



In this issue:

Xenophobia, nationalism, neo-liberalism and the South African state by Dale T. McKinley

The crisis of Gender-Based Violence requires a political response by Alex Hotz

A snap-shot of SA's multiple local level crises: Corruption, service delivery failure and abuse of power in the Mbizana Municipality by Vanessa Burger

Climate, conflict and capitalism fuel xenophobia by Sharon Ekambaram

Class struggle, the Left and Power part 3: A 'libertarian' socialist alternative by Jonathan Payn

Austerity on fire: A global guide to where it's going down by itsgoingdown.org

Small Business by Steve Faulkner



XENOPHOBIA, NATIONALISM, NEO-LIBERALISM AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN STATE



A member of the African Reclaimers Organisation (ARO) putting working class solidarity and internationalism into practice at the march against xenophobia in Johannesburg, 14 September. Photo: Anastasya Eliseeva

The most recent xenophobic attacks on immigrants should not surprise us in the least, given the political and socio-economic context within which the post-1994 South African state was formed and has functioned. It is only by locating and analysing this context, with particular reference to the 'marriage' of a nationalist politics and 'nation-building' alongside economic neo-liberalism, that we can then understand and critically appraise the reaction/response of the South African state to the recent xenophobic pogroms.

When the African National Congress (ANC) came to power in the 1994 elections, it took political control of an existent state that had been built to secure the dominant interests of a national bourgeoisie. The only difference was that now, the state was in the hands of a movement whose main aim was to build, and secure, the interests of a black nationalist (as opposed to white nationalist) bourgeoisie.

This state-centred 'changing of the nationalist guard' (i.e. a deracialised national capitalism) was overlaid by the ANC's acceptance and embracement of South Africa's capitalist political economy, within the context of a dominant, global capitalist neo-liberalism, codified in policy through the GEAR macro-economic policy/development framework.

In both theoretical and practical terms, these strategic and ideological choices demanded the creation of a dominant discourse of 'nation-building' as a means to politically legitimise the role and character of the 'new' neo-liberal state and the 'place' of those under its leadership. What was being consciously constructed then, was an inherently false and exclusivist nationalist identity and politics (in essence, an ideology of sorts), to be secured by political loyalty to a 'new' South African state claiming to represent the 'national will and interest'.

Such a macro-nationalist paradigm was, and still

is, designed to create the illusion that the struggle for political and socio-economic liberation by the black majority is defined by the active and loyal participation of an 'authentic national subject' that supersedes all other 'identities' of social relations under capitalism (for example, class).

It is an illusion not only because it has been clear (since 1994) that the fundamental decisions of the South African state have not been forged, or even informed, by the interests and needs of the majority of so-called 'national subjects', but also because under a dominant and globalised capitalist neo-liberalism, such a 'subject' is effectively non-existent.

It is within such a context that the South African state has constructed and fed the idea and practice of xenophobia. At its conceptual heart, xenophobia is a fear of the 'other', with the 'other' most often being defined by nation-state 'membership'. Thus, and only thus, can the idea/concept of a legal, political and social distinction be made between, for example, a 'South African' and a 'Zimbabwean'.

Indeed, it is the height of absurdist irony that the contemporary political and social hold of such a nation-state identity – in South Africa and in most of the global South – has its historical foundations in a racist, oppressive and genocidal colonialism. Lest we forget, it was during the colonial era that Africa's national borders were

drawn-up on a map at the whims of European political and economic elites.

Since 1994, the South African state has been remarkably consistent in its contradictory and hypocritical ideational, discursive and practical construction of xenophobia. At the same time that the state has presented South Africa (and 'South Africans') as the new and natural leaders of a continental (black African) 'renaissance' and the bedrock of a pan-African economic take-off, it has systematically pursued immigration policies that have not only favoured non-black African immigration but criminalised most black African immigrants through illegality and official corruption. This has been accompanied by the construction of a web of sub-imperial presences across the continent, ostensibly designed to enhance South Africa's (corporate dominated) 'international competitiveness' status.

The results have been tragically predictable: creating and assisting in the exploitation and displacement of other African 'nationalities', in the name of the 'national interest' and nationally defined 'economic growth'; and, using South African 'nationality' as the litmus test for societal acceptance and integration of those from the rest of the continent who have, not surprisingly under the circumstances, made their way to the 'new' South Africa.

Somewhat similarly, the state has, through its implementation of neo-liberal socio-economic policies inside South Africa, made a mockery of substantive 'citizenship' for the majority of South African 'nationals'. It is the 'classic' ruling class recipe for constructed tension, prejudice, competition and conflict amongst the 'have-nots' (whatever their nationality). All the while of course, none of this applies to the respective 'haves', who have long ago placed themselves above and beyond such non-consequential identities such as nationality, only using it when it suits their personal and class needs.

Under such a state-led rubric, the parallel constructions of internal (South African) xenophobic attitudes and practice have flourished. The coercive and endemically corrupt forces of the state – most notably SAPS – have thus treated African immigrants as if they were, a priori, criminals and charlatans intent on destroying the imagined 'national community' of 'authentic' South Africans.

The endemic corruption in, and venality of, several departments of the state – here, Home Affairs and Housing have taken the lead – have criminalised the desperation of poor African immigrants and thus contributed substantially to their parallel illegalisation in the eyes of both the 'law' and amongst many with whom they live.

Leading ANC, other party politicians, state officials and various local organisations, alongside some sections of the media, have also been remarkably consistent in their reactionary populisms that have sought to portray immigrants as the main cause of a host of South Africa's economic and social problems.

The cumulative reality is that two of the most defining socio-political features of post-apartheid South Africa are a state constructed xenophobic, chauvinistic nationalism and the catastrophic

EDITORIAL

This edition of Workers World News focuses on two issues that characterised South Africa's social landscape in 2019; femicide and gender-based violence (GBV), on one hand, and xenophobia and anti-foreigner violence on the other.

Concerning the xenophobic attacks last September Dale McKinley argues that it is only by understanding "the political and socio-economic context within which the post-1994 South African state was formed and has functioned [...] with particular reference to the 'marriage' of a nationalist politics and 'nation-building' alongside economic neo-liberalism, that we can then understand and critically appraise the reaction/response of the South African state [...] whose very existence and legitimacy has been built on the social and physical corpses of the poor and downtrodden (whatever their nationality)".

Alex Hotz writes that calls for stricter laws, like life imprisonment or the death penalty, in response to the femicide and GBV is not a solution, that the crisis of GBV requires a political response and that we have to ask ourselves, "Are we in our unions and organisations doing enough to deal with experiences of violence that womxn are facing in the country? Do our unions and movements reflect what we want to see in the country?"

In a Snap-shot of South Africa's multiple Local level crises Vanessa Burger exposes "corruption, service delivery failure and abuse of power" in the Eastern Cape which, "is run like a giant criminal syndicate with power maintained via a 'right-wing cabal' of the ANC".

Part three of our education series Class struggle, the left and power gives an introduction to "a 'libertarian' or 'anti-statist' socialist theoretical understanding of class and power [...] that may offer an alternative theoretical basis for building new forms of organising to the tried, tested and consistently disappointing state-centric one".

The Brazilian Amazon was on fire for all of 2019. Australia started 2020 on fire and, although Australia's Prime Minister denies the record high temperatures and drought that caused the fires have anything to do with climate change, there is no denying we are facing an unprecedented ecological and humanitarian disaster – and that it will be the working class, poor and marginalised populations and communities that bear the brunt.

According to UN climate scientists – who give us 12 years to completely turn the situation around – \$300 million would be needed to stop the rise in green house gases and buy the world up to 20 more years to fix global warming. In 2019, the world's richest 500 people gained over \$1.2 trillion, taking their collective wealth to \$5.9 trillion.

However, as the Latin American pink tide to which so many looked for hope and inspiration a decade ago turns a darker shade of brown, we recall what radical American labour organiser and anarchist Lucy Parsons warned us years ago: "Never be deceived that the rich will allow you to vote away their wealth".

While Australia is on fire so too, encouragingly, are cities around the world ablaze with mass demonstrations and popular uprisings against neo-liberal austerity and the governments that impose it. In Austerity on fire: a global guide to where it's going down we republish an overview of popular uprisings and insurrections in Sudan, Ecuador, Chile, Honduras, Rojava, Lebanon, Catalunya and Hong Kong. It is such movements that we must look for hope, inspiration and alternatives for a world in crisis. ■

END FEMICIDE



GENDER NEWS by Alex Hotz

THE CRISIS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE REQUIRES A POLITICAL RESPONSE



Photo: Anastasya Eliseeva

The streets reverberated with the song, “Yeeh Bambulele Eyothatha iParcel(a), Bambulele Uyinene yooaha”, translated to “They have killed Uyinene when she was only collecting a parcel from the post office”¹.

In the aftermath of 19-year-old University of Cape Town student, Uyinene Mrwetyana’s brutal rape and murder at the Claremont Post Office, which sent womxn² and non-binary people to the streets in protest, we saw calls for the State to amend sentencing law in South Africa, to introduce life imprisonment and reintroduce the death penalty for gender-based violence (GBV) as well as calls for a State of Emergency to be declared. We need to shift the conversation around GBV from looking to structures that in many ways uphold and reproduce patriarchal violence – whether it be the State, police, prison system and the law – for justice. We as the left have stopped imagining what justice would look like and what an emancipated society would be – surely it would be a society where we would all be safe and free from patriarchal power relations? Surely looking to the law is not going to deal with the deep wounds, traumas and effects of rampant capitalism, white supremacy and patriarchy that have shaped our violent society.

In 2019 after thousands of horrific cases of GBV were reported and exposed in the mainstream media, people have started to speak of GBV as a national emergency that needs to be dealt with. The common solutions put forward have been more policing, longer sentences and now even calls for the death penalty. In the 2017/2018 financial year, there were 177 620 violent crimes against womxn reported to the police – of these crimes 36 731 were sexual offences that include rape, sexual assault, etc. and 2 930 included assault and murder of womxn. This is an 11% increase from the previous year. While these statistics are incredibly shocking the Independent Police Investigative Directorate released its own annual report which stated that 55 rape complaints had been filed against police officers, 32 of which were committed by off-duty police officers and 23 by police officers on duty. This paints a bleak picture of the people entrusted with the task of protecting womxn from crime and ensuring the arrest of perpetrators. To understand why there is a crisis of GBV in the country we have to unearth the root causes. GBV is structural and thus requires much deeper responses than what have been put forward, otherwise we

They have killed Uyinene when she was only collecting a parcel from the post office

are putting a bandage on an deep and gaping wound. Many people see GBV as a post-1994 or ‘post-Apartheid’ issue but Professor Pumla Dineo Gqola deconstructs the idea that GBV, in the form of rape and sexual assault, is a post-1994 phenomenon. Gqola states that to respond to GBV meaningfully we must acknowledge that rape existed long before the democratic state of South Africa; it was a central part of colonialism and Apartheid. South Africa’s history of brutality has become entrenched within society, resulting in hypermasculinity.

Womxn are deeply traumatised and are visibly mourning the crisis we find ourselves in. Past wounds and traumas have been re-opened as we stand together against the crisis of violence against womxn. But in truth there is nothing different about this last period compared to any other period of violence.

Each week our collective outrage is met with silence. Unfortunately, every week, every day, every hour is a travesty of justice. Every womxn has stories about harassment and violence. What has been clear about the last few months is that we are experiencing this violence all over: at home, at school, at work, at the post office – in places we never thought these violence’s could ever take place. No place is safe. What is also clear is that

this is not the first time, nor will it be the last time that we have been shocked into protesting and standing together against this crisis, or too scared to get out of bed or leave house, or too scared to send our children to school or to walk alone to the corner shop.

What is clear is that we need to have a response, we can not only rely on the government and law enforcement. We need to organise ourselves in all the spaces we find ourselves. As workers and activists we have power and we

need to organise ourselves. How do we respond as members of a union, social movement, organisation? Is it enough for people to be calling for stricter laws like life imprisonment or the death penalty? As much as we think that they will stop the ongoing scourge of violence – it is insufficient. We need to get to the root cause. We must look at structures and systems that oppress us and perpetuate violence against womxn.

We have to ask ourselves, “Are we in our unions and organisations doing enough to deal with experiences of violence that womxn are facing in the country? Do our unions and movements reflect what we want to see in the country?” What feminist politics has taught us is that the personal, what is happening in our homes, families, work, is very much political and we don’t leave those things at home; they come with us to our place of work, our place of learning, etc. Therefore, we have to ask ourselves if we are able to affectively respond to this crisis in our unions and our workplaces. Do our workplaces, our unions, social movements, etc. empower us to ensure that womxn are equal in every aspect of life? Are there effective mechanisms in our organising spaces to deal with experiences of sexual harassment in our workplaces and the pervasiveness of patriarchy and sexism in progressive movements and unions? We must not just be seen as tea-makers and minute takers. We as womxn are very critical to the organising, mobilising and thinking of our movements, organisations and unions. Do the politics we believe in and the politics of our organisations prioritise dealing with the crisis that womxn are facing in society?

The “emancipation of women is not a by-product of liberation”, as Genevieve Lanka so aptly stated. We should not be fearful of making womxn’s power and equality our priority. We must not be afraid to disrupt the status quo and make men understand how systems and structures continue to work in their favour to oppress us and subjugate us in every aspect of our lives. At this current moment apologies are no longer going to cut it, we want action, we must demand action – at home, in our schools, in our religious spaces, in our work and in our unions. ■

Pull-out poster

Poster by: Peter Reynolds
Website: <http://gatherdesign.co.za/>
Social media: @gatherdesigndevelop
Email: info@gatherdesign.co.za

Everything in the poster is a symbolic representation of feminist strength, resilience and resistance. I used local birds; the Grey Loerie and Hummingbird, both of which have varying spiritual and symbolic meanings. The sun/halo and ‘cloud opening’ represent strength and hope, a ‘clearing away’ of darkness, if you will. The womxn represents the feminine, specifically the Black feminine; the main victim of patriarchy, gender based violence and femicide, but her face is also defiant and she emanates strength and resistance, emphasized by the fist, spear and knobkerrie.

“Wathint’ Abafazi, Wathint’ Imbokodo” is Zulu for “You strike a woman, you strike a

rock”. I placed it on her chest, representative of a tattoo. She is covered in traditional scarification, each scar representing a woman who has been a victim of femicide. She could also be seen as symbolic of the natural world (or Mother Nature), always referred to in the feminine, also constantly conquered and dominated by patriarchy (/capitalism, same thing). The snake can be interpreted however the viewer wishes. I don’t mean to demonise snakes in any sense, as I think that their bad name is largely due to patriarchal religious myth. To some, snakes are seen as potential threat and bad omens, to others they represent fertility, a creative life force, or other positive symbolisms. I chose three plants found in South Africa to frame the bottom of the illustration; Aloe Vera, Leonotis leonurus (or lion’s tail or wild dagga), and Carpobrotus Edulis (sour figs), all of which have medicinal value, to represent healing, as well as growth. I also love seeing nature “reclaim”, and I tried to convey that sense. The gold colour is representative of value, and depth, and is often used in traditional African colour palettes.

Lead article continued:

socio-economic impacts of economic neo-liberalism on the majority of poor and working people (regardless of nationality).

The disingenuous and frankly pathetic attempts to cover up these realities have largely consisted of denying their xenophobic and nationalist foundations, of blaming ‘criminal individuals’, issuing empty calls for ‘African unity’, and heaping hypocritical praise on ‘patriots’. Neither these nor any other fabrications and rationalisations can hide the fact that the South African state is a state whose very existence and legitimacy has been built on the social and physical corpses of the poor and downtrodden (whatever their nationality). This is the logical ‘outcome’ of the kind of post-apartheid politics and ideology that has not only been embraced and celebrated by those who have benefited from it, but has been tragically imbibed by many of those who are oppressed and divided by it.

Any national state is but a reflection of the (national) society which gives it both form and life. It then follows that it is the role and character of the state, the content of the policies that flow from it, along with the collective and personal social attitudes and behaviour, which desperately need and require radical change.

This struggle for truly radical, systemic and personal change demands that we throw off the yoke of the cousins of nationalist chauvinism and neo-liberalism. It is a struggle in which all of us human beings who live on this planet, are going to have to rid ourselves (whether by choice or enforced reality) of conceptual and physical borders. Our and our planet’s survival depends on it. ■



1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MsRJ33E9y0M>

2. The term ‘womxn’ will be used throughout this paper instead of women as an inclusive term for all womxn.



A SNAP-SHOT OF SOUTH AFRICA'S MULTIPLE LOCAL LEVEL CRISES:

CORRUPTION, SERVICE DELIVERY FAILURE AND ABUSE OF POWER IN THE MBIZANA MUNICIPALITY



Source: theconversation.com

Ndakeni village, home to several thousand people and located almost 160km from Mthatha, is administered by the Mbizana Local Municipality. The area is mostly rural with subsistence agriculture being the main activity. Part of the Alfred Nzo District Municipality, the Mbizana Local Municipality is made up of 31 wards with a population of almost 300 000. Ndakeni falls within Ward 8.

Better known for the Xolobeni community's almost two-decades-long resistance to titanium mining nearer the coast, for the past ten years the area has also been beset by the ANC's violent factional battles and allegations of vote rigging within its branches.

ANC FACTIONS

The faction of the ANC that rose to the fore following the 2011 and 2016 local government elections were previously among former president Jacob Zuma's loyal supporters. But shortly before the ANC's 54th elective conference at NASREC in December 2017, they reportedly threw their weight behind current president Cyril Ramaphosa.

After the 2019 national elections, former Eastern Cape Premier, Phumulo Masualle (now Deputy Minister of Public Enterprises) was replaced by provincial strongman Oscar Mabuyane who gained notoriety during the province's fractious October 2017 conference, better known as the 'festival of chairs'.

Said to be one of Mabuyane's closest allies, Mbizana 'homeboy', Babalo Madikizela, has enjoyed a meteoric rise within the province. Previously ANC treasurer for the party's Alfred Nzo region, Madikizela was elected provincial treasurer in September 2017 before being appointed Housing MEC in November 2018.

Locals allege that Madikizela 'remote controls' the Mbizana Municipality, that he has a hand – directly or indirectly – in most tenders awarded across the region and elsewhere in the province, and is responsible for channelling funds to the ANC. They say Madikizela entertains municipal officials at his Mbizana house and plies them with "expensive liquor and slaughters cows for them." Loyal cadres of this faction are allegedly rewarded with valuable properties at Margate and Port Shepstone on the KZN south coast, lucrative tenders and expensive vehicles

CRIMINALITY AND CORRUPTION

Reliable sources claim the province is run like a giant criminal syndicate with power maintained via a 'right-wing cabal' of the ANC that controls – not only all economic opportunities and access to service delivery – but also the criminal justice system through strategically placed functionaries in law enforcement, the courts as well as by using taxi hit-men.

Allegations regarding this 'cabal' appear to have some merit. Over the years various police units have proved remarkably inept at investigating high-ranking politicians and local government officials allegedly involved in corruption. There have also been disappearances and a number of witnesses have been assassinated. Community members and other sources have repeatedly accused certain police officers of taking orders from politicians, local taxi associations or businessmen.

The Auditor General's (AG) report on local government spending for the financial year 2017-2018 recorded R13.558 billion in irregular expenditure for the Eastern Cape – the highest in the country. According to the website Municipal Money the Mbizana municipality underspent its budget for the 2017-18 financial year, by 45%; fruitless, wasteful, unauthorised and irregular spending constituted almost 35% of the budget, and 0% was spent on repairs and maintenance.

At Ndakeni and nearby villages, many members of the community claim that over the past two decades, budgets intended for service delivery have mysteriously 'disappeared', or have been redirected to communities that are seen to be politically 'compliant.' Ndakeni has no access to clean water, few residents can afford electricity even where connections exist, roads are in a shocking state, the few amenities provided by government remain incomplete or poorly built and an RDP housing project promised to the community over ten years ago has apparently never materialised.

"They treat is like animals. We are forced to drink water where pigs and cattle shit" – Ndakeni community leader

GUN BARREL DEMOCRACY

Deep rooted and understandable community anger at what many claim is the looting of state coffers for the benefit of a few politically connected elites has manifested in regular protests [often met by violent

Reliable sources claim the province is run like a giant criminal syndicate with power maintained via a 'right-wing cabal' of the ANC

repression from the police] after numerous petitions and meetings have failed to elicit responses from local government.

During voter registration ahead of the May 2019 general elections, many communities vowed to prevent the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) officials from setting up voting stations. Although ward 8 was not among the communities who blocked IEC officials' entrance – many residents just stayed away – the area was subjected to heavily armed police patrols and a show of force that betrayed any pretence of democracy. A resident reported that: "The ward councillor is driving around the village. He is escorted by police and other unknown vehicles. Maybe they are hit-men. People heard him saying: 'People will go to register whether they like it or not, [he] is going to make sure of that'."

RETURN TO OPPRESSION

Since the elections the Ndakeni community has been divided by politics while service delivery stagnates further. Twenty-five years after the fall of apartheid, an increasing number of ordinary people are being forced into local exile – internally displaced people who fear a highly politicised police force and predatory politicians who abuse and exploit their communities.

There are thousands of 'Ndakeni's' all over rural South Africa – tiny war zones where unseen communities fight invisible battles against an overwhelmingly powerful and corrupt elite entrenched in high office. ■

"They only care about the money, not poor people"

- Mbizana community leader



CLIMATE, CONFLICT AND CAPITALISM FUEL XENOPHOBIA

Photo: Visible Hand



It is often asked where xenophobia—experienced predominantly and violently by black foreign nationals in South Africa—comes from. It is a difficult question to answer, but the legacy of a racist and repressive state is a common starting point. The prevailing status quo—a society deeply divided along race and class lines—can be traced back to colonization and Apartheid. Xenophobic violence is generally linked to the socio-economic inequalities, systemic unemployment and conditions of poverty that the majority of black African people continue to suffer in the post-Apartheid dispensation.

This raises serious questions about the current democratic state, one in which institutionalized xenophobia further exacerbates the crisis. Negative experiences of foreign nationals, especially

vulnerable indigent people, attempting to access the asylum system through the Department of Home Affairs are well-documented. Their vulnerability is compounded by policy shifts being promulgated by parliament—including removing the right to work of asylum seekers and detaining asylum seekers in so-called processing centres at the border.

South Africa has a very progressive constitution, thus such policy shifts go against the ethos and vision of the founding document, which frames a rallying call for transformation and redress of the wrongs of capitalist Apartheid. As former Constitutional Court Judge, Dikgang Moseneke, argued in 2014, "our constitutional design is emphatically transformative. It is meant to migrate us from a murky and brutish past to

an inclusive future animated by values of human decency and solidarity. It contains a binding consensus on or a blueprint of what a fully transformed society should look like."

Yet, the recent elections in South Africa saw both new and older political parties opportunistically blame black, indigent Africans from the rest of the continent for the state of crisis in the public health system. This is disingenuously extended to blaming foreign nationals for the economic crisis of chronic unemployment and crime, both consequences of rampant corruption and looting under the rule of the former president Jacob Zuma and his cronies in the ruling African National Congress. Such othering and scapegoating by both states and communities fuels xenophobic violence in the country and beyond.

EDUCATIONAL SERIES: PART 3 | By Jonathan Payn

EDUCATION SERIES: CLASS STRUGGLE, THE LEFT AND POWER

The first two parts of this series claimed that an important part of the reason why the many efforts to unite working class struggles in South Africa have largely failed to resonate with the working class in struggle, forming the basis of a new movement, is because of the strategic implications and limitations of the theoretical understandings of class, power and the nature of the state that are predominant on the 'authoritarian' or 'state-centric' extra-Alliance and independent socialist left.

Part three looks at a 'libertarian' or 'anti-statist' socialist theoretical understanding of class and power, and the strategic implications thereof for building working class unity in struggle, that may offer an alternative theoretical basis for building new forms of organising to the tried, tested and consistently disappointing state-centric one.

A SYSTEM OF EXPLOITATION AND DOMINATION: CAPITALISM AND STATE

Like the class analysis outlined in part two of this series, this analysis holds that capitalism is a class society in which a ruling class minority exploits the working class majority in order to accumulate wealth; and that it is able to do this because of private ownership of the means of production, which is legally recognised and protected by the state. However, unlike the previous analysis, this theory argues that the ruling class is, in fact, made up of two parts: private capitalists, on the one hand, and state managers (top government officials, including politicians) on the other. State managers are part of the ruling class because they rule over everybody else through their control of the state, because they control and own a part of the means of production through state companies and because they live off the labour of the working class (which pays their often

ludicrous salaries through taxes). Class is thus understood not only in terms of one's relationship to the means of production, but also to the means of administration and coercion (government and the repressive apparatus of the state).

Capitalism is thus seen not just a system of economic exploitation, although that is a central characteristic of capitalism, but a system of domination. This means that, through various social and political mechanisms, capitalism institutionalises particular social relationships in which some people, or groups of people, make decisions that affect other people, or groups of people. This situation is a relationship of domination because some people are prevented from taking part in decisions that affect them, whether social, political, economic or cultural. It involves the institutionalisation of command-obey relations that structure society into ruling classes, that command, and dominated classes, that obey.

This conflict of interests between these two antagonistic classes gives rise to a social war or class struggle through which the dominated classes try to win greater rights and freedom and improve their material and economic conditions.

In this analysis capitalism is a system that permeates every social relation and dominates us at every level of social life: economically, politically, ideologically, culturally as well as on the basis of gender, ethnicity, sexuality etc. However, it is important to recognise that these different spheres of domination (political-legal, ideological-cultural and economic) are interdependent: they rely on

and reinforce one another. In this sense we can say capitalism is a 'total system' because it affects and has power over every aspect of human existence.

This analysis of capitalism as a system of domination that includes, but is not limited or reduced to economic exploitation and ownership of the means of production, has important implications for one's conception of revolutionary subject and theory of social transformation. Central to this is the question of the state and power.

The state, like power, is not a tangible 'thing' or 'object' that can be 'seized' or 'taken' nor is it simply located in certain places (like Parliament, the Unions Buildings, municipal offices, etc.). State power is not a neutral force that, if in the 'right' hands (i.e. a workers' or socialist party), can be used in the interests of the working class and to usher in a classless society. The state as an institution has accumulated and centralised a whole series of functions necessary to the running of capitalist society.

State power is not only used doesn't only repress the different struggles of the oppressed class, it also defines the everyday world in which we are forced to live. State power reinforces the terms in which things should be done at almost all levels: the marriage certificate, driver's license, identity document, passport, etc. It organises the time and space within which individual life is lived, and it is profoundly coercive, whether or not experienced as such.

The state is reproduced daily over all of us, that we produce state power through voting, to meet with everyday procedures, even in going to school or the hospital.

The state, any state – even if disguised in the most liberal and democratic façade – is founded on violence and has a monopoly on the so-called legitimate (legal) use of violence, force and coercion in capitalist society. If we do not do what the laws of the state tell us to it can exercise violence against us. Sometimes this violence is disguised or concealed, sometimes it is open and unceremonious.

But although the state dominates society through force and coercion, it also does so through a perceived legitimacy. The existence of "free and fair" elections, parliament and political parties are key in the state's search for legitimacy and are one of its most important sources thereof as they create the illusion that the people themselves can freely choose the system of government and the parties that represent them through universal suffrage.

As such, state power can not simply be seized or changed through a political struggle; the power of the state is in our heads and, therefore, needs to be fought through an ideological-political and social struggle. ■



...capitalism is a class society in which a ruling class minority exploits the working class majority in order to accumulate wealth...

My Struggle article continued:

Movement of people is a global phenomenon. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) statistics reveal people forcibly displaced worldwide increased from 65.3 million in 2015 to 68.5 million in 2018. Climate change is a critical factor in the phenomenon. According to the UNHCR: "one person every second is being displaced by climate factors, with an average of more than 26 million people displaced by climate and weather-related events annually since 2008." In some parts of the world this increases the risk of conflicts and worsening conditions for refugees and displaced people.

We need to understand how climate change impacts the current and future flow of refugees and displaced persons, and ask why the protection needs of climate refugees are not being met. For example, the 2015-2016 El Niño phenomenon

had a severe impact on vulnerable people in Somalia; it worsened an already widespread drought in Puntland and Somaliland with a devastating impact on communities and their livelihoods,

The prevailing status quo—a society deeply divided along race and class lines—can be traced back to colonization and Apartheid.

increasing food insecurity, cash shortages and resulting in out-migration and death of livestock.

More recently, Cyclone Idai hit Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe with horrendous impact, proving (again) that vulnerable people in countries contributing least to adverse climate

change, but with limited infrastructure and capacity to respond to such extreme events, are experiencing its most devastating consequences. In Mozambique alone, 1.85 million people are affected, nearly 200,000 displaced, 600 dead, and nearly 5000 confirmed cholera cases. Close to one million people in Malawi are affected, and nearly 100,000 displaced. Zimbabwe, a country already in severe socio-economic crisis, is now burdened with one quarter of a million people affected, 300 dead and 16,000 households displaced.

In December 2018, for the first time the UN Global Compact for Migration launched at a meeting in Marrakesh, Morocco recognizing that the climate crisis is a driver of migration. Yet States are under no obligation to recognize the protection needs of climate refugees.

There is an urgent need to put in place mechanisms that ensure the protection of climate refugees and this must be enforced. An international emergency must be declared, along with a plan of action to mitigate and eventually put a stop to the man-made carnage destroying the planet and its people.

The vulnerability of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants is used opportunistically by politicians globally. In South Africa this has the direct consequence of fueling xenophobic violence which results in the displacement of hundreds of people, loss and damage to property and in many instances the loss of innocent lives. States cannot ignore the scientific evidence which speaks to the dire consequences of the climate crisis. These facts must inform our policy. The SADC region must adopt an accessible SADC visa to manage the movement of people. Xenophobia and its consequent violence will otherwise continue unabated. ■



AUSTERITY ON FIRE: A GLOBAL GUIDE TO WHERE IT'S GOING DOWN

Mass protest in Lebanon against planned new taxes and attempt to implement structural adjustment reforms.
Source: itsgoingdown.org



We are witnessing a new round of insurrections kick off across the globe. While each of the revolts that we will briefly go over below are very different, there are certain aspects that unite them.

First and foremost, many of these insurrections are the direct result of people violently rejecting austerity and by extension, decades of neoliberal reforms and structural adjustment programs (themselves simply extensions of past colonial systems) which have also led to economic precarity and crippling poverty. In Haiti and Ecuador, the most recent round of riots and uprisings was kicked off by increased gas prices; in the Sudan, it was the price of goods tripling, in Lebanon, it was over new taxes; in Honduras against austerity cuts to the public sector; and in Chile, it was against the launch of a fare increase. In short, across the world since the collapse of financial markets in 2008, the capitalist class has rebuilt its wealth through a regime of austerity, increased costs, and the suppression of wages. Currently, we are seeing the limits of the proletariat's patience with such a model.

Second, another common factor of many of these revolts is the widespread anger over government corruption, especially in the face of increasing poverty. In Haiti this is the most clear, where massive amounts of aid that was supposed to go towards 2010 earthquake victims has instead been laundered and government nepotism is widespread, while in Honduras, people have been launching riots against Juan Orlando Hernández, who was installed by a US backed coup and is alleged to have taken money from drug cartels for his political campaign.

Third, this new round of revolts often targets infrastructure and the circulation of commodities, including human labor itself. Thus we see massive demonstrations in Haiti which march on wealthy neighborhoods and shut down the entirety of society. In Chile, people have moved from evading fares to burning down a major energy company building and entire subway cars, while in Hong Kong, people have begun to set fire to banks.

In most of these revolts, generalized rioting is seen as the standard avenue of struggle and has

also been the vehicle in which these contestations have generalized; not isolated themselves from society.

Lastly, the current insurrections also showcase the State entering into a state of exception, through either enforcing when and where people can be, granting military or police special powers, passing new laws that made previous everyday actions now illegal, or simply giving the authorities the green light to open fire. In the Sudan, a three month state of emergency opened a window for the State to murder and disappear protest and opposition leaders. In Ecuador, curfews were enforced. In Chile, laws not used since the Pinochet dictatorship have been utilized to allow the military free reign on the streets to put down the revolt. In Hong Kong, the State attempted to ban masks and demonstrations, while in Spain, the government attempted to imprison Catalan leaders who had pushed for independence. Meanwhile in Rojava, a so-called ceasefire agreement between the US and Turkey has given cover for continued attacks by Turkish and Jihadi forces against the autonomous region.

It's worth pointing out that all of these current realities are playing themselves out within the United States as well. Since the 1970s we've seen both the build up of a repressive campaign of counter-insurgency aimed against black, brown, and poor communities, while wages have been suppressed and globalization and automation have worked to gut the former gains made by labor in the post-WWII period. Meanwhile, the cost of living, fuel, education, everyday commodities, health care, and especially housing has risen astronomically, resulting in the mass stratification of wealth along racial and class lines. This context has been compounded by a massive redistribution of wealth through the recent Trump tax cuts amid widespread corruption and cronyism within the administration and the wider political class, as attacks against immigrants, social movements, and the poor have increased behind a backdrop of Trump's calls for "civil war."

With all that in mind, here's a list of some of the places where it's currently going down.

Haiti

For weeks, Haitians have taken to the streets in order to demand the fall of the US backed president, Jovenel Moïse, against widespread corruption,

and rising fuel costs. Tens of thousands of people have hit the streets in an insurrectionary street movement that has paralyzed the country, shuttered schools, targeted wealthy neighborhoods with mass demonstrations, and clashed with authorities, who often open fire on street protests.

Sudan

Last December, the country saw enormous demonstrations break out following the tripling the cost of goods during a period of massive economic instability. A variety of groups pushed for President al-Bashir, who had been in power for over 30 years to step down, which led to intense State repression and the murder of protesters and opposition leaders. Despite this, in April of 2019, the government was overthrown, al-Bashir was arrested, and a three month state of emergency was put into place, resulting in more clashes and deaths between protesters and State forces. By later summer, an alliance of protester groups and the ruling military government signed a new constitution, however, but unrest has remained ongoing.

Ecuador

In response to harsh austerity measures that were enacted in the hopes of securing an IMF loan, a mass insurrection broke out across the country, with indigenous movements playing a major role. In mid-October, the President announced that they were killing the austerity bill and would instead work with indigenous groups involved in the protests, however others have pushed forward.



Mass protest in Ecuador in response to harsh austerity measures.
Source: itsgoingdown.org

Chile

Kicking off with resistance to a metro fare increase, a massive insurrectionary wave has led to the government calling in the military and declaring martial law, while fierce clashes have continued in the streets. Currently, the Chilean State has reported that only 8 people have been murdered by government forces, while opposition groups have stated the real number is much higher. A general strike was called for 21 October and the situation continues to evolve.

Honduras

Riots have broken out across Honduras against the right-wing regime of Juan Orlando Hernández, which was installed through a coup backed by the United States during Obama's presidency; a coup which Hillary Clinton played a major role in. For months, demonstrators have called for the removal of the president, claiming that he took money from drug cartels to use towards his presidential campaign and also plans to carry out extreme austerity measures.

Rojava

Fighting continues in Rojava despite a ceasefire agreement being reached by Vice President Mike Pence and Erdogan, while the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) reporting that Turkey has violated the ceasefire agreement 37 times.

Lebanon

Mass insurrectionary protests have broken out against the State's plans for new taxes as it attempts to implement structural adjustment reforms across the country. Demonstrators have also accused the regime of widespread corruption. In response to the protests, authorities have opened fire on the demonstrators.

Catalunya

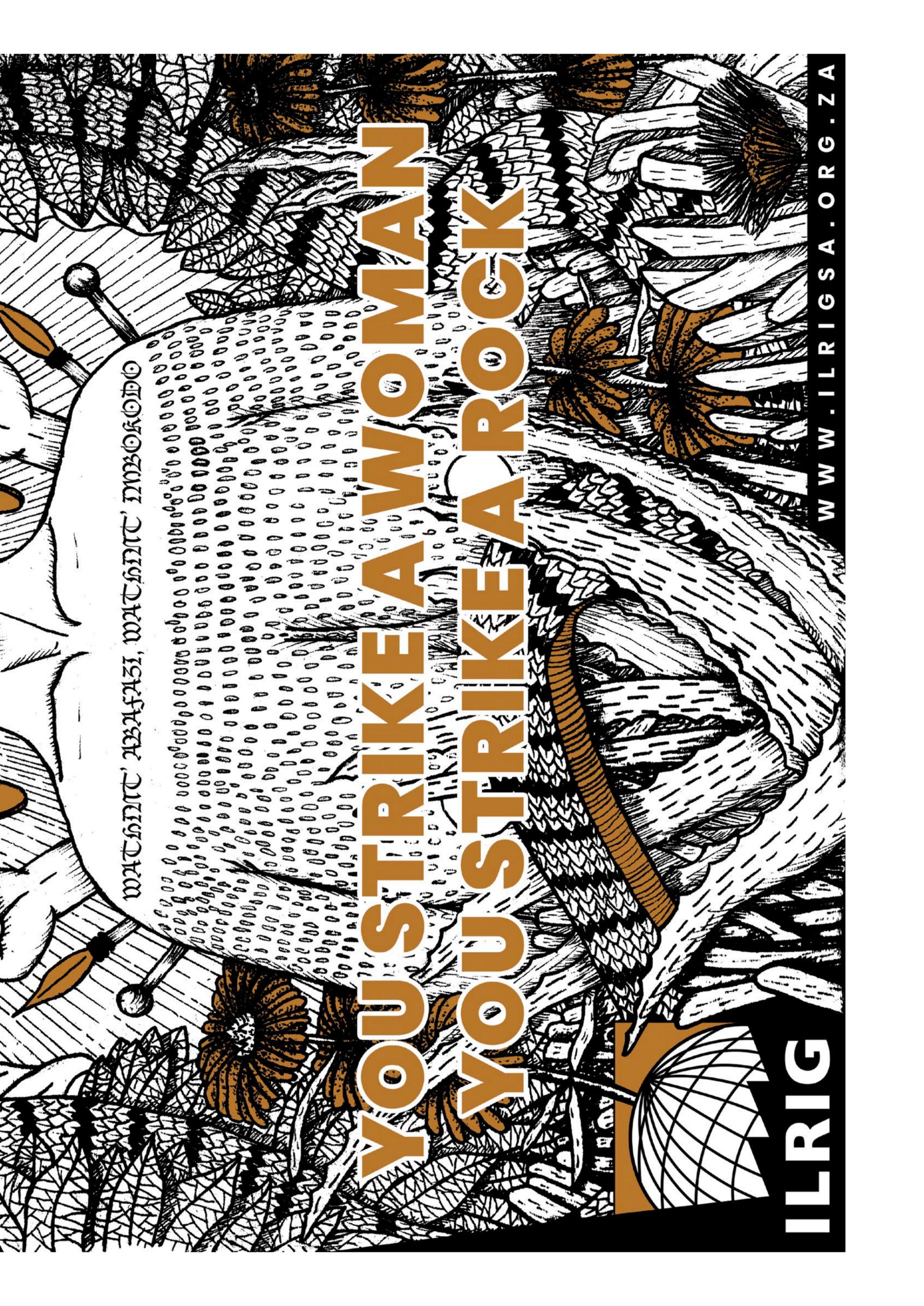
Since last Monday, widespread rioting, including heavy clashes with the fascist Right, have broken out in the streets, after the Spanish State moved to enact prison sentences against leading politicians backing Catalan independence.

Hong Kong

The revolt in Hong Kong is escalating again after several weeks of relative calm, with the latest round of demonstrations attacking and burning banks, throwing Molotov cocktails at police, and fierce property destruction against metro stations and shops. Police also state this weekend that they detonated an explosive device along a protest route and claim that it was placed there in order to injure police. Protesters are pushing back on a ban against masks and are also calling for the Hong Kong police force to be disbanded.

Far From Complete

This is far from a complete roundup of insurrectionary movements and riots happening around the world. As this was being compiled, riots broke out in Bolivia in protest of the recent election. For months now, fierce protests have been organized by African refugees in the Mexican State of Chiapas; caught in limbo as the American border extends itself across the hemisphere. Meanwhile in Malta, migrants set fires, attacked police, and rioted inside their holding center to demand freedom. ■



WATSHINT' ABAYAZI, WATSHINT' MBOKODO

YOU STRIKE A WOMAN YOU STRIKE A ROCK



ILRIG

WWW.ILRIGSA.ORG.ZA

SMALL BUSINESS

BY STEVE FAULKNER

You have learnt much
From your Masters

You who strut
Through streets of poverty
In over-priced designer-wear
Made by ragged children
In other lands

You who condemn those
Who make and sell cheap replicas
Of what you wear

You who protect
The sacred brands of the powerful
From being soiled
By the poor

You have learnt much
From your Masters

You who blindly champion
Law and disorder
On streets you never use
But remain silent
When billions are stolen
By those who sit next to you

You who once raised your fist for
Workers of the World
And Africa Unite
Now call informal traders
Foreign terrorists

You have learnt much
From your Masters

You who once condemned
The sacrifice of scapegoats
To distract and divide

You who never ever admit
To making a mistake
And who tell a lie so often
It is the only truth you now know

You have learnt so much
From your Masters
But be warned
We have also learned

How those who abuse their power
Become part of the problem
And who like you
Learn nothing new

For we now know

You are the biggest fake
Of them all.



UPCOMING EVENTS

ROJAVA Speaking Tour
Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town and Makhanda
Feb 29 - March 11, 2020

**AN ALTERNATIVE FOR A WORLD IN CRISIS:
THE ROJAVA REVOLUTION, KURDISH FREEDOM MOVEMENT
AND PROSPECTS FOR SOUTH AFRICA'S INCOMPLETE
LIBERATION**

Rohash Sheva
is a member of the Kongra Star Women's Organisation of Rojava and Northern Syria and sits on the diplomacy committee of the Kurdish women's movement. She will focus primarily on the anti-patriarchal aspects of the Rojava Revolution, Democratic Confederalism and the struggle for women's liberation and gender equality.

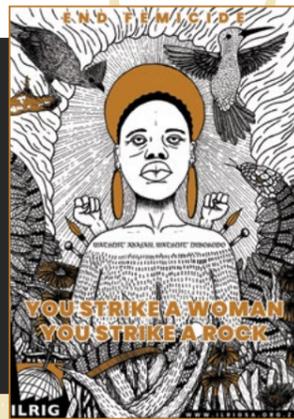
Ercan Ayboga
is co-author of the book *Revolution in Rojava*, an environmental engineer and activist and is politically involved in the Mesopotamian Ecology Movement, particularly in water struggles. He will focus primarily on the ecological aspects of the Rojava Revolution and Democratic Confederalism.

www.ilrigsa.org.za | 021 447 6375

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Are you involved in progressive struggles or grassroots workplace/ community organising that needs solidarity or that you think more activists should be made aware of? Do you have an analysis of or insights into a struggle or social/political/economic issue or development – whether local, regional or international – that is of interest or relevance to progressive/working class activists and struggles in South Africa that you would like to share? Do you have questions/comments about or disagreements with something published in Workers' World News?

Send us your article (max. 600 words) by email or Facebook private message and we will consider publishing it in a future issue.



CALLING ALL CULTURAL ACTIVISTS

We would love to feature your artwork advocating for alternatives to capitalism, fascism and patriarchy. Please help us make this an inspiring publication by sending us your poetry & songs, photography & graphic design, paintings & drawings, reports & manifestos of cultural activist interventions etc.

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AND JOIN CURRENT DEBATES

www.ilrigsa.org.za

The site allows viewers to find out more about ILRIG, its history, staff and board. It provides an interactive space for interested people to engage with ILRIG's work on globalisation, read articles, contribute to discussion, and order publications. Website members will receive regular updates on issues of interest.



Room 14, Community House, 41 Salt River Road, Salt River, Cape Town
info@ilrig.org.za 021 447 6375 021 448 2282
ILRIGSA / Workers World News #ILRIG