

# The 'other' working class

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## Who/what is the working class?

Historically, the working class (proletariat) – both in relation to the concept and lived reality of class structure/belonging under capitalism, as well as within dominant interpretations of classical Marxist theory - has been seen/treated in general terms as predominately constitutive of industrial workers and in more specific terms, as constitutive of organised workers in the formal capitalist economy.<sup>1</sup> As a result, those whose work and social existence resides outside of the formal, wage-labouring parameters of the capitalist economy have largely been considered/ treated, in both theoretical and political-organisational terms, as a 'lumpen proletariat', separate from the working class proper and thus not strategically and organisationally central to, the class struggles waged by the 'real' working class.

This 'inheritance', both in general terms but also with specific reference to working class and left organisational forces in South Africa, needs to be jettisoned. Not only is it theoretically anachronistic but in the practical realm of contemporary class struggle it continues to unnecessarily divide the working class and weaken the anti-capitalist struggles it wages.

If we go to the core theoretical source - i.e., Marx and Engels - then it is clear that their own conception and understanding of the proletariat was derived from the dominant, industrial composition of the working class (mostly in Europe) at the time. Thus, the proletariat, at the time of writing of the *Communist Manifesto* is that "class of modern wage labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live". However, in relation to what happens to this working class as capitalism develops, Marx/Engels also clearly understood that its composition would necessarily change: "The demand for men necessarily governs the production of men as of every other commodity ... should supply greatly

exceed demand, a section of the workers sinks into beggary and starvation ... the worker's existence is thus brought under the same condition as the existence of every other commodity".<sup>ii</sup> Simply put, and as Marx posited on numerous occasions in his writings, "the condition of the proletariat should not be considered within the narrow historical circumstances of its emergence".<sup>iii</sup>

Further, for Marx and Engels the 'lumpen proletariat' specifically referred to, "that passively rotten mass thrown off by the lowest layers of old [i.e. pre and early capitalist] society".<sup>iv</sup> In purely objective, historical terms vis-à-vis the subsequent development of capitalism, such a 'lumpen proletariat' ceased to exist a long time ago. But also, on the subjective terrain of the development of human agency and thus the struggles of those oppressed and exploited under changing capitalist relations of production and reproduction, it is both completely misleading and self-evidently patronising to ascribe attributes such as "unproductive", "passive", "scum" and "dangerous" to those whose labour/work and life activity are not to be found within the boundaries of the formal economic and institutionalised relations of capitalist work/production. In the context of a now historically developed/changed capitalism, the very idea and existence of a 'lumpen proletariat' is theoretically and practically nonsensical.

Unfortunately, large numbers of 'marxists' and the majority of those at the intellectual and organisational head of traditional working class parties/movements, have chosen to ignore the historic locality and foresight of their theoretical mentors.<sup>v</sup> They have thus continued to argue and act as though the composition of the working class, and thus the strategic and tactical understanding of, and approach to, its organisation and struggles, reflects a societal situation that effectively disappeared decades ago.

The reality is, and has been for some time, that the composition of the working class (proletariat) has changed. Today, the industrial working class - whether in South Africa or globally - is no longer the dominant form of the working class as a whole. It has, "been displaced from its privileged position in the capitalist economy and its hegemonic position in the class composition of the proletariat".<sup>vi</sup> Likewise, waged labour long ago lost its claim to be the only form of productive labour (if ever it had such a claim). The reproduction of capital, reflected directly in

the reproduction of labour/work is not simply a by-product of, and peripheral to, the production of capital (and thus of waged labour) - it is one and the same movement, if differentially 'applied' and experienced. In other words, the working class is not reducible to those who have 'jobs', who sell their labour power within the formal capitalist economy, nor to those therein who have organised themselves into associations/trade unions.

What we now have, and have had for some time, is a working class (proletariat) that is, in both the objective and subjective realms, constitutive of those "whose labour [work] is directly or indirectly exploited by and subjected to capitalist ... discipline and relations of production ... and reproduction". This does not mean that the working class is some kind of "homogenous mass" devoid of different strata and work/life experience. "Some labour is waged, some is not; some labour is restricted to within the factory walls, some is dispersed across the unbounded social terrain; some labour is accorded minimal value, some is exalted to the pinnacle of the capitalist economy."<sup>vii</sup> Likewise, "any work context involves an economic dimension (production of things), a political dimension (production of social relations) and an ideological dimension (production of an experience of those relations). These three dimensions are inseparable .... The so-called economic realm is inseparable from its political and ideological effects ... There is no 'objective notice of class prior to its appearance on the stage of history. Acting on the historical stage has to be conceived of as a moment in the constitution of class. Thus, class becomes the combined effect of a set of economic, political and ideological structures found in all arenas of social activity.'<sup>viii</sup>

This is theoretically and in more contemporary practical terms, consistent with the basic ideas and arguments of Marx on the historic and holistic 'nature' of the working class (proletariat) and its struggles. In his preface to the 1883 German Edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, Engels confirms this:

"The basic thought running through the Manifesto -- that economic production, and the structure of society of every historical epoch necessarily arising therefrom, constitute the foundation for the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently (ever since the dissolution of the primeval communal ownership of land) all history has been a history of class struggles, of struggles between exploited and exploiting, between dominated and

dominating classes at various stages of social evolution; that this struggle, however, has now reached a stage where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it (the bourgeoisie), without at the same time forever freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression, class struggles -- this basic thought belongs solely and exclusively to Marx.”<sup>ix</sup>

What should be clear from this brief exegesis on the working class is that (the development of) capitalism, combined with the continuous and varied struggles waged within it, against it, and for an alternative to it, have produced a newly constituted working class in our contemporary world. This is no more so the case than in South Africa.

If we take ourselves and the world of labour and class struggle around us seriously, then the working class which exists today must be seen/treated as constitutive of all those who “are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live”, whatever the specific form which the “selling” takes, including those who “sink into beggary and starvation”.

### **The South African case**

When South Africa’s first ever one-person, one-vote elections in 1994 resulted in an overwhelming victory for the African National Congress (ANC), it was the South African working class that was at the forefront of celebrating the arrival of a new democracy. After all, the ANC and its liberation movement allies were now in political control of the state thanks to the votes of those – mostly to be found in the ranks of the working class - who had, throughout South Africa’s modern history, been denied the right of institutionalised democratic participation simply because of their racial categorisation.

Accompanying this however, there still remained a broad based (but ultimately mistaken) expectation amongst the working class that the new ANC state would immediately begin to pursue a more socialist - or at the least, radically redistributive - political economy. The basis upon which such expectation had been built derived from the militant, mass-based political and socio-economic struggles of that working class (predominately in the form of unions and civic/community organisations) since the mid-1980s, alongside the continued ‘socialist’ rhetoric

of the ANC itself.<sup>x</sup> This was despite the fact that the South African working class was itself already weakened, differentiated and divided as a result of the combined effects of a long-running capitalist crisis/recession and the apartheid state's divide-and-rule approach to the demands/struggles of unions as well as to those of the less easily controlled community/civic organisations.<sup>xi</sup>

Even if it had been long apparent to some that the ANC was never going to follow even a proto-socialist developmental path once in power<sup>xii</sup>, the bubble was clearly and publicly burst with the ANC state's 1996 unveiling of the neoliberal GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) macro-economic policy. The organisational groundwork for this rightward ideological shift of the ANC had been laid soon after the ANC's return from exile in early 1990. Instead of supporting and strengthening the plethora of working class organisations in black communities that had formed the backbone of the anti-apartheid and anti-capitalist struggles in the 1980s (along with unions), the ANC called on them to fold-up and become part of ANC branches or to join the newly launched South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO). Simultaneously, the ANC further formalised its political/organisational alliance with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the traditional 'party of the working class', the SACP, by setting up numerous (consultative) Alliance structures and drafting key leadership figures into its electoral list for all levels of government.

Consistent with the socio-political thrust of GEAR, the ANC government also set about forming national structures to give institutional form to its corporatist commitments. The National Economic, Development & Labour Council (NEDLAC) was formed, in which 'civil society' was represented by a 'development chamber' (consisting of chosen non-governmental organisations – NGOs – and community-based organisations - CBOs), a labour component (consisting of recognised/organised union federations) and a corporate component (consisting of representatives from capital/big business). At the same time, legislation was passed - e.g., the Non-Profit Act of 1997 - and institutions set-up like the Directorate of Non-Profit Organisations (which required NGOs/CBOs to officially register with the state), and the National Development Agency ("to direct financial resources to the sector").<sup>xiii</sup> All of this fit comfortably within the ANC government's push "for a more formalised civil society constituency as part of a

developmental model where formally organised groups participate in official structures to claim public resources” and where “the role of such organised groups is constructed along the lines of official government programmes, without space to contest the fundamentals of those programmes”.<sup>xiv</sup>

To their external discredit, both leaderships of both COSATU and the SACP eagerly bought into the ANC ‘nation building’ and ‘corporatist consensus’ sales pitch (rationalised by constant reference to the Stalinist era-inspired theory of the ‘national democratic revolution’), thus placing key components of working class forces in a classic strategic *cul-de-sac*. In other words, into a situation where the pursuit/advancement of an anti-capitalist struggle is effectively co-determined by capital itself and a state already wholly committed to securing the core interests of capital.

Cumulatively, these developments meant that by the mid-late 1990s the vast majority of what had previously constituted a politically vibrant working class that sustained the hope of millions for an anti-capitalist transformation of South African society, had effectively been neutered. Whether swallowed by the ANC, absorbed into other Tripartite Alliance structures, hobbled by the co-option of key leaders into the state and associated corporatist institutions or starved of human and material resources, the bottom line was that the political and organisational terrain for active and militant resistance to the ANC’s creeping neoliberalism, elite deal making and wholesale acceptance of the institutionalised framework of bourgeois democracy had been contained.

The practical result in the realm of ‘economic development’ were massive job losses (for those members of the South African working class who had been fortunate enough to be employed), the ‘experience’ being accompanied by all the attendant social and economic devastation on already poor families and communities. To make matters worse, the ANC state also implemented basic needs policies that effectively turned such needs/services into market commodities, to be bought and sold on the basis of private ownership and the profit motive.

The logical result of these developments was a precipitous decline in the overall living standards of the working class simultaneous to a further material and social stratification within it. Those who lost their formal jobs (alongside their families/networks) and/or whose labour/work became even more precarious were hit hardest by the huge escalations in the costs of basic services and a concomitant increase in the use of cost-recovery mechanisms such as water and electricity cut-offs. By the turn of the century, millions had experienced cut-offs and evictions as the result of the ANC's neo-liberal orgy<sup>xv</sup> and were also being devastated by an HIV-AIDs epidemic, catalysed by official denialism and the state's refusal to provide decommodified access to anti-retrovirals. As if all of this was not enough, the ANC state's capitalist-friendly land policies, which ensured that apartheid land ownership patterns remained virtually intact, meant that South Africa's long-suffering rural population continued to taste the ever more bitter fruits of labour exploitation and landlessness.

It was the cumulative result of such experiences, combined with the failure of the main traditional, organised working class forces - COSATU and the SACP - as well as 'civic' structures like SANCO to lead and sustain counter mobilisations and active class resistance, that eventually saw the rise of new social movements/community organisations<sup>xvi</sup>, at first in the main urban centres and then also in some rural areas.

From their inception, these 'new' working class forces that emerged outside of, and often in consequent opposition to the politics of the 'traditional' organisations of the working class allied to the ANC, have been largely ignored, treated with thinly disguised contempt and regularly, actively opposed by the SACP and COSATU. Despite the fact that these social movements/community organisations have been subject to a consistent state campaign of rhetorical vitriol and physical assaults,<sup>xvii</sup> the various leaderships of the SACP, COSATU and other ANC 'civil society' allies, have often given tacit/silent support to the state's actions and have consistently failed to seriously engage with, politically support and provide material solidarity to their struggles against the state's service delivery policies and suppression of political dissent. Even during the numerous public and private sector workers' strikes that have taken place over the last several years, there has been little, if any, effort and/or practical work by

COSATU and the SACP around linking union struggles for better wages/working conditions and those of poor communities around basic services and freedom of expression.

This transitional rupture within the organised forces of the South African working class is unfortunate, but not surprising. The hostage politics of COSATU and the SACP, now defined more than ever by the embrace of individuals and factions, has virtually institutionalised this rupture precisely because the consequent positioning of the SACP and COSATU demands that they play the role of organisational and ideological gatekeepers of working class forces in South Africa. The practical goal of this is to politically and organisationally control the ‘anti-ANC’ politics and mobilisations of the new movements/organisations, so as to ensure that these forces do not pose any ongoing or future threat to the political/ideological dominance of the SACP/COSATU.

This approach also lends support to the theoretically and practically false position that the core composition of the South African working class continues to be made up of those who have formal jobs within the capitalist economy (whether in the private or public sectors) and provides further credence to the claim that it is COSATU and the SACP who are the ‘natural’ leaders of the working class. These are the main reasons why the SACP and COSATU find the ‘other’ working class to be a ‘problem’, instead of seeing allies and commonalities as a means to build a viable and grounded anti-capitalist movement.

It has been such an organisational and ideological gate-keeping role that has ensured the possibilities of a united working class capable of fundamentally contesting the neoliberal state as well as broader power relations within society as a whole, have remained still-borne. Despite their radical rhetoric, COSATU and the SACP have been at pains to stress that their opposition to state policies, and critiques of the ANC itself, are “not challenging the ANC”<sup>xviii</sup> and have nothing to do with those of the new movements/struggles. They have also actively sought to prevent rank-and file structures/members from working with such movements and struggles. Dinga Sikwebu, a leading official in one of COSATU’s largest unions also states the case: “The leadership and conservative layers [in COSATU] have something to preserve in the existing status quo ... COSATU gains something from the ANC – status and all the other perks ... whilst



the ANC guarantees all those things, this relationship between the ANC and the union movements will always be there because they feed into each other ... these movements threaten this political relationship ...".<sup>xix</sup>

Despite the obvious organisational weaknesses and politically incipient nature of the new movements/struggles, they broadly represent those who increasingly desire to push beyond the enforced boundaries of institutionalised bourgeois democracy, who are actively engaged in grassroots struggles in opposition to neoliberal state policies and for the basic necessities of life, and who pursue an independent, mass-based mobilisation as the only meaningful and realistic option for resisting global neoliberalism and planting the seeds for an ideological and organisational working class alternative to existing political party/union politics. While these movements do not represent some kind of homogenous entity (as is the case with the South African working class as a whole), and while there has been, and continues to be, substantive organisational differences and political/ideological debates within their ranks, they have become inextricably bound together by the levelling content and common forms of the neoliberal onslaught, both nationally and, to a lesser extent, internationally<sup>xx</sup>.

Linked to this, is a stark, but often ignored, reality that impacts on the ability of the new movements to be part of strategically unified working class. The social base of such movements has remained dominated by the 'other' working class – i.e., casualised workers, those in the 'informal sector', the unemployed and more particularly, unemployed women. In classical 'left' parlance, for these movements, an extended and flexible 'community' of work and life has come to replace the formal 'workplace' as the epicentre of organising collective resistance to capitalist political, productive and social relations. However, since the vast majority of those in the kind of 'community' that constitute these movements represent different strata within the working class, strata whose labour/work cannot be formally 'measured' and thus organised on a more explicit 'capital-labour' relational nexus, they have been mostly seen/treated as secondary to the material and political/organisational positionality of formal, organised workers. This has made the possibilities of enjoining practical and political working class solidarities and struggles extremely difficult.

## Working class unity?

“The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air.”

From the *Communist Manifesto*

The last several decades of working class politics in South Africa (and indeed, globally), has shown quite clearly that the theoretical and strategic sureties of a pre-defined characterisation/ understanding of the working class combined with a classical vanguardism have failed, precisely because the presumed composition and class consciousness to which such a politics adheres has proven to be historically fundamentally flawed. For those in need of confirmation, we only have to look at the consistent crisis of socialism, of the working class movement, that is now almost a century old. In South Africa, the present disunity within, and weakness of, the working class is much more than simply a question of the recent ‘collapse of communism’, the impact of the neoliberal onslaught and/or the differentiated responses to the ongoing crisis of the capitalist system.

At its core, it has to do with preconceived and prefigured understandings of the working class itself and a parallel mode of strategic thinking that fetishises a stagiest conceptualisation of an ever-expanding productive base as the prerequisite for any fundamental, change in socio-political relations beyond capitalism. In the words of Edward Thompson: “While one form which opposition to capitalism takes is in direct economic antagonism – resistance to exploitation whether as producer or consumer – another form is, exactly, resistance to capitalism’s innate tendency to reduce all human relations to economic definitions. The two are inter-related of course: but it is by no means certain which may prove to be, in the end, more revolutionary”.<sup>xxi</sup>

In South Africa (as elsewhere), attempts to merely reconstruct the historically determined forms of working class ‘vanguards’ – whether through accessing state power or through independent class struggle - have led, and will continue to lead, straight into political/organisational

sectarianism and ideological absolutism. The all too evident result has been a marked failure to capture the political imagination of the working class and thus to generally limit consequent struggle to narrowly defined understandings of production and micro-material related socio-political relations.

Nonetheless, we are now in an 'epoch' in South Africa, and in many other places globally, in which the struggles of the working class are increasingly, and necessarily, framed by an anti-capitalist spirit, if not content. It is therefore necessary not only to catalyse such struggles through practical involvement and varying forms of political/ideological impetus, but to win the idea, politically and ideologically, that what is desperately needed (indeed demanded) is the unity of working class struggles and organisation.

What is important in this regard is how we understand the political character and organisational sustainability of the present ANC/COSATU/SACP alliance and thus, the best strategic approach to moving working class politics and class struggle forward. The very basis, historically, for the maintenance of a sustainable political alliance between unions and (ostensibly progressive) political parties that have hold of state power is the parallel maintenance of both a politically malleable union leadership and expanding benefits for a meaningful threshold of unionised workers. On both counts, the situation of such an alliance in the South African context is taking serious strain and there is absolutely no reason to believe that this will be turned around simply because of a leadership change within the ANC and/or within the state itself.

What is also happening is that the wage and working conditions gains of all but the most highly paid unionised workers are being seriously eroded by the combined effects of the state's neoliberal policies and the displacement of the current crisis of capitalism onto workers . In respect of the 'other' working class, the impacts are being felt even more acutely. Nonetheless, unionism is ingrained, politics is not. As such, for there to be any meaningful move towards a unity of both experience and response, a strategy is needed that essentially forces unionised workers to respond, politically and organisationally, to intensifying mass struggles from the very grassroots/communities that they are also part of. As long as the struggles which are presently driven by the 'other' working class remain in the political shadows – i.e., in terms of their

political militancy, their social reach and their potential to cause serious breaches in support for a capitalist-friendly ANC and the state it controls – unionised workers will feel little pressure to translate their own dissatisfaction with the political ‘delivery’ of the ANC-led alliance, into serious consideration of explicitly working class political and organisational alternatives.

Such a strategy does not hinge itself on whether there is a break in the alliance. Rather, it can begin to lay the political and organisational groundwork for a new kind of working class politics by linking/uniting - ideologically and organisationally - the ongoing struggles of various layers of the ‘other’ working class (in urban and/or rural poor communities etc.) with the struggles of organised workers (mainly in/through COSATU). In so doing, it can expose the political and strategic sterility of an approach that seeks to ‘transform’ capitalism and an ANC that has embedded, and championed it, within South Africa’s post-apartheid political economy. This can be a major step forward to a real and meaningful working class unity, as opposed to the present state of false unity based on spurious claims to a de-classed, common ‘national democratic revolution’.<sup>xxii</sup>

For the working class in South Africa to move out of its present *stasis* will require a politically qualitative and organisationally quantitative advancement of the very real, anti-capitalist struggles of that working class, not predominately in the intellectual and organisational capabilities of a select ‘working class vanguard’ or in ‘capturing the heart and soul’ of the ANC . The advance can be extended by taking the idea of, and debate around, new forms of working class political organisation directly into the heat of practical struggles taking place (and that are only going to get more intense). In this way, there becomes the possibility that both unionised workers and those in social movements/community organisations, through their own self activity, combined with certain degrees of intellectual and activist 'push', can prepare the ground for what can be a truly meaningful 'path' to political, ideological and organisational unity and independence for the working class.

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<sup>i</sup> This has been the case for the majority of ‘marxist literature’ as well as within the dominant streams of socialist/communist parties, throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup>, all of the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

<sup>ii</sup> From the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* - <http://www.anu.edu.au/polsci/marx/classics/manifesto.html>

<sup>iii</sup> Shlomo Avineri (1988), ‘The Proletariat’ in Tom Bottomore (ed), *Interpretations of Marx* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell), p. 238.

<sup>iv</sup> *Manifesto of the Communist Party ...*

<sup>v</sup> Although it must be mentioned that Marx and Engels failed to fully grasp the dialectic between the development of the different (and predominantly racial) components of the world’s working class. As Keith Griffler forcefully argues:

“For the half century in which the white working class—the world’s industrial proletariat—enjoyed steady progress, the black working class travelled a completely opposite course. Black workers became increasingly enmeshed in a world economy that inextricably linked them no matter whether their subsistence was bought with wages, grown in a family garden, or provided in lieu of cash payment by the owner of the land they worked. From the historical vantage point, in fact, the bonds that tied them together were far more essential than the “labor systems” that allegedly divided them. Slaves, sharecroppers, peasants, coolies, indentured workers, contract laborers—all became caught up in cycles of more or less permanent forced migratory patterns connected to the production process. This allegedly transitional condition that has in actuality dominated the five hundred year history of the modern world economy, permitting only islands of proletarian permanence in a sea of perpetual forced migration.

Indeed, the same International Labour Organisation that promulgated the Forced Labour Convention of 1930 conceded that “such migration is an essential feature of the new Africa.”<sup>vi</sup> Those words, written some eight years after the banning of forced labor, constituted the tacit admission that coercive means of compelling work remained—and would remain—firmly in place. The Forced Labour Convention, far from outlawing such coercion, merely defined who was subject to—that is, who would *remain* subject to—forced labor. In essence, it wrote race into international labor law; though, like the US Constitution before it, it did so only implicitly.<sup>vii</sup> Or, more precisely, international law was already racialized, since one of the chief functions of the League of Nations and the treaty conventions it sponsored was the upholding of the colonial system. For its part, the ratification in 1930 of the Forced Labor Convention as a purported labor code for the colonial world acknowledged that there could be no international law with respect to class that was not constructed on an explicitly racial basis. It was the tacit statement that developing international labor law did *not* apply to workers of color in their vast majority; in other words, it was the racialization of international labor law to match the determining nature of race in the construction of the global working class. There were to be one set of conventions applicable to the industrial workers of Europe and North America and quite another for most workers of color in the rest of the world. The provisions of the Forced Labour Convention ensured that the law came into conformity with the practice.

I want to advance beyond the view of forced labor as episodic, peripheral and transitional<sup>viii</sup> and shed light on the systemic conditions that existed across the colonial world. Therein, I would argue, lies the possibility of conceiving a political economy of *race* and class that follows up on the insights of Du Bois and the school of class analysis developed by black radical political economists in the early to mid-twentieth century. As Du Bois recognized, the same British state that produced and reproduced the conditions for a free and urbanized English industrial proletariat produced and reproduced the African working class as permanently mobile and unfree—subject to forced labor. [Keith Griffler (2008), ‘The Forced Labor Convention of 1930: Race, Class and Capitalist Production in the Epoch of Imperialism’, Paper presented at the University of Toronto (May)]

<sup>vi</sup> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000). *Empire* (Boston: Harvard University Press), p.53.

<sup>vii</sup> *Ibid*, p.52.

<sup>viii</sup> Michael Burawoy (1985), *The Politics of Production* (London: Verso): p.39.

<sup>ix</sup> Frederick Engels in the ‘Preface’ to the 1883 German Edition of the *Communist Manifesto* - <http://www.anu.edu.au/polsci/marx/classics/manifesto.html>

<sup>x</sup> Throughout the late 1980s and first two years of the 1990s, the ANC had consistently kept to its ‘line’ that, once in power, it would nationalise key sectors of the economy, would set about a radical redistribution of land and wealth and would ensure that the black working class became the main ‘driver’/ controller of a ‘people’s’ state

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dedicated to popular/participatory democracy. The ANC's adoption, in 1994, of the fairly radical, social-democratic *Reconstruction & Development Programme* (as its electoral platform), served to further fuel such expectations. For a detailed exposition of the 'fundamentals' of the RDP see, National Institute for Economic Policy (1996), 'From RDP to GEAR', Research Paper Series (Johannesburg: NIEP).

<sup>xi</sup> See Martin Murray (1994). *The Revolution Deferred* (London: Verso), pp.156-158.

<sup>xii</sup> See Dale T. McKinley (1997), *The ANC and the Liberation Struggle: A Critical Political Biography* (London, Pluto Press).

<sup>xiii</sup> Richard Ballard, Adam Habib & Imraan Valodia (2006). 'Social Movements in South Africa: promoting crisis or creating stability?', in Vishnu Padayachee (ed), *The Development Decade? Economic and Social Change in South Africa 1994-2004* (Cape Town, HSRC Press, 2006), p.397.

<sup>xiv</sup> Stephen Greenberg and Nhlanhla Ndlovu (2004), 'Civil society relationships' in, *Mobilising for Change: New Social Movements in South Africa, Development Update*, Vol.5, No. 2: pp. 32-33.

<sup>xv</sup> See David McDonald and Leila Smith (2003), 'Privatizing Cape Town', Occasional Papers, No.7 (Johannesburg: Municipal Services Project, 2002). Also see, Edward Cottle, 'The Failure of Sanitation and Water Delivery and the Cholera Outbreak', in *Development Update*, Vol.4, No.1.

<sup>xvi</sup> Some of the main/key movements and organisations borne out of this period include: The Concerned Citizens Forum in Durban (which no longer exists but which spawned numerous community organisations that remain alive and active); the Anti-Privatisation Forum in Johannesburg (which continues to expand and now has nearly 30 affiliate community organizations); the Landless People's Movement (a national movement which went through a divisive 'split' with its original NGO partner – the National Land Committee – and has since weakened but remains active in some rural and peri-urban areas); Jubilee South Africa (a national movement centred around debt, reparations and social justice struggles/issues but which also experienced a split in its ranks in 2005/2006 which has since resulted in the existence of both Jubilee South Africa and a new formation – Umzabalazo we Jubilee); the Anti-Eviction Campaign based in Cape Town; and Abalahli base Mjondolo (a movement of shack dwellers mainly in/around Durban but which has begun to link up to other shack dweller organisations in other parts of the country)

<sup>xvii</sup> The most public expressions of the ANC's evident contempt for the new movements and their struggles was an ANC statement in 2002, accusing them of being an "ultra left ... waging a counter-revolutionary struggle against the ANC and our democratic government", and of siding with the "bourgeoisie and its supporters" [See, ANC (2002) 'Contribution to the NEC/NWC response to the Cronin interviews on the issue of neo-liberalism', Internal ANC paper by the Political Education Unit (September). President Mbeki waded in soon thereafter by claiming publicly that, "this ultra-left works to implant itself within our ranks ... it hopes to capture control of our movement and transform it into an instrument for the realisation of its objectives" [ See, Mbeki (2002), 'Statement of the President of the ANC, Thabo Mbeki, at the ANC Policy Conference', Kempton Park (20<sup>th</sup> September) – <http://www.anc.org.za/docs>.

<sup>xviii</sup> COSATU (2005), 'Response to Sunday Independent article', COSATU Media Statement (7 August).

<sup>xix</sup> As quoted in Tom Bramble and Franco Barchiesi (2003), 'Pressing Challenges facing the South African Labour Movement: an Interview with John Appolis and Dinga Sikwebu', in Tom Bramble & Franco Barchiesi (eds.), *Rethinking the Labour Movement in the 'New South Africa'* (Aldershot: Ashgate): p. 224.

<sup>xx</sup> For a more detailed exposition of this argument see John Appolis (2002), 'The Political Significance of August 31<sup>st</sup>', *Khanya*, No.2 (December): pp. 5-9.

<sup>xxi</sup> Edward Thompson (1965), 'The Peculiarities of the English', *Socialist Register*, p.365.

<sup>xxii</sup> These and other arguments are contained in a paper I presented to the 2008 COSATU National Political Education School entitled, 'Towards a Socialist Strategy and Left Unity in South Africa'.