist Group, Keep Left and the Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM), which are all Trotskyist in orientation, and the Bikisha Media Collective, which is anarchist. In this way, a new organisational culture is beginning to develop, with more regular spaces providing the opportunities for relationships to be developed amongst activists and for ways of debating, discussing and organising to emerge.

It is interesting to observe and be part of the play between different organisational traditions and styles, old and new, in these spaces at the level of simple matters, such as how chairing of meetings happen, the different languages used, and the general interactions between very different groups of people. For instance, the words ‘brother’ and ‘sister’ are used to refer to each other, in addition to the older ‘comrade’. There is an interchange between different languages used by people, as most meetings and events have translation in Zulu, Sotho and English. At times, APF members have played with old slogans, identities and other traditional ways of representing issues. For example, the way that those arrested from the SECC for marching on Mayor Amos Masondo became the ‘Kensington 87’ was through a conscious choice made by activists producing the media to re-appropriate the tradition which developed under apartheid to name political prisoners (The Sharpeville 6, for example). Another example is the way John Vorster Square was renamed Thabo Mbeki Square during the repression around the WSSD (see below).

The APF has had some amazingly creative sessions and happenings. These include banner-making, the emergence of a drama group of young members (who are now regulars at all major events of most new social movements in Johannesburg, and who participate in all other activities and committees of the APF as members of different affiliates), a recent lively and productive media workshop, the creation of new songs, and so on.

Within affiliates there are many different styles of organising depending on the nature, location, and kinds of resources a particular affiliate has access to. In many communities, initial organising happened at the level of neighbours, members of the same church groups or stokvels and the like coming together in their homes, churches and streets in meetings and mass gatherings which have then evolved into different structures. In some communities, meetings start and end with prayers. In Orange Farm, the greatest support it has received from within the community has been from the local St Charles Lwanga Catholic Church, and so weekly meetings take place on the verandah of the church. While the church initially allowed the OWCC free use of the actual church building for big meetings and discussions, recently ANC members of the church have insisted on the OWCC paying for use of this space.

However, a key challenge for this organisational structure (which is not fixed, but open to change at all times) is to ensure that it is not the vision of a few individuals that is carried in the APF, but that of a majority of people fighting neoliberalism.

The APF is not a mass movement yet, but it has a mass orientation. This is opposite to the ANC, which although it had a mass base followed an elitist politics. (Trevor Ngwane, interview).

With this orientation (evident in its programmes, principles and organisational structure), the APF has allowed itself to evolve and still leaves space for change in its form and programme.

While this evolution may have resulted in the current identity it enjoys, reflecting a certain homogeneity amongst its members, there are still many unresolved issues on which members differ. Melanie Sampson argues that the APF could never have a structure that is determined and holds forever. However, she argues that the APF has already allowed its structure to evolve over a number of organisational changes, and should allow for the space for this structure to change as conditions change (Melanie Sampson, interview). The APF is currently in discussion regarding the drafting of a constitution for itself. Many activists would like to ensure that the constitution allows for such flexibility and dynamism, and fear that a rigid constitution might prevent the space that now exists for looseness and openness to new ideas and change.

While this has perhaps been the reason for many activists joining the APF, it is also probably one of the least easily acceptable differences in terms of organisational form for activists coming from any of the major left South African political traditions. It is also an issue that is constantly discussed and debated within the APF.

Connections

In emerging to address the dangers presented by the failures of the old, new social movements struggle to reconstitute or preserve old ties and look to the formation of new ones. The APF has since its inception consistently sought to build working relations with organised labour, in particular COSATU. In exploring new approaches and ways of becoming, the APF has made new allies and partners in a global network of activists and movements struggling against neoliberalism in its various forms.

With the old

With the APF's roots being in the struggles of workers in Johannesburg and at Wits University, the majority of its members continue to see the centrality of organised labour and the working class more generally in any struggle against neoliberalism. A commitment to old notions of the working class as the vanguard of any movement in society has come to be challenged by changes in the very composition of the working class, as experienced in the daily lives of APF members under neoliberalism. Unemployment, casualisation, the growth of informal labour, and so on, have raised real questions for members of the APF with regard to the nature of its organising and programme.

One of the issues enjoying much debate currently is that of the attitude of the APF to workers and organised labour, in particular COSATU. The APF has had representatives from COSATU and SAMWU sitting in its initial meetings, but after the first few meetings and communications between the APF and COSATU and SAMWU, these unions withdrew their formal participation in the APF. A few members of these unions have continued to participate in the APF as individuals. In fact, John Appolis, the chairperson of the APF, began as the COSATU regional representative to APF meetings and merely continued his participation as an individual once COSATU had decided to withdraw its formal participation. While the APF has tried on numerous occasions to make formal contact with COSATU, it has received no positive responses from COSATU to invitations to discussions and events.

One of the major reasons for the hostility from COSATU towards the APF could be attributed to the APF's severe criticism of the ANC Alliance. In contrast to the APF, it has been argued that the stage and state in which COSATU finds itself today is a result of the choices it has made in relation to the ANC and the SACP, and the tripartite Alliance's agenda of advancing the neoliberal project. In this vein, activists and academics have argued that the bringing of the trade union movement under the umbrella of the ANC has facilitated the drawing in of labour to corporatist governance processes within the overall framework of the neoliberal policy, GEAR, and thus tied organised labour to a partnership with government and business with the aim of enhancing productivity and thereby growth.

There are many experiences in relation to privatisation that illustrate this, the latest being the national anti-privatisation strike which took place over 2 days in October 2002. Originally planned for the days preceding the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), a last minute intervention by the Alliance saw COSATU postponing this action and instead putting its forces behind an Alliance march celebrating its participation in the WSSD. When the strike did take place, Zwelinzima Vavi was sure to point out that,

The strike is not about questioning the bona fides of government. I want to stress that again. This is not about passing a vote of no confidence to our government. This is about registering a disagreement about a specific policy, the policy being privatisation, which has resulted in mass job losses, which has resulted in more and more people being pushed deeper and deeper into poverty. And this is what this march is about, and not about any other thing that other people tend to do. This is not about apples. This is about real issues – 100 000 jobs have been lost only in Spoornet, Telkom, Denel and the post office. Surely, workers are going to raise that issue. This is their government, their government must respond to the issues they are raising. This is not a march about counter-revolution or extreme leftists as some people may want to believe. (Vavi in response to a question from an Indymedia journalist, 3 October 2003, Indymedia-SA video footage).

Vavi's words betray the immense loyalty and commitment to the tripartite Alliance that exists amongst COSATU leadership. Despite the above compromises, COSATU remains committed to the Alliance. In response to a question related to the losses around GEAR and privatisation, Oupa Bodibe stated,

Let's not fall into the trap of an end of history. Like GEAR happened in 1996 and nothing thereafter. Yes, it was a major setback. But, it was the working class driving the transformation agenda... and there have been some small shifts in the original framework of the GEAR adopted in 1996. The mere fact that the ANC cannot use words like GEAR, restructuring, privatisation – they have to say RDP, etc. – show that even their own constituency has problems with it. You're not going to win anything overnight. The mere fact that government has been forced to come back to the table – I'm not saying that there'll be any major victories for the working class – to get consensus from broader society about economic policy is a sign that the pressures brought to bear on government from various forces, including the trade union movement, have paid off. (Oupa Bodibe, interview).

A COSATU discussion document, entitled 'Consolidating Working Class Power for Quality Jobs – Toward 2015', is a little more critical. After launching a page long critique of the relationship between Alliance partners and the failure of the ANC to take the Alliance seriously beyond elections, it states:

The Alliance has been reduced in practice into a crisis manager, mediating mostly between the state and COSATU. Moreover, it has become clear that the state will not necessarily abide by agreements within the Alliance or, for that

matter, even ANC resolutions. During the Growth and Development Summit (GDS) negotiations, for instance, government officials resisted including commitments to halving unemployment by 2012 and to avoid job losses in restructuring the state – both included in resolutions from the ANC's 51st conference. Similarly, contrary to ANC resolutions, officials have consistently delayed convening meetings under the National Framework Agreement on state-owned enterprise. The experience of the Ekurhuleni Summit in 2002 is typical. The Alliance agreed to hold in-depth discussions and give strategic leadership to the GDS whilst also resolving long outstanding differences around economic policies. Yet the follow-up meetings never materialised. Again, the delays appeared superficially as a failure to find space in diaries – but fundamentally, it results from the balance of forces today. Still, the Alliance remains the only weapon in the hands of our people to deepen transformation and take our National Democratic Revolution (NDR) to new heights. We must not, because of the current situation and our frustration, throw away the only weapon our people have developed over many years in the trenches of struggles, in our communities and in our prison, in exile and internally. It would be a class suicide if workers were to hand the ANC over to the bourgeois state. (COSATU, 2003: 7 – <http://www.cosatu.org.za/cong2003/2015.html>).

This unqualified support by COSATU leadership for the ANC and the Alliance has started to play itself out within COSATU unions, with many unable to bear the 'pain and suffering'. The most recent experience of this has been the case of the Chemical, Engineering, Pulp, Paper, Wood and Allied Workers' Union (CEPPWAWU), where the entire leadership of its Wits region as well as representatives from this region to the National Executive Committee (NEC) were suspended in May 2003 for calling for a Workers' Referendum on the Alliance and the 2004 national elections.

According to the Wits region, this referendum was called for by locals within the region following the COSATU anti-privatisation strike of October 2002, as a result of differing opinions amongst workers about the strike. Some joined the strike in order to show their distaste for privatisation and to specifically show the ANC this, while others chose not to participate in the strike because of the contradictory role of the ANC in the Alliance and in government.

The workers who participated in the strike and march in Johannesburg wanted to show the ANC government that they rejected privatisation. They wanted to show the ANC that they are fully behind COSATU and wanted to defend COSATU against the attacks from the ANC. Their support for the general strike was a massive vote of no confidence in the ANC government. During the Johannesburg march on the first day of the general strike workers were burning the posters of Mbazima Shilowa, premier of Gauteng. The workers who did not participate in the general strike wanted to give a political message to COSATU. They wanted to tell COSATU that privatisation cannot be fought decisively because of the Alliance with the ANC. They said that they know that after the general strike COSATU would go back to the Alliance and say that they are sorting out matters between them as Alliance partners. They felt that COSATU would not be serious to continue fighting privatisation. They further said that COSATU cannot fight seriously and strongly the ANC government because they are in the same political bed with the ANC... Workers were right because before and during the strike the views of the COSATU leaders were directly different to that of the workers. COSATU leaders were trying to cool down the hot political feelings of the workers. The COSATU leaders were saying 'the strike is not political', 'the strike is not directed at the ANC and the ANC government.'... Our REC felt quite strongly that these kinds of statements are confusing and they amounted to an attempt to de-politicise an otherwise very political issue. The locals and the Regional Executive Committee (REC) felt that these messages from workers must be conveyed to the union nationally. We felt therefore that it is time that workers' voices must be heard and that workers provide the answer to this political crossroad of the trade union movement. To this end the REC proposed that CEPPWAWU/COSATU must organise a Workers' Referendum on workers' views on the Alliance. In this way we can prepare in a mass manner for the up-coming National Congress of the federation in 2003. (CEPPWAWU, 2003: 1).

In November 2002, the NEC attacked the proposals as going against the union's resolutions of maintaining and strengthening the Alliance taken in August 2002, and it was decided that the National Office Bearers Council (NOBC) should visit the locals of the Wits region in order to investigate this call. It was also decided at this November 2002 meeting that no elected union leader would be allowed to use any public platform to air views contrary to the union's. The Wits region responded by arguing that this latter decision was undemocratic and against their constitutional rights to freedom of expression. They also explained the history of differences that existed between the Wits region and the NEC. In 2000, the region raised concerns about financial mismanagement in the union and called for a vote of no confidence in the NOBC; this was rejected by the NEC in April 2001.

In April 2002, the Wits region started an initiative to organise retrenched and dismissed members of CEPPWAWU in a project called the Masimbambane Unemployed Project (MUP). This was based on a decision taken at a Wits regional congress in October 2001 as an 'attempt to organise the unemployed and to bring about unity between the employed and the unemployed.' (ibid: 4). One proposal from the MUP was to give first preference to retrenched CEPPWAWU members in new jobs that open up in the sector. Committees of the MUP were set up in Tsakane, Kwathema, Katlehong and Tembisa.

However, the MUP has been seen by the union leadership as a political problem and there have been attempts to discredit the MUP and to undermine it. The leadership is claiming that the November 2002 NEC decided that the MUP must be closed down whilst national guidelines are being worked out of how to organise the unemployed. They were also claiming that the MUP is a front of the APF which is anti-ANC. The Wits region has been challenging these attempts to undermine the MUP. So instead of welcoming the initiative to organise the former members of CEPPWAWU, the leaders are trying to destroy it. (ibid: 4).

In addition, John Appolis, Secretary of the Wits region, was called to a meeting on 7 February 2003 where the general secretaries of the union questioned whether he knew that the call for the referendum and the MUP were against the union's positions. They asked what his role as an employee of the union would be to ensure that workers and shopstewards comply with union positions. The Wits region stated,

Comrade John Appolis has been accused of being incompatible with the tradition, culture and views of CEPPWAWU... This is a clear indication of trying to get rid of Comrade John Appolis by singling him out as the problem. This amounts to political suppression and purging of individuals within the union. The union leadership is now using the language and weapons of the bosses to deal with comrades in the union. This is also an indication that the union is becoming bureaucratic and it is adopting the culture and operations of a capitalist company. (ibid: 4).

The Wits region has also stated that the suspension of the 3 NEC members from the Wits region was not an NEC decision. While the suspension is being contested using the legal framework, the Wits region has also split from CEPPWAWU to join the previously-small, independent General Industrial Workers Union of South Africa (GIWUSA). With offices in Germiston, the new GIWUSA affiliate has already started organising, with assistance from various sources. The development of GIWUSA, through the entry of these former members of CEPPWAWU, and the organisational forms and strategies that it chooses to adopt will be

important in the unfolding history of the struggle of workers and the poor in neoliberal South Africa.

The choices being made by COSATU, as well the above experiences of workers within trade unions, then seem to suggest that:

the factory gates and anything that happens behind the factory gates are no longer of any relevance to what we'd regard as a radical antagonistic challenge to this political economy and to the inequalities in society. You are not going to be winning wage increases in excess of inflation, even if that was your way of judging things. And I would go a step further and say that not all, but recently the subjectivity that is bred behind the factory gates gets in the way of a radical challenge to social norms and powers that are dominant. (Heinrich Bohmke, interview).

This very debate played itself out within the APF as John Appolis is its Chairperson and because it raised several serious questions for the APF about its relationship to labour – organised and unorganised. The difference of approaches to COSATU, and workers in general, within new social movements led to the APF holding its first workshop to explore the attitudes of its members and affiliates to this question on 16 August 2003. In this workshop, attended by representatives of all affiliates, discussion and debate ensued based on presentations received from workers organised under the OWCC, workers from CEPPWAWU Wits Region who had left and joined GIWUSA, and the NUMSA National Education officer, amongst others. Much of the debate and discussion focused on understanding the changes in the nature of work and the labour market and the effects of these changes on organising in terms of the specific experiences of members and affiliates of the APF. Still, two clear lines of difference emerged with regard to COSATU and organised workers. Some argued strongly for continuing to work with the base of COSATU unions and encouraging the strengthening of the existing trade union movement, with some even calling for GIWUSA members to return to CEPPWAWU. Others argued for the prioritisation of work with new, independent unions and workers who are not organised through APF structures, like the Orange Farm experience. While there were no decisions made in this workshop, there was a general agreement to continue to work with workers wherever they might be as the APF has done in the past and to continue to debate the changing conditions of work and organising under neoliberalism. The discussion itself and the various proposals that were tabled for further discussion reveal the various points at which activists are with regard to the issue. On one hand, the organised Trotskyist formations of Keep Left and the Socialist Group rehashed the old positions of 'winning the heart and souls of the rank and file of COSATU' and the need for more consistent work with the base of COSATU to 'build enough confidence in the working class' to change COSATU and force its break from the Alliance or its transformation from within. But there was also evidence of people really struggling with the issue as a result of the failure of traditional organisations and theories to provide answers for the challenges placed on organising by changing conditions of work. The overriding agreement amongst the latter group was that COSATU and the traditional trade union form have failed to respond to the needs and problems of workers under neoliberalism, and that the clear distinctions between 'worker' and 'community person', and 'factory/workplace' and 'community' were blurring under neoliberalism. The result: that

organising must allow for the coming together of these traditionally separate subjects and sites.

However, activists differed around the form in which the APF should approach this issue. While some proposed the establishment of an APF Work Forum, an open space in which anyone could raise an issue for debate and discussion related to work in a manner that allows for analysis of current changes facing us without artificial divisions between workers and others, others called for a Workers' Forum, which would be a space for discussion of issues related specifically to workers. While both these seem similar, the former would open up the space for discussions around reconceptualisations of work allowing for different sites of production/reproduction and their relative value to be the subject of discussion (e.g. Orange Farm's sewing and gardening projects as well as the retrenchments happening at a chemical plant). In this way, it would facilitate the development of alternative understandings of work and value (possibly even the rejection of work and its value as determined by capital). The latter rather seems to confine itself to current conceptualisations of work and workers. Other suggestions have included the setting up of an APF Workers' Desk, which would respond institutionally and quite routinely to the needs of workers as they arise.

For now, while the discussion is still open and fairly new, there is only an agreement that there will not be a generalised approach to this question and that individual situations will determine their own unfolding. For us, this discussion is an extremely important one as it goes to the heart of what possibilities we decide to explore in the creation of alternatives to capitalism. Our participation in this discussion also gives value to the work we have put into this research study as it has allowed us to use this work very concretely in a discussion that will see the APF make some serious decisions about its organisational form and strategic orientation.

APF members continue to attend COSATU events and campaigns to give support and to draw attention to the existence of a critique of the ANC government and its neoliberal policies. There is still a very strong feeling amongst APF members that COSATU members ('the rank and file') must be 'won over' to the positions of the APF (Trevor Ngwane, interview). COSATU leadership has, however, grown increasingly antagonistic in its actions despite its overall position that COSATU will work with the APF and other social movements where there are points of agreement on certain issues. However, it reserves the right to differ from other social movements on issues such as its participation in the Alliance.

I'll be frank with you... We do recognise that there are new movements, and that these new movements have arisen because the ANC has left the MDM – it's no longer leading, it's collapsed everything into the state and it's left a vacuum in the MDM in the sense that there is no UDF, crudely. So, there is no congress mass movement anymore. And, many of the new movements have emerged in response to specific government social policy issues, like privatisation, housing, landlessness. However, where COSATU has a problem is with the anti-state and anti-ANC posture of some of the movements. Our principles are that we are not anti-state and not anti-ANC. We have certain problems with government policy, but we certainly don't clamp down on people if they have a different view and if they have a legitimate constituency and who sometimes we might share the same demands and so on, but it is rather difficult because you must remember that principally we have an alliance with the SACP and ANC. This is not a tactical alliance, but a principled one and until and unless that sunders, you cannot consider forcing alliances with organisations that are anti-ANC and anti-state. Therefore, with the APF, we've taken a position that we cannot work

with them continuously on a long-term basis, but that around specific issues on which we agree we could consider working together.' (Oupa Bodibe, interview).

When COSATU did decide to join forces with new social movements in the Anti-War Coalition (AWC) march against the war on 15 January 2003, it was this relationship to the ANC that was to prevent a unified action from being pulled off on the day. Interestingly, the debate around whether to allow the ANC to be part of the AWC action was to divide new social movements. The APF position was to work with COSATU but not the ANC, as the ANC was seen to be contradictory in its position on the war, opposing it in word but continuing to allow Denel to supply arms to the USA, and because it is complicit with the neoliberal agenda of those pushing for war. While this position carried through into the programme on the day of the march, this was only after heated debate within the APF and the AWC in which many activists felt that we were being 'sectarian' in denying the ANC a platform on the day. The final decision taken by the AWC was that COSATU would be allowed a speaker on the main stage while the ANC would be prevented from speaking.

COSATU felt that:

There's no need to be balkanised about the war. The government here was anti-war and one of the things we've learnt to appreciate - even in the days when Mandela was the President, Mandela did not agree with the property clause in the constitution and he agreed with the entrenching of workers' rights in the constitution. Right wing forces were not agreed and Mandela joined COSATU strike actions at the time, if you remember, in spite of the fact that he was the President of the country. And so, when the democratic state takes progressive positions, let's support that democratic state. We must mount the same mass action as when we oppose the democratic state. (Simon Boshielo, interview).

On the day of the march, the ANC Alliance was a clear bloc (visibly smaller than the rest), which at the end of the march separated from the main march to hold its own rally. After the WSSD (see below) this was a clear sign that the lines were drawn and that there was little hope of COSATU coming together with new social movements.

What followed was the APF's eviction from its offices in COSATU house in June 2003. In a statement released on 30 June 2003, the APF stated,

The reasons provided by the COSATU-Cubah Properties for kicking the APF out are that the APF did not apply to renew the lease. They also made false allegations that the APF was a bad payer despite the APF being up to date with its rent payments. COSATU does not have the guts to state the true reasons for the eviction. In a pathetic attempt to cover the politics behind the eviction, Cubah Properties in its correspondence with the APF, distanced itself from the COSATU Central Executive Committee (CEC) resolution and evasively implied that there was no link between COSATU and Cubah Properties. On investigation, the APF found out that Zwelinzima Vavi (COSATU general secretary), Bheki Ntshalintshali (COSATU deputy secretary) and Alinah Rantsolase (COSATU Treasurer) are the directors of Cubah Properties. (APF, 2003: 1).

Minutes of the COSATU CEC meeting reveal that this was actually a minuted decision of the CEC. Activists anticipate that tensions will only get worse as COSATU has already taken positions that will bring it into conflict with the APF and other social movements. For example, Trevor Ngwane points out that COSATU has taken a position that it is not opposed

to the system of pre-paid electricity and water, while the APF and its affiliates have a clear strategy of destroying and preventing the installation of pre-paid meters.

With the new

The APF, while emerging in response to the specific struggles of specific groups against privatisation, has grown to include various struggles of communities going beyond the issue of privatisation. In doing this, it has promoted an understanding of privatisation that has situated privatisation within a broader programme of capitalist expansion in the form of neoliberalism. In this way the APF has broadened its programmes to include fighting, not just the South African government's policies as they apply here, but also the policies of neoliberalism that are being promoted in the form of NEPAD for the African continent, and the international financial institutions. In doing this, it has linked up with other struggles in the world and come together with other social movements in protest action, in particular around the WCAR in 2001 and the WSSD in 2002. These have included the Concerned Citizens' Forum (CCF-Durban), the Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC-Cape Town), the Landless People's Movement (LPM), Jubilee South Africa, and the Anti-War Coalition (AWC). In addition, it has formed alliances with certain non-governmental organisations (NGOs), such as the Environmental Justice Networking Forum (EJNF) and the Alternative Information and Development Centre (AIDC).

While participation in such events and processes has shown several similarities between and amongst movements, it has also raised several differences. As John Appolis stated,

There have been 2 major events over the last 2 years, the WCAR and WSSD, that brought about a broad, common identity amongst different social movements. But this is only in the very broad sense – APF, AEC, CCF, Jubilee, etc. I think there is a real basis for working together as social movements. But if you look at the past 2 years we have not been able to translate that kind of common identity into real co-operation around solidarity work and assisting each other in our work... I think for the foreseeable future we're not going to have a national movement. It's going to take time for things to gel together. I think we're going to have to go through lots of processes, of common struggles, victories, defeats, setbacks for us to gel together as a national political movement. (John Appolis, interview).

After its success during the WSSD, the SMI has continued to provide the space through which social movements have been able to meet.

The SMI is to be seen as an open space for meeting and convergence. It is not an organisation or political party and we base our unity in solidarity and struggle, based on a common platform that would include:

- 1 Place for unity and struggle
- 2 Develop common set of principles to base interactions on (charter of principles, common platform, or memorandum of unity)
- 3 Commitment to the poor and not to organisations
- 4 Position that is anti-capitalist, anti—neoliberal, and that focuses on proactive struggle for basic needs and rights
- 5 Not seeing ourselves in sectoral terms
- 6 Solidarity at national and international levels
- 7 Entity that prioritises autonomy of organisations and groups – don't want to be prescriptive
- 8 A space that allows people to organise differently – build a movement through this space that doesn't suppress diversity and debate
- 9 Community control (SMI, November 2002).

How the SMI evolves will depend on the nature of the continued participation of movements in it. Significant, however, is the fact that a space for convergence outside of the tripartite Alliance is being forged. This is a space that is different from the Alliance not only in terms of its composition, but also in terms of the organisational structure and relationships that it is creating.

In addition to the above formal interactions between social movements, there have been many informal meetings and interactions between individuals and groups of individuals within the APF, CCF, AEC and the LPM. These have ranged from providing legal and material support, advice and debate to providing activists with shelter when in hiding from the police and celebrating new babies and birthdays or grieving at funerals. Many of these relationships go back to histories shared in traditional liberation movement structures, and in many cases histories of battles within traditional movements. The shared circumstances of the new struggles have now cemented these relationships and created new ones, which aim at finding solutions to the present together.

The WCAR and WSSD have also seen the coming together of South African movements with activists and movements from other parts of the world and the growing global movement against neoliberalism and capitalist globalisation. These relationships have also grown through the World Social Forum and other international gatherings to which South African activists have gained access. While this is the subject for another paper, it is significant that the changing relationships between the old and the new (and, in particular the relations between the trade union movement and new organisations, movements and forms of organising) are increasingly being played out on these global stages.

Beginnings ...

This Report is our contribution to a story that is currently being written, in the local and immediate experiences of and responses to neoliberalism by those facing its worst effects at an individual, organisational/union, and community level. This is a story that speaks a new discourse that emerges from and is built on old traditions, styles and ideologies, but imagines new worlds and possibilities. This is a story in which all truths and fixities are beginning to be played with and explored. This is a story in which we re-member ourselves as individuals and groups inside and outside of neoliberalism and capitalism, grappling with the 'old' and 'new' in relation to the nation-state, the trade union, the political party, the movement, 'the people', and so on. This is a story that thrives on democracy, collective self-activity, and freedom. This is a story that cannot stop being told.

We cannot therefore conclude. Instead, we hope that this Report will be the start of many more re-memberings – contributions to the story being told. In this we acknowledge our difference/s from the old – the old ways of narrating, the old ways of organising, the old ways of allowing the world/s to be seen and re-presented.

Today, after so many capitalist victories, after socialist hopes have withered in disillusionment, and after capitalist violence against labour has been solidified under the name of ultra-liberalism, why is it that instances of militancy still arise, why have resistances deepened, and why does struggle continually re-emerge with new vigour? We should say right away that this new militancy does not simply repeat the organisational formulas of the old revolutionary

working class. Today the militant cannot even pretend to be a representative, even of the fundamental human needs of the exploited. Revolutionary political militancy today, on the contrary, must rediscover what has always been its proper form: not representational but constituent activity. Militancy today is a positive, constructive, and innovative activity. This is the form in which we and all those who revolt against the rule of capital recognise ourselves as militants today. Militants resist imperial command in a creative way. In other words, resistance is linked immediately with a constitutive investment in the biopolitical realm and to the formation of cooperative apparatuses of production and community. Here is the strong novelty of militancy today: it repeats the virtues of insurrectional action of two hundred years of subversive experience, but at the same time it is linked to a new world, a world that knows no outside. It knows only an inside, a vital and ineluctable participation in the set of social structures, with no possibility of transcending them. This inside is the productive co-operation of mass intellectuality and affective networks, the productivity of postmodern biopolitics. This militancy makes resistance into counterpower and makes rebellion into a project of love. (Empire: 412-413)

Annex 1: List of interviews, group discussions and meetings conducted and attended

In-depth Interviews

1. John Appolis, chairperson of APF, former regional organizer of CEPPWAWU, member of GIWUSA – 17/7/03
2. Oupa Bodibe, Co-ordinator in the COSATU Secretariat – 30/04/03
3. Heinrich Bohmke, member of CCF, lawyer – 02/07/03
4. Simon Boshielo, International Officer, COSATU head office- 11/07/03
5. Ashwin Desai, member of CCF, writer – 01/07/03
6. George Dor, member of Jubilee South Africa – 12/07/03
7. Pat Horn, General-Secretary of the Self-Employed Women’s Union (SEWU) – e-mail interview, June 2003.
8. Richard (Bricks) Mokolo, Co-ordinator of OWCC – 20/06/2003
9. Nhlanhla Ndlovu, former Programmes Co-ordinator at SANGOCO, director of Rural Development Services Network (RDSN) – 23/06/03
10. Trevor Ngwane, secretary of APF, member of SECC – 22/06/03
11. Dale McKinley, media co-ordinator of APF – 06/05/03
12. Andile Mngxitama, Land Rights Co-ordinator, NLC – 28/07/03
13. Brandon Pillay, chairperson of BRA, member of CCF – 30/06/03
14. Melanie Sampson, member of APF education committee, former union educationist for NUMSA, researcher in Municipal Services Project (MSP) – 28/06/03
15. Salim Vally, member of APF, AWC, PSC, ERP – 15/05/03
16. Peter Van Heusden, treasurer of AEC – 28/05/03

Focus Group Discussions

1. Vrygrond Action Committee – 28/05/03

Meetings

These are too numerous to list, but include all major meetings, workshops and events of the APF, SMI and Indymedia-SA from 2000-2003. In addition, meetings were held with Max Ntanyana and Fonky Goboza of the AEC during December 2002 and May 2003 in Johannesburg and Cape Town respectively. Meetings were also held with various members of the CCF in Durban in 2002. We have also participated in all the major discussions, meetings and actions of the DSF during the WCAR in 2001 and the SMI during the WSSD in 2003. During the WSF, we had several discussions with Ashraf Cassiem from the AEC, with whom we spent most of our time in Porto Alegre.

During the World Social Forum in 2003 in Porto Alegre, we participated in many meetings, debates, discussions and demonstrations. People we were able to meet and engage with on a one-to-one basis include: Franco Barchiesi, Naomi Klein, Michael Hardt, activists from the MTD in Solano-Argentina, activists from Intergalactica, activists from Indymedia-Brazil, Argentina and other parts of the Indymedia network.

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Unedited video footage

We have been fortunate to have access to unedited footage (including interviews, meetings, workshops, and actions) from Indymedia-South Africa from the following events:

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