

TWO ESSAYS ON ANTI-CAPITALISM IN AFRICA

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Embryonic African anti-capitalism

by Patrick Bond¹

Introduction: Africa's structural burdens

When it comes to anti-capitalist resistance, the most economically-marginalized sites are amongst the most interesting. Not because the greatest number of militant activists are out in force--but because the trials and tribulations they overcome along the way, and the consciousness they express, teach us vital lessons about uneven capitalist development.

Consider the African continent, where from Accra and Dakar in the West to Harare and Johannesburg in the South, growing movements closely parallel the international anti-capitalist protesters. Their targets are the same--the World Bank, IMF, WTO, particularly venal corporations and other purveyors of commodification and exploitation--but because of conflicting legacies of African nationalism, the going is slower and more careful.

These were, after all, also sites of intense, bloody resistance to previous epochs of globalization. The British, French, Belgian and Portuguese (and to a lesser extent German, Spanish, Italian, and Afrikaner) states which ran diverse colonies here during most of the twentieth century were amongst the most brutal in human history. At one historical bookend of colonial repression, they accounted for tens of millions of slaves; at the other, leading up to 1994, at least two million civilian deaths in Southern Africa alone can be traced to destabilization by the apartheid regime and allied forces, including the US.

Simultaneous with formal independence from weakened European powers mainly during the 1960s, two debilitating processes--Cold War politics and patronage battles--broke out in and around many African states, between clients of the United States and Soviet Union, with Cuba and China playing mixed roles. Under the circumstances, Africa became a melting pot of war and organized criminality: i.e., an excellent platform for short-term capital accumulation by extraction-oriented multinational corporations.

Resistance came in waves. The anti-colonial tribal-based uprisings of the 19th century were only suppressed by the Europeans' brutal military superiority, ultimately requiring automatic weaponry. Twentieth century settler-capitalism could only take hold through coercive mechanisms that dragged Africans out of traditional modes of production into the mines, fields and factories. On the other side of the struggle, Africa's rich, interrelated radical traditions grew and intermingled. They included vibrant nationalist liberation insurgencies, once-avowed 'Marxist-Leninist' political parties, mass movements (sometimes peasant-based, sometimes emerging from degraded urban ghettos), and powerful unions. Religious protesters, women's groups, students and youths also played catalytic roles that changed history in given locales.

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In the sense that the imperialist stage of capitalism was a logical outcome of pressures building up in the early 20th century world system--as insisted by socialists like Lenin and Luxemburg, and conceded by liberals like Hobson--these were some of the most important anti-capitalist campaigns ever. For example, the 1885 meeting in Berlin that carved up Africa between the main colonial powers reflected pressures directly related to the 1870s-90s capitalist crises, particularly in the London and Paris financial centers. The stock markets reacted as badly to news of, for example, Ndebele raids on Cecil John Rhodes' mine surveyors in Zimbabwe, as modern brokers did to the Zapatista uprising and failure of the Seattle WTO negotiations a century later.

But what kinds of globalized resistance can be retraced? Anti-slavery was amongst the most important international solidarity movements ever. Later, an attempt was made by Marcus Garvey to relocate African-Americans to Liberia. African nationalist movements exiled in London and Paris established even greater Pan-Africanist visions, as well as solidarity relations with Northern critics of colonialism, apartheid and racism. The combined anti-colonial/imperialist phase, i.e., from the 1960s through the liberation of South Africa in 1994, gave leftists and anti-racists (from militants like Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael to church-basement activists) inspiration--although as Che Guevara found out during a hellish year (1965) organizing and occasionally fighting in what was then Mobutu's Zaire, not all peasant societies proved ripe for the struggle. Names of that era's leading African (and African-diaspora) revolutionary writers and thinkers--Ake, Amin, Biko, Campbell, Cabral, Fanon, First, Lumumba, Machel, Mafeje, Magubane, Mamdani, Nabudere, Nkrumah, Nyerere, Odinga, Onimode, Rodney, Sankara, Shivji, Soyinka--still grace political reading lists from the world's great universities to political clubs deep in African shantytowns.

As predicted especially by Frantz Fanon, terrible disappointments then accompanied virtually all the transitions from colonialism to neo-colonialism in Africa. This is crucial to point out at a time when blame-the-victim analysis of what the *Economist* magazine has termed 'the hopeless continent' is rampant. Africa's worst socio-economic problems are better considered as deep-rooted manifestations of a peripheral capitalism manipulated at will by imperialist powers, accompanied by the rise of complicit local ruling elites. Three sets of closely-related problems can be identified, associated with what Fanon described as 'false decolonization':

- colonialism's artificial borders, racism and ideological control, ethnic divide-and-rule strategies, land acquisition, labor control, suppression of competition from indigenous sources, military conflict (independence struggles) and replacement by African nationalism together guaranteed a future of distorted economics and failed states;
- for women, pre-colonial patrilineal systems evolved into colonial forms of inequality (e.g., minority status and legal guardianship) which often persisted and evolved as post-colonial forms of structured oppression (e.g., market-related brideprice), in part because colonialism's migrant labor systems required ultra-inexpensive workers who women would subsidize through child-rearing, home-based medical care and retirement (in lieu of the standard set of business-financed schools, medical plans and pensions offered to workers elsewhere); and
- political continuities from past to present include unreformed state structures, international political and cultural relations with colonial powers, and especially class alliances involving *compradorism* (local sell-outs working in league with international oppressors).

The economic structure of Africa's neo-colonial societies was relatively homogenous. Although as settler-colonial societies, South Africa and Zimbabwe did develop quite extensive manufacturing capacities, several economic features apply equally to other countries across the continent:

- extractive industries, primary product export orientation, international commodity price fluctuations and 'dependency';
- lack of internal linkages between production and consumption, and between urban and rural areas;
- widening differences between social strata (class, ethnicity, rural/urban, gender, generational); and
- landlessness, accelerating urbanization, and worsening unemployment.

On the one hand, uneven formal working-class organization existed in many parts of the continent, resulting periodically in strikes in especially the mining and railway industries. But at the point of production, the forces of law and order were invariably stronger and treacherous. The most virulent symptoms of social morbidity typically occurred just prior to independence, as settlers held on to privileges with sophisticated state repressive capacity, much of which carried over into the post-colonial state.

So the post-colonial state was quickly harnessed for neo-colonial duty. This allowed, in turn, Africa to continue expanding exports notwithstanding terribly unfair terms of trade (the difference between prices paid for exports in relation to prices paid for imports). The peak of demand for Africa's raw materials, before synthetic substitutes were invented, was during World War II. From the mid 1970s, terms of trade worsened dramatically, in part because of export-oriented policies which most African countries were compelled to adopt once they experienced debt crisis.

The prices of primary commodities (other than fuels) have risen and fallen according to a deeper rhythm. Exporters of primary commodities, for example, have fared particularly badly when financiers have been most powerful. The cycle began with falling commodity prices (1973), rising foreign debt (1970s), dramatic increases in interest rates (1979), a desperate intensification of exports which lowered prices yet further (1980s), and in some cases outright bankruptcy. This process impoverished nearly the entire non-industrialized Third World, with occasional, erratic exceptions in oil-producing regions. For Africa, the trend to declining terms of trade was especially devastating because of the continent's extraordinary dependence upon a few export commodities. Export-led growth strategies pursued since the 1970s by virtually all Third World countries meant that Africa's market share also shrunk drastically.

Meanwhile, thanks in part to *de facto* guarantees by international financial agencies (backed by unwitting Northern taxpayers), willing bankers promoted corruption and capital flight. In the DRC, for example, Mobutu Sese Seko was thought to be illegitimately worth US\$5 billion by the time of his 1996 overthrow. The cost of imported oil rose dramatically in 1973 and 1979, and markets for raw materials stagnated and declined, requiring a short-term substitute for foreign-currency revenues in the form of loans. During the first part of the 1980s, the World Bank and IMF took over as creditors to ensure that African countries repaid Northern commercial bank loans, in exchange for power over virtually all aspects of public policy in African countries. This resulted, uniformly, in austere macroeconomic policies which emphasized liberalization, export orientation and an end to social subsidies.

But incoming funds continued to decline, and by 1984, net financial resource transfers to the Third World were negative for the first time, as countries spent more on interest payments than they gained in new loans. By the end of the decade, the net South-North transfer had reached \$50 billion a year, which reflected the success of financiers in shifting the repayment burden to not only

Northern taxpayers but also to Third World citizens. Whereas world real interest rates were, on average, -1% during the 1970s (because inflation was higher than the prevailing interest rate), they soared to 7% during the early 1980s due to extreme monetarist policy in the United States, and averaged 4.5% during the 1980s-90s.

Some 'emerging markets' (middle-income countries) received a net early-1990s inflow of finance, and so developing countries found that by 2000 they had more than \$2 trillion in foreign debt to repay (up from \$1.3 trillion during the early 1980s when the debt crisis broke out and \$1.4 trillion in 1990). Africa, however, suffered a net outflows of funds. Each year during the late 1990s, African countries paid \$162 million more than they received in new loans, up from \$60 million in 1990.

There was little hope of balancing accounts by attracting inflows of foreign direct investment. Africa's share fell from 25% of all multinational corporate investments during the 1970s to less than 5% during the late 1990s. The tiny amounts in Sub-Saharan Africa in recent years can be attributed in large part to oil company investments in Angola and Nigeria. Profit repatriation and transfer pricing, whereby foreign investors steal money from developing countries by misinvoicing inputs drawn from abroad, meant that in any case, such investments drained more from Africa than they contributed.

Moving to geopolitical tensions that rose inexorably under these circumstances, another crucial issue was the militarization of the continent. This problem was associated, initially, with colonial resistance to change, and then to neocolonial power plays that inexorably resulted from partial transitions. Thanks in part to Cold War machinations and lubrication provided by arms dealers, many African countries witnessed extraordinary social, civil and regional conflicts ranging from genocide to attempted coups during the 1980s-90s: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, Western Sahara and Zambia.

Militarisation also helps explain why Africa's subsequent, oft-celebrated democratisation wave, from the late 1980s-early 1990s, was superficial and truncated. Both political and economic failure necessarily followed the imposition of neoliberal policies--dating to the early 1980s--whether associated with nationalist authoritarian regimes or post-nationalist (pseudo-)'democratic' governments. Aside from a few special-case exceptions (Botswana and Mauritius), neither regime type could make neoliberalism work in a world economy that paid ever-declining prices for ever-increasing African outputs, and that demanded more debt repayment than Africa's people could bear.

These latter macro circumstances--closely associated with the way global capitalist crisis played out over the past two decades--plus exceptionally high capital flight by African elites, should be the contextual starting points of any robust structural analysis of the continent's economic problems. From economic hopelessness logically follows many of the political disasters that litter Sub-Saharan Africa. In sum, debt, trade, investment, wars, failed political democratisation, more recent scourges like HIV/AIDS--exacerbated by the refusal of pharmaceutical corporations to sell medicines at affordable prices--all compel Africans to fight for peace and justice locally, by firmly invoking continental-scale and international anti-capitalist themes.

Anti-capitalist campaigning in Africa today

What are popular organizations actively involved in these issues arguing and doing? Much can be

gleaned from specific social struggles associated with local campaigns. Many such campaigns centrally involve labor, and are well documented in two recent books (*Anti-Capitalism* edited by Emma Bircham and John Charlton, and *Class Struggle and Resistance in Africa* edited by Leo Zeilig). An occasional catalyst for regime change during the colonial era was the mass strike. During the 1980s-90s, these intensified. Organized workers and the urban poor invoked the 'stayaway' periodically against undemocratic regimes, as well as 'IMF Riots' against the lifting of subsidies on vital inputs like staple foodstuffs and transport. During the early 1990s, these strikes and riots resulted in numerous overthrows of governments (there are roughly 50 nation states in Africa)--but without ideology and solid organization of oppressed people, the parties that replaced the ruling elite simply kept the systems of oppression intact.

Just as interesting are specific struggles that draw to the world's attention local injustices. For example, in mid-2000, when the US EximBank offered \$1 billion in loans for African countries to import anti-retroviral drugs to combat HIV/AIDS, Africans involved in grassroots advocacy (especially South Africa's Treatment Action Campaign) recommended that their nation-states reject the advice, and instead import parallel, generic drugs at as little as 5% of the US corporate price from countries like Thailand, India and Brazil.

The fight against Big Pharma was one of the most important in recent anti-capitalist history, for it forced the South African government and World Health Organization to reluctantly confront the power of patent protections in the World Trade Organization. That fight did not end, because Pretoria's rulers appear ambivalent about keeping five million mainly unemployed poor people alive (a stance that is regularly labeled 'genocidal' by serious observers). International allies like AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) and *Médecins sans Frontières* assist Africa's courageous campaigners to the point that South Africa's 'undertaker-in-chief', the mercurial president Thabo Mbeki, reportedly claimed in desperation in late 2000 that the Treatment Action Campaign was part of a CIA plot. At the end of 2002, moreover, US vice president Richard Cheney was reported to be promoting Big Pharma's indefensible monopolistic position, in WTO discussions concerning the nature of illnesses to exclude from intellectual-property protections.

Another emblematic struggle with greater implications than are immediately visible is the grassroots campaign by Jubilee debt activists for the return of Nigerian dictator Sani Abacha's billions in looted funds, hoarded in Swiss and London banks. Early success has helped to break open Swiss secrecy, following similar campaigns over fifteen years waged by citizens' groups and governments in the Philippines and Haiti in relation to the Duvallier and Marcos hoards, not to mention victims of the Nazi Holocaust. The British government was particularly embarrassed by its regulators' nodding and winking at the largest London banks, which laundered Abacha's--and no doubt many other tyrants'--dirty money without qualms.

This followed well-publicized Nigerian activist attacks on oil companies which in Ogoniland and other parts of the Delta continue to trash the environment and people. Ken Saro Wiwa's Mossop movement had a subsequent boost, after Abacha's 1998 execution of the fearless writer: in mid-2002, hundreds of Nigerian women conducted invasions and sit-ins at the local oil-complex offices (and bourgeois residential zones) of the main multinational firms. As this happened just prior to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, they forced important concessions from PR-vulnerable oil companies.

In addition, progressive local African groups and international allies have critiqued specific World Bank projects, including the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline, the Lesotho Highlands Water Project which supplies Johannesburg with water, and the Bujagali Dam at the headwaters of the Nile in Uganda. In one important site, the Tanzanian town of Bulyanulu, a 1996 dislocation (and alleged mass death by burial) of informal goldminers by Barrick Gold, backed by a World Bank investment guarantee agreement, is backed by impressive Canadian solidarity. Other growing campaigns that link

African and international civil society organizations include the massive environmental debt that the industrial North owes the South, and the campaign to ban 'conflict-diamond' trade that has contributed to civil war in Sierra Leone, the DRC and Angola.

Environmental justice struggles have linked South Africans with counterparts elsewhere over the following issues: dumping of toxics (e.g., mercury); compensation for community/worker lung disease caused by asbestos mining; anti-incineration of municipal and hospital toxics; other air pollution threats; critiques of the oil industry; South Africa's inordinate contribution to global warming; biopiracy especially victimizing First Peoples of southern Africa; the genetic modification which is rife in South Africa; recycling; soil degradation; species protection; timber plantation damage; water pollution; worker safety/health; and many others. Most of these labor and community campaigns--which at the grassroots/shopfloor base are typically led by women--have been supported by, or even gave rise to, environmental NGOs that quickly transcended South Africa's classical tradition of white paternalist-conservationism.

'Corporate accountability' is the overall demand but much more radical politics can potentially be found behind the international solidarity networks. Likewise, movements against privatization of basic services--mainly water and electricity--began in Accra and Johannesburg in 2000 and have attracted great international support, not only in their fights against British and French firms but in opposing the commodification of their daily lives. Their influence is spawning similar campaigns across Southern and West Africa. The Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee's Operation Khanyisa ('Switch On') illegally reconnects people whose supplies were cut because of poverty and rising prices associated with services commercialization. Other militant community-based protests in Durban and Cape Town against disconnections, evictions and landlessness have also won international recognition. These are covered thoroughly on the South African Indymedia website, which is one of several--Nigeria and Zimbabwe were also active by the end of 2002, with more planned for 2003--that periodically report on anti-capitalist activism.

Networked anti-capitalism

African networks that build these campaigns are evolving continually, and several are worth citing at this juncture.

- The 'Lusaka Declaration' was signed in May 1999 by the leading African social movement and church organizations working on debt. Dozens of Lusaka meeting participants launched a process for drafting a mass-popular 'Africa People's Consensus' to transcend the development orthodoxy of the Washington Consensus and the slightly reformed Post-Washington Consensus, and to do so by building upon similar regional meetings in Accra, Lome and Gauteng in 1998-99. Typical participants include the main Jubilee chapters, other faith/justice organizations, NGOs, progressive think-tanks and human rights bodies. Countries represented in Lusaka included Burkina Faso, Lesotho, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Cameroon, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- The Africa People's Consensus went to West Africa in December 2000, via the 'Dakar 2000' Coordinating Committee. The Dakar summit was supported by groups like the Association des Femmes Africaines pour la Recherche et le Developpement as well as numerous West and Central African social movements and NGOs. Dakar 2000 is networked across the Third World through the International South Group Network's

well-respected Harare branch, and internationally through the Paris-based Association pour la Taxation des Transactions financières pour l'Aide aux Citoyens (Attac), and the Committee pour l'Annulation de la Dette du Tiers Monde in Brussels. The organizations united behind a tough analysis, that 'Third World debt to the North is at once fraudulent, odious, illegal, immoral, illegitimate, obscene and genocidal', leading the way to a demand for reparations:

Countries of the North owe Third World countries, particularly Africa, a manifold debt: blood debt with slavery; economic debt with colonization, and the looting of human and mineral resources and unequal exchange; ecological debt with the destruction and the looting of its natural resources; social debt (unemployment; mass poverty) and cultural debt (debasing of African civilizations to justify colonization).

- The Africa Trade Network was similarly active in opposing the United States free-trade legislation known as the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act. Some of its member organizations pledged in October 2000 to lobby their governments to refuse entry into the deal, which provides a slight amount of market access to those countries that Washington (this time, the US State and Commerce Departments) deems economically responsible. This follows similar work by the network to promote Africa-Caribbean-Pacific unity in relation to Lome and European Union trade negotiations more generally, and early critiques of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper initiative of the IMF and Bank. Subsequently, a well-organized anti-capitalist movement in Mauritius prepared a major protest against George W. Bush's attempt to establish free trade with Africa in January 2003, before Bush suddenly canceled his trip to prepare for a war against Iraq (for which he would find virtually no African support). Inequitable capitalist trade relations are also tackled regularly by an important NGO from Accra, Isodec, which is affiliated to the Penang-based Third World Network. Along with Cape Town's Alternative Information and Development Centre and the Harare NGO 'Seatini' (Southern and Eastern African Trade Information Initiative), these were the major African players behind the collapse of the WTO Seattle Round, working both in the streets and inside the official African delegation. South Africa attempted to cut a side deal in the 'Green Room' deliberations of key countries, but Pretoria was eventually shamed into accepting the Organization of African Unity resolution that prevented insider-consensus on establishing a Seattle Round.

- Free trade within a given region is also problematic, particularly under the influence of Washington, according to the Southern African Peoples Solidarity Network. Key participants include the African Organization on Debt and Development; Africa Trade Network (Southern Africa); Alternative Information and Development Center; Associacao para Desenvolvimento Rural de Angola; church and ecumenical groups from most countries; trade unions; the Gender and Trade Network (Southern Africa); Jubilee groups from Angola, Malawi, South Africa and Zambia; Ledikasyon pu Travayer (Workers Education-Mauritius); Mwelekeo wa NGO (Mwengo-Zimbabwe); the Swaziland Youth Congress and Swaziland Campaign Against Poverty and Economic Inequality; and the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development. Meeting in Windhoek in August 2000, the Network resolved 'that the governments of our countries'

--have for long mainly engaged in rhetorical declarations about national development, and development cooperation and regional integration, with few effective achievements;

--are mainly concerned with preserving and promoting their own individual and group status, power and privileges, and their personal and aspirant-class appropriation of our nations' resources; and, for these reasons, are frequently engaged in divisive competition and even dangerous conflicts amongst themselves

at the expense of the interests of the people at national and regional levels;

--are, at the same time, committed to supporting and defending each other whenever the interests and power of the ruling elites come into conflict with the human rights, and the democratic and development aspirations of their own populations; and are using SADC as a self-serving 'old boys' club' for such mutual support;

--are increasingly responsive and subordinate to external inducements and pressures from governmental agencies in the richest industrialized countries, and their global corporations, banks and other financial organizations, and the 'multilateral' institutions dominated and used by them.

- The Jubilee network in Africa convened in 2001 in Kampala to critically consider the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) gambit of the IMF and World Bank, in a statement that gives an indication of the strong bullshit-detection capacity now developed in African civil society:

The experiences of the functioning of PRSPs in our countries raise a number of additional concerns with regard to the involvement of organizations of civil society:

--The PRSPs are not based on real people's participation and ownership, or decision-making. To the contrary, there is no intention of taking civil society perspectives seriously, but to keep participation to mere public relations legitimization;

--The lack of genuine commitment to participation is further manifested in the failure to provide full and timeous access to all necessary information, limiting the capacity of civil society to make meaningful contributions.

--The PRSPs have been introduced according to pre-set external schedules which in most countries has resulted in an altogether inadequate time period for an effective participatory process.

--In addition to all the constraints placed on governments and civil society organizations in formulating PRSPs, the World Bank and IMF retain the right to veto the final programs. This reflects the ultimate mockery of the threadbare claim that the PRSPs are based on 'national ownership'.

--An additional serious concern is the way in which PRSPs are being used by the World Bank and IMF, both directly and indirectly, to co-opt NGOs to 'monitor' their own governments on behalf of these institutions.

- In January 2002, dozens of African social movements met in Bamako, Mali, as the African Social Forum, in preparation for the Porto Alegre World Social Forum. It was one of the first substantial conferences since the era of liberation to combine progressive NGOs and social movements from all parts of the continent, and was followed by African Social Forum sessions in Johannesburg (August 2002) and Addis Ababa (January 2003). The Bamako Declaration included the following paragraphs:

A strong consensus emerged at the Bamako Forum that the values, practices, structures and institutions of the currently dominant neoliberal order are inimical to and incompatible with the realization of Africa's dignity, values and aspirations.

The Forum rejected neo-liberal globalization and further integration of Africa into an unjust system as a basis for its growth and development. In this context, there was a strong consensus that initiatives such as Nepad that are inspired by the IMF-WB strategies of Structural Adjustment Programs, trade liberalization that continues to subject Africa to an unequal exchange, and strictures on governance borrowed from the practices of Western countries and not rooted in the culture and history of the peoples of Africa.

- African groups began networking more actively in 2002 when the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) was introduced by Mbeki and a handful of other African leaders, as discussed below.

The main point to make here, is not that these and other progressive African movement networks (e.g., labor-related, economic justice practitioners in churches, health equity specialists, numerous

types of environmentalists, and so on) are advancing strong, mature, ideological statements about the debt, trade and related economic oppression they face. What is perhaps of greater interest is that instead of working merely through NGO-type circuits, they are increasingly tying their work to militant street action, as was evident at the Durban World Conference Against Racism in August 2001 and the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development a year later. As we see, both cases involved militant anti-capitalist and anti-Pretoria activism.

Where will these initiatives coalesce? To some extent they do so through more generalized campaigning, as in when the Jubilee Africa and South Africa chapters helped to catalyze the international World Bank Bonds Boycott initiative in April 2000, aiming for an anti-apartheid style commitment by investors--pension funds, municipal accounts, church investments and university endowments--not to buy Bank bonds. The bottom-up defunding strategy is inspired by the desire to abolish, not reform, the Bretton Woods Institutions.

A warning about *civilized* society

In other situations, however, instead of synthesizing with mass protest, some local activities undertaken by grassroots groups too easily fall into the trap of neoliberal economic policies. This was a logical corollary to the global rise of civil society discourses, and was not unique to Africa by any means. Since the 1980s, Claude Ake warned,

there has been an explosion of associational life in rural Africa. By all indications, this is a by-product of a general acceptance of the necessity of self-reliance, yielding a proliferation of institutions such as craft centers, rural credit unions, farmers' associations, community-run skill development centers, community banks, cooperatives, community-financed schools and hospitals and civic centers, local credit unions, even community vigilante groups for security. Some have welcomed this development as a sign of a vibrant civil society in Africa. It may well be that. However, before we begin to idealize this phenomenon, it is well to remind ourselves that whatever else it is, it is first and foremost a child of necessity, of desperation even.

The rise of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and associated development NGOs closely corresponds with the desire of the international agencies to shrink Third World states as part of the overall effort to lower the social wage. The result is an ongoing conflict between technicist, apolitical development interventions on the one hand, and the people-centered strategies (and militant tactics) of mass-oriented social movements of the oppressed on the other hand. Thus by the early 1990s, two out of five World Bank projects involved NGOs (including well over half in Africa), and in projects involving population, nutrition, primary health care, and small enterprise, the ratio rose to more than four out of five.

For this reason, there was a more rapid initial acceptance of NGOs and CBOs within the broad configuration of forces that *reproduce*, however weakly, African capitalism. Donors and reformist international NGOs could justify more resource flows and international conferencing; African ruling elites could *appear* more tolerant; neoliberal agencies could get on with the job of shrinking African states, now supported by the mopping up role of NGOs which more 'efficiently' rolled out the tattered safety net; and the NGO petit-bourgeoisie garnered hard-currency salaries, 4x4 vehicles and a certain degree of local prestige. These elements gave paternalistic African rulers greater breathing space, and when NGOs became an occasional nuisance, repressive legislation and registration processes usually did the trick.

Thus by 2000, African civil society outside the networks mentioned above had mainly been civilized, tamed and channeled. In this context, geopolitical maneuvers were solely between African capitals, Paris, Washington and London, although another new player, Pretoria, would have to be accounted for.

Resisting homegrown neoliberalism

Thabo Mbeki and his team began exhibiting a self-confidence that included a unique noblesse oblige. Trade minister Alec Erwin, for instance, openly expressed Pretoria's grandest ambitions to his parliamentary colleagues, (ironically) just prior to the Seattle round of the World Trade Organization:

We will soon have to give leadership not just to the process of the development of our own economies [in the developing world] but to the equitable development of the world economy. The political capacity to do this and the will to do it in the G7 is weakening despite the power of the social democrats.

In the wake of defeating apartheid, the ANC--in particular--must dramatically expand its objectives, Mbeki told the Port Elizabeth gathering in July 2000:

When we decided to address the critical question of the ANC as an agent of change, the central subject of this National General Council, we sought to examine ourselves as an agent of change to end the apartheid legacy in our own country. We also sought to examine the question of what contribution we could make to the struggle to end apartheid globally.

With rhetoric of this sort--labeled 'talk left, act right' in South Africa--it is understandable that some naive international progressives tried reaching out a bit to African leaders. In mid-2000, activists from Global Exchange, Ruckus Society and other groups (organized by a small group with excellent email contacts, United Peoples) concluded in a letter to Nigerian ruler Olusegun Obasanjo, the convenor of the Group of 77 Third World leaders who had recently met in Havana, that alliances with Southern rulers are possible:

With regard to the fundamental debt cancellation and fair trade issues, the G77 summit in Havana once again confirmed the accordance between the views of the G77 and the new worldwide anti-globalization movement that protested WTO/IMF/WB in Seattle and Washington. A cooperation between the two parties therefore would seem appropriate in order to achieve our common goals.

But this came to naught, as Obasanjo and Mbeki looked for relief instead to sites of power, not to disruptive leftwing groups with which they too experience regular friction. That much is clear from the South African experience, dating back to the mid-1990s. Consider a 1996 African National Congress discussion document authored by very senior politicians which concluded with these lines:

The democratic movement must resist the illusion that a democratic South Africa can be insulated from the processes which characterize world development. It must resist the thinking that this gives South Africa a possibility to elaborate solutions which are in discord with the rest of the world, but which can be sustained by virtue of a voluntarist South African experiment of a special type, a world of anti-Apartheid campaigners, who, out of loyalty to us, would support and sustain such voluntarism.

The struggle over access to anti-retroviral AIDS medicines was, activists insist, precisely such a 'voluntarist experiment.' It was, indeed, *only* sustained by virtue of appeal, by local activists, to 'a world of anti-Apartheid campaigners' who 'out of loyalty,' militantly demonstrated against Big Pharma in March 2001 and forced 39 corporations to retreat from their patent-protection lawsuit (Pharmaceuticals Manufacturers Association v. Nelson Mandela).

Ironically, speaking to an audience of social-democratic activists gathered in Stockholm in mid-2000, Mbeki was resolute in his commitment to nurture challenges from the grassroots:

All of us, but most certainly those of us who come from Africa, are very conscious of the importance that all tyrants attach to the demobilization of the masses of the people. At all times, these tyrants seek to incite, bribe or intimidate the people into a state of quiescence and submissiveness. As the movement all of us present here represent, surely our task must be to encourage these masses, where they are oppressed, to rebellion, to assert the vision fundamental to all progressive movements that--the people shall govern!

Within two years, however, he had changed his tune entirely, as Africa-wide protest emerged against his New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

In 2002, Nepad was the most discussed initiative in Africa. It won endorsement at a UN heads-of-state summit in September 2002, shortly after being one of the main agenda items at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. Weeks earlier, Nepad won crucial official state and business endorsements at the June summit of the G8 leaders (the Group of Eight main industrial powers) in Alberta, Canada, immediately followed by the southern African gathering of the World Economic Forum in Durban, and the July launch of the African Union (replacement for the Organization of African Unity), also in Durban. Nepad evolved under conditions of secrecy, in close contact with the G8 in Okinawa in 2000 and Genoa in 2001, the Bretton Woods Institutions throughout, and international capital via the World Economic Forum at Davos in 2001 and New York in 2002. The program has gone by various names, including the African Renaissance (1996-2000), the Millennium Africa Recovery Plan (2000-July 2001) and the New African Initiative (July-October 2001).

The document's core premise is that poverty in Africa can be cured, if only the world elite gives the continent a chance. Nepad suggests that 'The continued marginalization of Africa from the globalization process and the social exclusion of the vast majority of its peoples constitute a serious threat to global stability.' The argument depends upon a depoliticized view of globalization: 'We readily admit that globalization is a product of scientific and technological advances, many of which have been market-driven.' Moreover, 'The locomotive for these major advances is the highly industrialized nations.' In reality, these three arguments are better put by reversing the logic. Africa's continued poverty and degradation ('marginalization') are a direct *outcome* of globalization, not a lack of globalization. Technology lubricates but does not *cause* international economic dynamics. The advanced capitalist world has itself witnessed lower profits and growth since the 1970s, and the dot.com craze is only one indication of technology's *failure* to resolve economic crisis.

Without a strong analysis of structural adjustment, Nepad is destined to repeat the failures associated with existing institutions and processes. As a result, progressive civil society organizations in Africa have repeatedly expressed skepticism about Nepad's main strategies:

- privatization, especially of infrastructure such as water, electricity, telecoms and transport, will fail because of insufficient buying power of African consumers;
- more insertion of Africa into the world economy will simply worsen fast-declining terms of trade, given that African countries produce so many cash crops and minerals whose global markets are glutted;
- multi-party elections are held, typically, between variants of neoliberal parties, as in most countries, and cannot act as a veil for the lack of participatory democracy required to give legitimacy to so many failing African states;
- grand visions of information and communications technology are hopelessly unrealistic

considering the lack of simple reliable electricity across the continent; and

- South Africa's self-mandate for peacekeeping gives no peace of mind, in the wake of Pretoria's ongoing purchase of US\$5 billion worth of offensive weaponry and its unhappy record of regional military interventions.

Likewise in areas of economic reform, such as debt, financial flows and foreign investment, Nepad offers only the *status quo*. Instead of promoting debt cancellation, as do virtually all serious reformers, the Nepad strategy is to 'support existing poverty reduction initiatives at the multilateral level, such as the Comprehensive Development Framework of the World Bank and the Poverty Reduction Strategy approach linked to the Highly Indebted Poor Country debt relief initiative'. Only after trying these discredited strategies, replete with neoliberal conditions such as further privatization, would African leaders 'seek recourse' through Nepad. Yet Malawi's 2002 famine occurred because the country's grain stocks were sold following IMF advice to first repay commercial bankers, a telling indicator of power relations.

Nepad's solution to the foreign investment drought is consistent with international rhetoric about Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in privatized infrastructure: 'Establish and nurture PPPs as well as grant concessions towards the construction, development and maintenance of ports, roads, railways and maritime transportation... With the assistance of sector-specialized agencies, put in place policy and legislative frameworks to encourage competition'. However, most infrastructure is of a 'natural monopoly' type, for which competition is unsuitable: roads and railroads, telephone landlines, water and sewage reticulation systems, electricity transmission and distribution, ports and the like. Nepad cannot make a case for competition in these areas. There is, in contrast, an extremely strong case, based on public-good features of infrastructure discussed in previous chapters, for *state* control and non-profit operation. Most noticeably, privatization of infrastructure usually prevents cross-subsidization to enhance affordability for poor consumers.

In all these respects, Nepad's core arguments reflect residual neoliberalism. Just as disturbing, the potentials for democracy, good governance and genuine participation by civil society through Nepad appear slim. A succinct critique of Nepad was issued by an Accra meeting of the Council for Development and Social Science Research in Africa (Codesria) and Third World Network-Africa (TWN-Africa) in April 2002. According to the meeting's resolution:

The most fundamental flaws of Nepad, which reproduce the central elements of the World Bank's *Can Africa Claim the Twenty-first Century?* and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's *Compact for African Recovery*, include:

- (a) the neoliberal economic policy framework at the heart of the plan, and which repeats the structural adjustment policy packages of the preceding two decades and overlooks the disastrous effects of those policies;
- (b) the fact that in spite of its proclaimed recognition of the central role of the African people to the plan, the African people have not played any part in the conception, design and formulation of the Nepad;
- (c) notwithstanding its stated concerns for social and gender equity, it adopts the social and economic measures that have contributed to the marginalization of women;
- (d) that in spite of claims of African origins, its main targets are foreign donors, particularly in the G8;
- (e) its vision of democracy is defined by the needs of creating a functional market;
- (f) it under-emphasizes the external conditions fundamental to Africa's developmental crisis, and thereby does not promote any meaningful measure to manage and restrict the effects of this environment on Africa development efforts. On the contrary, the engagement that it seeks with institutions and processes like the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO, the United States Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, the Cotonou Agreement, will further lock Africa's economies disadvantageously into this environment;
- (g) the means for mobilisation of resources will further the disintegration of African economies that we have witnessed at the hands of structural adjustment and WTO rules.

Codesria and TWN-Africa are not alone. During the first half of 2002, African social movements, the largest South African civil society organization (the Congress of SA Trade Unions, or Cosatu), and leading African intellectuals analyzed Nepad and issued public statements that decry the document's lack of participation and consultation, its orientation to Western economic interests and its inability to make good on governance claims. There can be no doubt that Nepad will become a point of unification amongst progressives in African civil society:

- Progressive civil society organizations have traditionally demanded that all policies, programs and projects of government be conducted in a transparent, participatory and respectful manner. Nepad's formulation failed on all accounts.
- Progressive civil society organizations have also traditionally provided rights-based advocacy that takes basic needs as human rights. At a philosophical foundational level, Nepad fails here, and instead promotes market-related strategies and privatized infrastructure even with respect to basic infrastructural services.
- Moreover, progressive civil society organizations have opposed the international neoliberal agenda of free markets, transnational corporate dominance of the South, lower government budgetary spending (under the rubric of alleged macroeconomic stability), and the lowering of standards for the sake of foreign investors. In terms of content, Nepad fails on these points.
- Finally, progressive civil society organizations have most forcefully promoted good governance and democracy. While Nepad gives lip-service to these ideals, it fails to take them sufficiently seriously such that obvious violations--e.g., of recent elections in Congo-Brazzaville, Zambia and Zimbabwe--are publicly criticized and punished. As one of Nepad's own co-authors, Senegalese president Wade put it, the leaders of Africa, including Nepad coauthors in South Africa and Nigeria, appear to have a 'trade union' approach that gives mutual support and solidarity to dictators and tyrants.

As if to amplify the latter point, Mbeki announced at the end of October 2002 that politics would ultimately be withdrawn from Nepad's African Peer Review Mechanism--which in any case was already a voluntary procedure (that would have been ignored by the likes of Mugabe, Gaddafi and other tyrants)--and shunted over to the (suspect) African Union. Reflecting the real nature of power relations, Canadian prime minister Jean Chretien insisted that Mbeki restore political peer reviews, which the latter did, obviously half-heartedly. It was a telling incident, emblematic of the awesome contradictions associated with the continuation of neoliberal macroeconomic policies and closely related authoritarian politics in Africa. But so too is opposition growing, in what promises to be the main African class/gender/geographical struggle of the early 21st century.

The first public protest against Nepad occurred at the July 2002 World Economic Forum regional meeting in Durban, where anti-apartheid poet Dennis Brutus, acting secretary of Jubilee South Africa, led more than a hundred demonstrators into horse-charging policemen. Brutus held up a sign for national television viewers: 'No Kneepad!', and promised more protests six weeks later at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. As those protests neared, Mbeki's main hatchet-man, minister Essop Pahad, wrote a telling letter to the country's largest newspaper, the *Sowetan*, ending in these lines:

Brutus disappeared without trace from the anti-apartheid struggle many years before 1994, and re-emerged in the

last few years to hurl invective at the democratic government and programs for Africa's recovery. However, to the extent that on some issues such as eradicating global inequality, we may agree, perhaps there is hope for co-operation. Welcome home Dennis the Menace! Hope this time you will stay, the better to appreciate that we cannot not allow our modest achievements to be wrecked through anarchy. Opponents of democracy seek such destruction. But if you intend once more to leave for demonstrations elsewhere, we can only retort: et tu Brute! Good luck.

No doubt to Pahad's regret, the spirit of demonstrations elsewhere--Seattle, Washington, Prague, Quebec City, Genoa, New York--that Brutus has graced came home with him to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, as the 78 year old former Robben Island prisoner welcomed more than mere traces of anti-global-apartheid activism. As Trevor Ngwane notes, the South African ruling party's attempt a week later to gather support for Pretoria's plan to 'eradicate global inequality' (via strengthening multilateral financial and trade agencies) was 'a dismal flop'--and Pahad himself was ejected from a platform where he desired to speak to an angry crowd of 20,000 anti-Nepad marchers.

Within a month, Mbeki was back to a paranoid-defensive mode in opening the September 27 ANC policy conference. Attacking the 'left sectarian factions' who allegedly 'occupy the same trench with the anti-socialist forces which they claim are their sworn enemies', Mbeki warned his followers that 'this ultra-left works to implant itself within our ranks. It strives to abuse our internal democratic processes to advance its agenda, against policies agreed by our most senior decision-making structures'.

Those policies, failing in South Africa and across the continent, would draw increasing opposition. But regardless of local-level political dynamics, the larger lessons for the global anti-capitalist movement are becoming obvious. Suffice to say, imperialism in its current form--a global crisis of capitalist accumulation centered in hyperactive financial and trade circuits, intensified destruction of the environment, reduction of the social wage and community, the shift of the burden of failed states especially to women, the rise of dubious NGO activities, and the accompanying geopolitical re-arrangements (especially the rescaling of many political-economic responsibilities to world-state institutions overly influenced by gun-toting, neoliberal US administrations)--cannot be reversed in the near future. Suffice to say, neither can much progress be anticipated from capitalism's most recent project: emanating from Pretoria and Abuja with guiding hands in Washington and applause from Davos, a homegrown and only slightly modified neoliberalism that looks suspiciously like subimperialism.

It is here that *The Economist* is helpful, namely in citing the high ideological stakes associated with the interpretation of Mugabe's failure: 'What sets him apart from other anti-globalizers, however, is that he has been able to put his ideas into practice.' That is why, it is becoming ever more clear, African anti-capitalism must not be merely about rejecting the international character of neoliberalism, but moreover must confront its local champions, state agents like the Nepad champions, no matter how much they confuse matters by Talking Left Acting Right. And most of all, African anti-capitalism must confront the system's internal, systemic logic: the commodification of everything. No matter the continual reversals, momentum to take up these challenges is now greater than at any time in memory.

A tale of two WSSD demos

by Trevor Ngwane²

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The anti-capitalist line was drawn in Johannesburg when, on the day the heads of state arrived on August 31 for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD--or W\$\$\$D in popular placard slang) they were met by two marches. The first march was 20-25,000 strong, and demanded that the WSSD be shut closed. The second, smaller march (of roughly 1,500) was led by the ANC and its Tripartite Alliance partners, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). The clash between the two marches on the same day and on the same route was a historic and an unambiguous contest. Victory went to the red march. The ANC/Alliance's 'yellow' march served to crystallize the issues for the masses, and it exposed the ANC government's class collaborationist role in world politics.

The red marchers accused the WSSD of being 'a meeting of hypocrites, of the rich and powerful', who could not solve world poverty because they are part of the problem. The multinational corporations only want profits and cannot provide 'water for all' or indeed any kind of 'sustainable development' because when they take over public services they destroy jobs and increase prices thus robbing the poor of access.

The main line of division was the question of how to relate to the government in Pretoria. The red marchers defined the ANC as part of the class enemy because of its role as driver of the capitalist agenda in South Africa. The ANC is implementing anti-worker policies such as privatization, disconnection of services, evictions and macroeconomic policies designed to stunt growth in the name of monetary stability. Those who marched with the ANC marched on the grounds of historical loyalties and the claim that Mbeki is indeed opposed to what he calls 'global apartheid'. The protesters, in contrast, defied the ANC argument that Mbeki's strategy of working from within capitalist parameters, locally and globally, can advance the cause of the poor.

Both marches started in Alexandra township and ended 12 kilometers later in Sandton. The former is a black working class township, a depressing apartheid creation still characterized by overcrowding, poverty, squalor and a lack of basic services to this day. Sandton is the richest suburb in Africa, home of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and many big company headquarters. The marches highlighted the contrast between these two worlds; one rich the other poor, one for the bosses the other for workers. The red march aimed to unite the working class against its exploiters while the ANC march believed that through co-operation between rich and poor a solution could be found for the poor.

The red march was organized by the Social Movements Indaba (SMI), a special anti-WSSD coalition consisting of organizations and movements who felt that the world's working class would get nothing from the summit. At the last minute the Landless Peoples' Movement (LPM) joined the SMI and the banner of the march was changed to Social Movements United.

Central to the SMI was the Anti-Privatization Forum (APF), a campaign uniting struggles against electricity and water cut-offs, evictions, forced removals of squatter communities, retrenchments and other capitalist attacks on South African urban working class communities associated with privatization. The SMI also included the Palestinian Solidarity Committee, Jubilee South Africa and numerous marchers representing movements and organizations inside the country and from abroad such as the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development, the Malawi Economic Justice Network, Lesotho Dam Survivors, the French group ATTAC, Via Campesina, etc. The LPM represented rural communities fighting against farm evictions and for land for the landless in a country where less than 2% of the land has been redistributed to black peasants and the rural proletariat since the ANC took state power in 1994.

The SMI march represented the coming of age of the 'new' anti-capitalist movements in South Africa and claimed a direct link with the international mobilisations such as those that took place in Seattle and Genoa. Some have honored the event by calling it the A31 mobilisation. The day was a great success even though it did not 'shut down' the WSSD as had been threatened by organizers. That this march took place at all was a victory after the South African government had initially banned it fearing that it would expose Mbeki's feet of clay on his homeground.

The red march revealed Mbeki's Achilles heel: his lack of support at home. Can he speak for Africa when social movements in his own country march against him? How is Nepad good for Africa when South Africans do not support it? This paradox was not lost on Mbeki, and he initially tried everything to stop the anti-WSSD march. The application for the march was formally turned down and the government suggested that it would only allow a strictly controlled march in a pre-determined route on a 1.8 km stretch in Sandton. Initially, the ANC decided that no one must march from Alexandra because that is where the working class that Mbeki betrays lives. The Minister of Police and SACP chairperson Charles Nqakula appeared on national TV banging his fist on the table saying the police would clamp down on those who posed a security risk to international guests and heads of state. Everyone wondered why the marchers had to be kept away from Alexandra but allowed to Sandton where the VIPs were going to be. The SMI coalition did not waver and insisted that it would march from Alexandra to Sandton with or without the authorities' permission.

This stalemate was broken, ironically, on the evening of 24 August when Pretoria overreached with state repression, in the glare of the world's cameras. A candlelight march of the SMI, led by high profile anti-capitalist activists such as Vandana Shiva, Naomi Klein, Maude Barlow and Oscar Olivera, was violently disrupted by police recklessly throwing eight percussion grenades into the crowd and injuring at least three international visitors. The 800 marchers had planned to march to John Vorster Square, a police station notorious for deaths in detention during apartheid days. Activists from the LPM and the APF were being held there after public demonstrations held a week earlier. The marchers were calling for the release of all detainees and an end to state repression, and planned a symbolic renaming of the police station to Thabo Mbeki Square to remind the world of the government's resort to apartheid methods to deal with opposition.

The attack on the peaceful, innocuous candlelight march caused an international stir, for it exposed Mbeki's latent authoritarian instincts. Public opinion made the government's stance untenable, and Mbeki had to allow the SMI's announced Alexandra-Sandton march. But having failed to use force, the ANC government turned to the use of duplicity. It announced another march from Alexandra to Sandton on the same day, billing its event the 'unity march'. Fidel Castro and Yassir Arafat were promised as speakers (though ultimately, neither came to South Africa). The ANC, Cosatu, the SACP, the South African Council of Churches and the South African Non-Governmental Coalition (Sangoco) were drawn in, marching under the banner of the WSSD Civil Society Secretariat, a clever move to lure the international NGOs participating in the parallel conference. They called on everyone to join their march and even sent envoys to their SMI rivals. But the SMI comrades refused to have anything to do with the yellow march on the grounds that they could not march alongside people who are part of the problem, namely, the ANC government.

All these machinations were widely reported so that when the day dawned on August 31, the stage was set for a public contest between civil society aligned to the new anti-capitalist, anti-ANC, anti-Nepad and anti-WSSD social movements and the ANC-led anti-establishment establishment. Clear lines of division were drawn, everyone had to choose: do you march with the anti-capitalists or with the pro-capitalists? International activists and NGOs were confronted with this choice. Many late night meetings were held and there was no fence on which anyone could find a comfortable space to sit. Could you be anti-imperialist but pro-ANC--for who, after all, are the agents of imperialism in Africa?

The SMI comrades were afforded a platform to explain their position to millions of people. They stood firm in their position despite vicious public attacks and intimidation by the ANC government—including visits to leading comrades by the South African National Intelligence Agency. Ultimately, it was the ‘unity march’ that could not stand the contradictions, for at the last minute Sangoco publicly withdrew from the ANC’s march on grounds of government’s bullying tactics.

The red march was a public humiliation for Mbeki and his neoliberal sponsors. His rally and counter-march were termed a ‘resounding flop’ by a Sunday newspaper. During the march many Alexandra residents joined in or cheered the anti-ANC marchers. A lasting impression of the march was the color red: most marchers wore the APF or the LPM red T-shirts, carried red flags and wore red headbands written ‘Phansi [down with] Gear! Phansi Nepad!’ The Growth Employment and Redistribution (Gear) plan is South Africa’s neo-liberal macro-economic policy. The march marked a change in the mood of the masses in South Africa. It showed that the new anti-capitalist movements have arrived in South Africa, are connecting with the problems facing the working class and will not be tamed, confused or co-opted. The march drew the line between the capitalists and the workers, between profits and people.

Millions saw the red march on TV and in the newspapers. Millions were inspired. Millions are asking questions. However, organized labor and the student sector were not part of the march. This is a serious challenge to the marchers who now need to ask the question why—and in coming months and years to turn to the millions of workers and youth who were not present at the march and win them over. The march also failed to shut down the WSSD. This shows that the anti-capitalist currents still need to gather more strength and a greater force of numbers to be able to impose the popular will on the bosses.

But there is no doubt that history was made on August 31, the day that working-class Alexandra and all our allies marched onto bourgeois Sandton and exposed the collaborationist agenda of the ANC government. The main lesson was that there is no solution for workers under capitalism.