



“Histórias do Trabalho no Sul Global”

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“Labour Histories from the Global South”

I Seminário Internacional de História do Trabalho

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DRAFT PAPER

“Race, Class and Ideology in Social Movements: Exploring Past and Present Movements in South Africa”

(‘PHANSI PRIVATISATION! PHANSI!’: THE ANTI-PRIVATISATION FORUM AND IDEOLOGY IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS)

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Introduction

AT THE OUTSET OF THIS VOLUME, attention was drawn to the persistence of inequalities that continue to mar South African society more than a decade after the transition to democracy. Much of the work presented here concentrates on popular protest and resistance movements



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during and after apartheid, which have, in various ways and to differing degrees, shaped the country and continue to influence political debate and policy matters. This chapter is concerned with popular protest in the post-apartheid period and adopts, as its vantage point, one of South Africa’s ‘new social movements’, namely the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF).

The discussion uses the APF's struggles against the commodification of water services as a lens through which to gain insight into contemporary grassroots struggles in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The APF is an umbrella organisation comprising, in 2008, 27 community affiliates, three political groupings as well as a number of individual supporters. The Forum defines its main task as mobilising working class communities against privatisation in the spaces where they live and work.¹ According to the organisation, '[t]he APF links workers' struggles for a living wage and jobs with community struggles for housing, water, electricity and fair rates and taxes'.² It sees itself as an open platform where people can collectively discuss the implications of privatisation.

The APF endeavours to bring together communities that may be engaging in isolated struggles, as well as individuals who may have internalised their suffering, to share experiences and strengthen the struggle against privatisation.³ Key texts on social movements globally characterise them as single issue movements. The APF does not have such narrow aims. It frames its mobilisation efforts in terms of broader questions around 'the relationship between new forms of exploitative capitalist reproduction and working class struggle'.⁴ Drawing on social movement literature, this discussion offers an explanation for the emergence of movements such as the APF and considers the ideological content and practical forms of the APF's opposition to the commodification of water services. These struggles are considered against the backdrop of popular resistance that characterised the apartheid era and that sparked democratic transition. In taking this approach, this chapter highlights some of the continuities and changes in popular protest in South Africa. It also attempts to assess the extent to which the APF's resistance efforts are able to provide direction in terms of reconceptualising the meaning and content of democracy.

The frame of reference for the following discussion is rooted in a leftist critique of political change in South Africa. Critics on the left regard contemporary popular struggles as symptomatic of ongoing and increasing inequality. For instance, some argue that South Africa

* I am grateful to Dale McKinley for providing comments on this chapter.

¹ Anti-Privatisation Forum, 'About the Anti-Privatisation Forum' (2001). Available at <http://www.apf.org.za>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ D. McKinley & P. Naidoo, 'New Social Movements in South Africa: A Story in Creation', *Development Update*, 5, 2 (2004), p. 15.

experienced an ‘elite transition’⁵, which did very little to fundamentally alter the socio-economic realities of the poor. Demonstrators in the post-apartheid period are still overwhelmingly black and poor, but while the eradication of racial oppression was a strong, unifying objective of popular protest during apartheid, race is now a less central, though not absent, fault-line. With a Gini-coefficient of 0.679, South Africa now has the highest income inequality in the world. Popular resistance in the contemporary period is rooted in persistent class inequalities, increasing poverty and patent deterioration of conditions of life, which continue to plague those who are unemployed or who hover precariously on the edges of the economy in irregular and insecure forms of labour. It is people from these bulging layers of society who constitute the support base of movements like the APF.

This chapter takes up the issue of grassroots struggles in the post-apartheid period and uses the Anti-Privatisation Forum as a lens through which to examine continuity and change in popular protest in South Africa, with particular reference to ideology and modes of mobilisation. An important continuity is the furtherance, by movements such as the APF, of South Africa’s long tradition of resistance against social injustice. Some of the methods used to pursue this goal echo the strategies used by freedom fighters during the liberation struggle. Other slogans and tactics employed by APF activists represent a break from anti-apartheid protests, largely because they are underpinned by a distinct socialist ideology, which is openly expressed by the movement’s supporters. Another common thread running through past and present grassroots struggles centres on the nature of the demands that emerged during the liberation struggle. Many of the popular protests in the contemporary period continue to revolve around bread-and-butter issues, like access to clean water for example. Further examples of continuity with the apartheid period are witnessed in the APF’s battles against state machinery and also in the government’s response to the movement’s actions.

The Emergence of New Social Movements in South Africa: An Assessment of the Political Opportunity Structure

To explain how the potential for mobilisation translated into action, renowned social movement theorist, Sidney Tarrow, proposed the idea of a ‘political opportunity structure’,

⁵ P. Bond, *Cities of Gold, Townships of Coal: Essays on South Africa’s New Urban Crisis*. (Africa World Press, New Jersey and Eritrea, 2000).

which he defined as ‘consistent – but not necessarily formal, permanent or national – dimensions of the political environment which either encourage or discourage people from using collective action’.⁶ He added that these opportunities must be assessed in relation to ‘more stable structural elements, like the strength or weakness of the state, the form of repression employed by it and the nature of the party system’.⁷

The political opportunity structure is not a given within a particular political form and it is open to the influence of a wide range of contextual factors. South Africa has a long history of mass popular organisation that was central in the transition to democracy. In the mid-1990s, following the accession to power by the ANC, there was a brief respite as far as popular movements and black community resistance was concerned. It was a period marked by high levels of hope and expectation. People had faith that the ANC would deliver on its promises contained in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Struggle fatigue had perhaps also set in, as political freedom was a hard-won battle, for which many paid a very high price. Writing on social movement mobilisation in post-apartheid South Africa, Ballard et al. claimed that ‘old avenues of opposition were absorbed into the post-apartheid government, thus leaving opponents of the government without a “voice” with which to express or a mechanism to organise opposition.’⁸ These authors suggested further that from the late 1990s onward, this void began to be occupied by a number of groups, defining themselves as South Africa’s ‘new’ social movements, and they grouped all of these movements together as an oppositional force in relationship to the ANC-led alliance.⁹ It is argued here that Ballard as his co-authors have overstated the void or ‘vacuum’ in popular opposition. In the first instance the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) – although weakened – was still in operation in the mid-1990s, and the issue of inadequate service delivery lingered on their agenda. Secondly, the apparent hiatus in grassroots struggle did not last very long at all. Criticism from the left actually began to emerge shortly after the ANC took power, more or less in the mid-1990s, when the government was criticised for putting forward a diluted version of the aims and demands of the liberation struggle in the

⁶ S. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics* (Cambridge University Press, New York, 1994), p. 18.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 81-82.

⁸ R. Ballard, A. Habib, I. Valodia & E. Zuern, ‘Introduction – From Anti-Apartheid to Post-Apartheid Social Movements.’ In R. Ballard et al. (Eds). *Voices of Protest: Social Movements in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, Durban, 2006), p. 15.

⁹ Ibid.

form of the RDP. In 1996 when the RDP was swept aside in favour of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme, condemnation from certain elements within the Alliance was palpable. Thus, in contrast to the view offered by Ballard et al., post-apartheid opposition was not restricted to the 'new' social movements outside of mainstream politics. However, most of the vehement critique of GEAR came later from voices located within these movements, the academy and other positions outside of Alliance structures, which opined that GEAR would not improve the lot of the poor.¹⁰

The waning of local community organisations that were addressing bread-and-butter issues occurred alongside what some authors refer to as a 'dominant political and economic project that reproduces marginalisation and exclusion'.¹¹ Part of this exclusion relates to the fact the COSATU represents only 'the core permanent workforce' and thus '[neglects] other workers who do not fit into this paradigm'.¹² Some of the new social movements used this aspect of the political opportunity structure to further the struggles of casual labourers and the unemployed who were not able to look to COSATU to protect their interests. Another criticism of the interpretation of the rise of the 'new' social movements by Ballard et al. is that not all the social movements that emerged since the late 1990s are opposed to the government or its capitalist agenda. For example, the APF, since its inception, has espoused a socialist ideology, which distinguishes it from other movements like the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), whose demands and strategies are not necessarily framed within an alternative political philosophy. Indeed, Mark Heywood, founding member of TAC, suggested that the organisation's strategies are based on the following key propositions: First, TAC accepts that '[t]he ANC government is fundamentally a progressive government that is not selling out the poor in this country'. Second, the state is not regarded by TAC as 'inherently antagonistic towards the poor'. Third, TAC believes that '[e]xtensive and lasting

¹⁰ Bond, *Cities of Gold*; P. Bond, *Elite Transition: Globalisation and the Rise of Economic Fundamentalism in South Africa* (Pluto & University of Natal Press, London & Pietermaritzburg, 2000); H. Marais, *South Africa: Limits to change - The Political Economy of Transition* (Zed Books & University of Cape Town Press, London, New York & Cape Town, 2001); P. Dwyer, 'South Africa Under the ANC: Still Bound to the Chains of Exploitation.' In L. Zeilig (Ed.). *Class Struggle and Resistance in Africa* (New Clarion Press, Cheltenham, 2002); D. McKinley, 'The Political Economy of the Rise of Social Movements in South Africa.' Seminar paper presented at the Centre for Policy Studies, Johannesburg (2003); D. McKinley, 'Democracy and Social Movements in South Africa.' In V. Padyachee (Ed.). *The Development Decade? Economic and Social Change in South Africa, 1994-2004* (HSRC Press, Cape Town, 2006); D. McKinley, 'South Africa's Third Local Government Elections and the Institutionalisation of 'Low-Intensity' Neo-Liberal Democracy.' In J. Minnie (Ed.). *Outside the Ballot Box: Preconditions for Elections in Southern Africa 2005/6* (Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Windhoek, 2006).

¹¹ S. Greenberg & N. Ndlovu, 'Civil Society Relationships', *Development Update*, 5, 2 (2004), p. 45.

¹² Ibid., p. 39.

reform is possible within the boundaries of capitalism and the current state'. Fourth, '[t]he Constitution of 1996 can, and has been, used to benefit the poor'.¹³

APF activists disagree very strongly with these propositions. As Friedman and Mottiar reported, 'Activists in other movements say the chief divide lies in [TAC's] failure to situate its campaign in a critique of government macro-economic policy.'¹⁴ TAC is thus seen by other social movements as a pressure group that tries to influence government policy within the existing political framework. In an interview with Friedman and Mottiar, activist-intellectual, Ashwin Desai, commented that '[TAC] seems to work within the corridors of power'.¹⁵ Heywood's attempt to defend TAC's stance was rather contradictory. He argued that '[e]xtensive and lasting reform is possible within the boundaries of capitalism and the current state' but then went on to say that 'capitalism... is an evil system ... a system which can't provide jobs for people, can't provide security, can't provide equality for people, but we have to work to try to make sure that some of those vast surpluses which we know are out there are made available to poor people'.¹⁶ Based on their interview with Desai, Friedman and Mottiar suggested that from the viewpoint of other social movements TAC appears to be unwilling to cooperate, 'because it fears their militancy will jeopardise its attempts to build winning coalitions'.¹⁷ However, long-time APF activist, Dale McKinley, urged TAC not to see the APF 'as wild troublemakers' and to 'recognise that we could work together'.¹⁸ Acknowledging the correlation between the lack of access to water and increased suffering for those living with HIV-Aids, the APF attempted to forge links between its own struggles and those of TAC, and it openly demanded that anti-retrovirals be provided free of charge¹⁹. However, the APF's advances were not reciprocated by TAC.

Finally, Ballard et al. claim that most of the contemporary social movements, in contrast to the oppositional forces that confronted the apartheid government, consider themselves to be 'engaging ... with a democratically elected government whose legitimacy

¹³ M. Heywood, 'Social Movements: Challenging the State.' Paper prepared for the Harold Wolpe Memorial Seminar, presented at The Edge Institute (4 May 2005), p. 3-4. Available at <http://www.the-edge.org.za/seminars.htm>

¹⁴ S. Friedman & S. Mottiar, 'Seeking the High Ground: The Treatment Action Campaign and the Politics of Morality. In R. Ballard et al. (Eds). *Voices of Protest: Social Movements in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (UKZN Press Durban, 2006), p. 38.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Heywood, *Social Movements*, p. 5.

¹⁷ Friedman & Mottiar, 'Seeking the High Ground', p. 34.

¹⁸ D. McKinley interviewed by Friedman & Mottiar, *Seeking the High Ground*, p. 38.

¹⁹ Anti-Privatisation Forum. 'Anti-Privatisation Forum Local Government Platform.' Press Release, 6 February 2006.

they do not question, and within a constitution to which they are loyal.’²⁰ While the ANC government may indeed have been elected legitimately, much of the social unrest around the country today represents a challenge to the ANC government’s legitimacy. As Greenstein argued, ‘the legitimacy of the post-apartheid government must depend on the extent to which it has transcended the practices of its predecessors, and has managed to deal effectively with the legacy of apartheid’²¹ and for many APF (and other) activists, the government has not succeeded in this regard. Instead, several activists have based their challenge to the state’s legitimacy on the assertion that the legacy of apartheid ‘is being entrenched and even strengthened by the current government’s policies’ with the implication that some of ‘those who were disadvantaged under apartheid continue to be so under the new dispensation’.²² Moreover, being legitimately elected through various democratic electoral procedures does not necessarily ensure democracy in practice. Commenting on the ANC’s rule, Pretorius suggested that ‘[t]he party’s tendency to discount diversity of interests, to persist with claims to superior understanding of complex issues and to preach hegemony as a virtue might signify government *over* the people rather than government *by* the people’.²³

In sum, the mid-1990s was not a period of complete absence of opposition. Instead, it should be interpreted as a period of significant ideological conflict within the Alliance and attendant criticism of government policy, which provided both a basis and a context for the emergence of the ‘new’ social movements. By acknowledging this dimension of the political opportunity structure one avoids the pitfall of depicting the new social movements as though they suddenly burst onto the scene out of nowhere. In reality, even though many of the so-called new social movements were new in form, the content of their struggles is rooted in earlier protests against the inequalities that were enforced under apartheid, particularly those related to basic services and housing. Moreover, some of the activists in the new social movements are former members of the Alliance and others had been involved in UDF structures and other ‘political traditions and ideological tendencies with a long history of struggle’.²⁴

²⁰ R. Ballard, A. Habib, D. Ngcobo & I. Valodia, ‘Globalization, Marginalization, and Contemporary Social Movements in South Africa’ (Centre for Civil Society, 2003), p. 13. Available at <http://www.nu.ac.za/ccs/>

²¹ R. Greenstein, ‘State, Civil Society and the Reconfiguration of Power in Post-Apartheid South Africa.’ Centre for Civil Society, Research Report No. 8 (CCS, Durban, 2003), p. 42.

²² Ibid.

²³ L. Pretorius, ‘Government *by* or *over* the People? The African National Congress’s Conception of Democracy’, *Social Identities*, 12, 6 (2006), p. 745, emphasis in original.

²⁴ McKinley & Naidoo, ‘New Social Movements’, p. 13.

While these new social movements symbolised, in many respects, ‘a return to the civic form’ they differ from their protest predecessors in that their struggles occur in the absence of ‘political party leadership’.²⁵ This can partly be explained by the fact that, in the early years of many of the ‘new’ social movements, there was a strong current of more autonomist and anti-party politics, which was possibly underscored by a conscious decision by some of the activists to avoid the ideological domination that they had witnessed in the transition, when the ANC became increasingly hegemonic.²⁶ But there was also the structural reality of the absence of political parties to the left of the ANC and its allies. A related discontinuity between the anti- and post-apartheid protests is that at the height of the struggle in the 1980s, ‘there were community, youth, student and worker formations *already in existence nationally*’.²⁷ In contrast, part of the task of the early post-apartheid struggles was to actively seek out and bring together the isolated critical voices into a more coherent formation that was able to challenge the democratic government. This was not an easy undertaking, since some of the ANC dissidents within the alliance who openly criticised GEAR eventually backed-down and fell into line. Some decided to fight their battles with the ANC, SACP and COSATU from their vantage point within alliance structures. Others refused to yield and were stripped of, or resigned from, their posts. Others still were expelled. Some of those who were marginalised carved out spaces for themselves in the new social movements.

Critics on the left suggest that, as a consequence of nodding in a neo-liberal direction, the government is increasingly unable to deliver on its promise of a ‘better life for all’²⁸ and that ‘[n]ew social movements have emerged in response to the failures of a democratic state’ ... in the very spaces opened up as a result of the failure of the tactical approaches and strategic visions of the traditional formations to offer any meaningful response to the changing conditions affecting their equally traditional constituencies’.²⁹ The early post-apartheid years were thus characterised by an opening up of democratic spaces that

²⁵ Greenberg & Ndlovu, ‘Civil Society Relationships’, p. 41.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 41-42.

²⁷ N. Benjamin, ‘Organisation Building and Mass Mobilisation’, *Development Update*, 5, 2 (2004), p. 90, emphasis added.

²⁸ A. Desai, ‘Neo-Liberalism and its Discontents: The Rise of Community Movements in Post-Apartheid South Africa.’ Centre for Civil Society, Research Report (2002), p. 14. Available at <http://www.nu.ac.za/ccs/>; McKinley & Naidoo, ‘New Social Movements’, p. 11; D. McKinley & A. Veriava, *Arresting Dissent: State Repression and Post-Apartheid Social Movements* (Centre for Violence and Reconciliation, Braamfontein, 2005), p. 25.

²⁹ McKinley & Naidoo, ‘New Social Movements’, pp. 9, 14-15.

were conducive to the emergence of the kinds of social movements that crystallised on South Africa's political landscape after apartheid.

Ideological Underpinnings of the APF

The APF, although officially launched in September 2000, actually came into being earlier in 2000 amidst two important anti-privatisation struggles, namely the opposition to iGoli 2002, a plan for municipal restructuring which entailed increasing involvement by private companies in the provision of basic services, and Wits 2001, which was a two-pronged restructuring plan aimed at downsizing the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits University) by streamlining the service departments (which involved reducing the number of auxiliary staff) and trimming the number of faculties from eight to five (which entailed amalgamating some of the smaller academic departments and creating interdisciplinary schools).

The iGoli 2002 policy, prepared in 1997, represented a blueprint for a new model of local government that was applied to the whole of South Africa. Amongst other things, iGoli 2002 allowed municipalities to enter into contracts with private companies to outsource the management and distribution of basic services. City councillors and ANC officials believed that iGoli 2002 'offered greater autonomy and flexibility to the management of the service to introduce commercial management practices to the delivery system'.³⁰ Cost recovery and financial sustainability were key driving forces behind iGoli 2002. Councillors firmly believed that the commercialisation of service delivery would allow for improved service delivery and would increase the likelihood that users would pay for services. An opposing view came from others, notably trade unions, but also from members of the SACP, who argued that iGoli 2002 was a strategy that would cause further divisions in an already divided Johannesburg.³¹ In 1999 the South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) lodged a formal complaint against the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, labelling the process that gave birth to iGoli 2002 as undemocratic and accusing the city councillors of being arrogant owing to their lack of consultation in the matter.³² As both municipal workers and 'medium or low income consumers' of basic services, SAMWU members were at risk of

³⁰ City of Johannesburg. 2001. *City of Johannesburg: An African City in Change* (Zebra Press, Johannesburg, 2001), p. 32.

³¹ J. Beall, O. Crankshaw & S. Parnell, *Uniting a Divided City: Governance and Social Exclusion in Johannesburg* (Earthscan, London, 2002), p. 99.

³² Ibid. pp. 99-100.

experiencing a ‘double vulnerability’ to corporatised services, which explains why the union was sympathetic to the APF.³³ The anti-iGoli 2002 caucus, some of whom were absorbed into the APF, regarded the policy itself as a neoliberal, anti-labour, anti-poor and business-orientated document that would result in job losses (particularly those held by municipal workers), a decline in labour standards and increased costs for poor and working class consumers.³⁴

APF activists have accused the ANC of having double standards, which, they argue, are an outcome of its contradictory ideology. For APF supporter, Eddie Cottle, ‘the biggest onslaught against socialist ideology in South Africa is to be found in the backward orientation of the ... ANC and its alliance partners who subscribe to a thesis of a two-stage revolution, precisely because it still holds the aspirations of large sections of ordinary people.’³⁵ In this vein, Bricks Mokolo, former chairperson of the APF offered the following view:

COSATU, SACP they claim that they are socialist ... and then it’s easy for people to start recruiting or mobilising people under the name of socialism. Socialism for some people is just a step-ladder to capitalism. It is the same like in previous years whereby people were addressing people with black consciousness politics or philosophy in the black communities. ... They are for capitalism. When you chant socialist politics, or socialist slogans, people think, ‘Oh! He is a socialist’ and then they vote for him. ... How many socialists and communists are in parliament? The Minister of Safety and Security³⁶ is the chairperson of the SACP, but what is he doing now? When the workers are marching in the street, he sends in the police. Now I’m afraid of the comrades from COSATU and SACP telling the people they are socialists, because they are not.³⁷

³³ Afrol, ‘SA Unions see Hope for Economic Recovery’, *Afrol*, 19 August 2003; F. Barchiesi, ‘Classes, Multitudes and the Politics of Community Movements in Post-Apartheid South Africa.’ In N. Gibson (Ed.). *Challenging Hegemony: Social Movements and the Quest for a New Humanism in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. (Africa World Press, Trenton, New Jersey & Asmara, 2006), p. 233.

³⁴ J. Pape & D. A. McDonald, ‘Introduction.’ In McDonald & Pape (Eds). *Cost Recovery and the Crisis of Service Delivery in South Africa* (HSRC Press & Zed Books, Cape Town, London & New York, 2002), pp. 6-7; see also Beall et al., *Uniting a Divided City* for a useful tabulated summary of the iGoli 2002 debate, pp. 101-102.

³⁵ E. Cottle, ‘Ideology and Social Movements’, *Development Update*, 5, 2 (2004), p. 99.

³⁶ Mokolo was referring here to Charles Nqakula, who held the position of Minister of Safety and Security at the time of the interview.

³⁷ Mokolo, Interview, 24 August 2006.

The government's perceived duplicity was further highlighted by Thabo Modisane, an activist in the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, one of the APF's largest affiliates. He accused COSATU leaders of being 'class-collaborators.' He justified his claim in the following way:

They defend the bosses. They just close our eyes, and say, 'we are socialists', but when we disperse, they negotiate with the capitalists, and the bosses, and tomorrow they come and say they are socialists, but at the same time they are on the capitalist's side. While we march [together], COSATU is socialist, SACP is socialist, but on our [own] march, why they don't support our march to show us we are all socialists? Why is the leadership of communist party dominating in parliament? ... All the socialists [during the liberation struggle] are the leaders now. They are there in the parliament. So if the SACP says, 'We are socialist', they must bring back all the leaders down here on the ground, and come back and fight. That is why we say they are class collaborators, because they talk with us like this, then after we [have] left, they talk like that. They've got two languages.³⁸

Silumko Radebe, the APF's former national organiser also spoke of the state's hypocrisy: '[I]t was quite interesting to see them [the government] as well coming on board to say, "We are for the people of Palestine; we are for the people of Lebanon," but also not wanting to spoil their relations with Israel, so they always get themselves caught in a 50/50 situation'.³⁹ Mokolo moreover raised the concern that 'the ANC does not tell them [the people] that, "We, the ANC and the National Party, we are one today."' He was referring here to the former ruling party, which, in 1994 became known as the New National Party (NNP), and which was disbanded following the 2004 national elections. Under the leadership of Marthinus van Schalkwyk, many NNP representatives subsequently joined forces with the ANC.⁴⁰ Mokolo continued:

³⁸ Modisane, Interview, 4 April 2006.

³⁹ Radebe, Interview, 1 September 2006.

⁴⁰ Mokolo, Interview, 24 August 2006.

The National Party and the ANC are the capitalists. That is why it was easy for them to come together, to click. It's easy; they are not even fighting. The ANC can fight SACP, it can fight COSATU, it can fight PAC, but it cannot fight the National Party. All the nationalists who joined the ANC [albeit a small number], they are settled. They are enjoying their positions. They feel that they are still in the same party. Now this is what the people are not aware of. From the communists, SACP, COSATU leaders, they also try to open spaces for themselves to get into the capitalist group so they can enjoy the benefits. There is no more solidarity because everyone cares for himself now.⁴¹

The move toward more individualistic modes of operation are, according to Dale McKinley, partly the result of governments – which had initially endorsed a ‘commons’ approach to the provision of resources like water – caving in the face of a situation ‘where now those things are no longer ideologically popular ... because neo-liberalism has come’.⁴² ANC Councillor, Themba Hlatshwayo, who represents Ward 25 in Soweto (which covers Klipruit, Pimville Zone 1, 2, 6 and Power Park) elaborated on the reasons behind the government’s conscious ideological shift:

I think if you put forward the ticket of socialism, you are lost. Before 1994, I was a member of the Communist Party. I was pushing seriously that ticket, but after 1994 I’m no longer pushing that ticket. Everything is changing so speedily. Socialism is not going to make it in this country. You can’t push that ticket. You’ll die even if you win. In fact the whole world is going in the direction of the capitalists, mixed economy and so on, so why don’t we follow?⁴³

Reflecting on what he considered an ideological turnaround within the ANC-led alliance, Mokolo lamented: ‘I didn’t like the way ANC shifted from politics that people were expecting. ... People thought the ANC was a socialist party, but then after 1994, very few

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² McKinley, Interview, 10 August 2006.

⁴³ Hlatshwayo, Interview, 15 March 2007.

people realised that the ANC is not a socialist party and that the ANC has shifted. ... It's like a business, so it's easy for them to be co-opted into the system.'⁴⁴ Mokolo added that

[s]ome of the councillors were activists ... [but they] forgot where they come from. ... [D]uring apartheid, our struggle against apartheid was going along with solidarity. Some people were boycotting rent [payments] to show solidarity with those who don't have money and now today the leaders who are in the government they forgot about solidarity, now they started speaking the same language as the ... apartheid leaders. They forgot about everything and then they start blaming the poor.⁴⁵

Ideological tensions between the APF and the ANC are largely rooted in the government's adoption and implementation of what the APF and other critics on the left regard as a neoliberal macro-economic policy in the form of GEAR. Commenting on the ANC's abandonment of the already watered-down, but ostensibly pro-poor, policies that were embodied in the RDP, Radebe notes:

It [ANC] has clearly shown itself since 1996 ... that it is for neo-liberal policies; it's for the capitalists; it's for business. It has made those commitments to business at the expense of the people. ... [H]aving hopes that the ANC will change is more like waiting for Jesus to return.⁴⁶

However, prior to 1994, the ANC lacked a specific, coherent economic programme and had never fully committed itself to a socialist revolution. Thus, the leap to present-day public-private partnerships in service delivery is not indicative of a sharp ideological about-turn. Reflecting on Rosenthal's work, Beinart's introductory chapter draws attention to the career path of people like Amos Masondo, for example, from leadership roles in the civics to positions of power, either at the level of the local state or in the private sector. Some analysts put forward a betrayal thesis, which very likely stemmed from the disjuncture between what that ANC said and what it did. But the APF realised early on that there was a growing

⁴⁴ Mokolo, Interview, 24 August 2006.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Radebe, Interview, 1 September 2006.

political gap as far as championing the interests of the working class was concerned and it positioned itself and framed its demands accordingly.

As far as service delivery is concerned, the City of Johannesburg, of which Amos Masondo is the mayor, has not followed a full-scale privatisation route in the sense of a wholesale selling-off of state assets. Instead, the City has opted for a corporate model that has allowed for state-owned – but privately managed – utilities to take over some of the functions of the municipality. For many municipalities faced with added responsibilities and financial pressures following the process of local government restructuring after 1994, transferring service responsibilities onto state-owned utilities, or entering into long-term contracts with service providing companies, seemed an attractive option. Water services in Johannesburg are under the control of Johannesburg Water (sometimes referred to as the Johannesburg Water Company or JOWCO), which operates as a corporatised municipal utility. The management of its water and sanitation services were outsourced to Johannesburg Water Management (JOWAM), a ‘specialised water and sanitation management consortium,’ which, at the time of conducting this research, was jointly owned by Ondeo (a subsidiary of the French water multinational Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux) and two of its subsidiaries, namely Northumbrian Water (based in the UK) and the Water and Sanitation Services South Africa (the local subsidiary).⁴⁷ The City of Johannesburg envisaged Johannesburg Water as a utility that ‘would operate without significant financial transfers from the City of Johannesburg, and indeed might be so efficient that it could operate at a slight profit’.⁴⁸

The approach to the management and distribution of water services depends largely on the way in which water is conceived. Some – notably local government councillors and representatives from Johannesburg Water, but also township residents who are employed – argue that water, despite being a public good, goes through a number of processes (collection, storage, treatment and piping) in order to ‘deliver’ it into people’s homes. These processes cost money, hence their argument that water is a commodity. Proponents of this view also stress that the only way to teach people to use water responsibly is to make them pay for it.

⁴⁷ Public Citizen, Anti-Privatisation Forum, & Coalition Against Water Privatisation, ‘Nothing for Mahala: The Forced Installation of Prepaid Water Meters in Stretford, Extension 4, Orange Farm, Johannesburg, South Africa.’ A Report by Public Citizen, APF & CAWP (2004), p. 8. Available at <http://www.wateractivist.org>; City of Johannesburg, ‘Reflecting on a Solid Foundation: Building Developmental Local Government’ (2006), p. 31. Available at <http://www.joburg.org.za/>

⁴⁸ City of Johannesburg, ‘Reflecting on a Solid Foundation: Building Developmental Local Government’ (2006), p. 113. Available at <http://www.joburg.org.za/>

For example, ANC Councillor, Mandla Mtshali, who was responsible for Ward 19 in Soweto, suggested:

People do not respect water. They don't know how they are blessed with water. ... [O]ne opens the tap, and puts the washing under the tap, and then goes to watch *The Bold and the Beautiful*. Do you mean that particular person does not have the money to pay? He is overspending the water that is being provided for free.⁴⁹

If one were to accept this view, privatisation and cost-recovery strategies would be the logical operating principle. Indeed, as part of the government's cost recovery plan, and in accordance with the terms of iGoli 2002, Johannesburg Water launched 'Operation *Gcin'amanzi*' (which means 'conserving water'), in terms of which prepaid water meters were installed in homes across Soweto.⁵⁰ However, an alternative viewpoint centres on the argument that even if the processing of water costs money, as a public good and a basic need, it should remain decommodified, and the associated costs should not be borne by the end-users, particularly not at the household level. The negative consequences of PPMs on end-users are well documented, but it is beyond the scope of this chapter to expand on this discussion here.⁵¹ The APF notes that '[t]here is politics behind the prepaid meters for the private sector to make money. The motive is profit'.⁵² The shift from public to private sector provision of basic resources is aligned with 'somebody's particular class agenda, so of course, if you're sitting on that side of the class fence, then yes, it's going to make absolute sense for you to want to charge for water and to privatise it and to squeeze poor people. And the other side doesn't'.⁵³ Since the APF accepts the premise that water is a public good and a basic necessity, not a

⁴⁹ Mtshali, Interview, 18 July 2006.

⁵⁰ For information on how the PPM should work in practice, see Johannesburg Water. 'Prepayment Water Meter.' (Johannesburg Water, n.d.), p. 1 and Johannesburg Water. 'Operation Gcin'amanzi: FreePayment User Guide.' (Johannesburg Water, n.d.), p. 4, 8-9.

⁵¹ See for example Public Citizen, APF & CAWP, 'Nothing for Mahala'; CAWP, 'The Struggle Against Silent Disconnections: Prepaid Meters and the Struggle For Life in Phiri, Soweto.' (CAWP, Johannesburg, 2004); E. Harvey, 'Managing the Poor by Remote Control: Johannesburg's Experiments with Prepaid Water Meters.' In D. A. McDonald & G. Ruiters (eds). *The Age of Commodity: Water Privatisation in Southern Africa*. (Earthscan, London, 2005), pp. 120-127; E. Harvey, 'The Commodification of Water in Soweto and its Implications for Social Justice,' Ph.D. Thesis (University of the Witwatersrand, 2007); Dawson, 'Social Movements', pp. 195-236.

⁵² Mokolo, Interview, 24 August 2006.

⁵³ McKinley, Interview, 10 August 2006.

commodity, the organisation considers it unacceptable for water to be ‘mediated by the market’.⁵⁴ Prepaid meters would thus be ‘out of the question, precisely because water is ... something that is an absolute human necessity. It’s necessary as a public good; as a public right – if you want to talk about it in terms of rights, human, constitutional or otherwise – so the question of the recovery of costs to deliver that, does not come into the equation’.⁵⁵ In a similar vein, Radebe argued,

[W]e have to look at it [water] as a universal issue whereby everybody has right to access it, whether you might be well off or poor ... I think it’s a fundamental human right that a person has to have access to water, and the way that the government and the private sector has taken up the issue of water as a commodity, that in itself sparks an anger from the community that we have to look at water as a commodity; something that we must buy.⁵⁶

Radebe went on to compare water with other basic services, like electricity, for example, pointing out that while there may be alternatives for electricity, such as gas or paraffin, nothing can replace water.⁵⁷ Along these lines, Mokolo insisted that ‘[people] have got the right to drink water. People can live without coca-cola, without beer. They can distance themselves from that, but they cannot distance themselves from water.’⁵⁸

Linking commodification of basic services to prepaid meters and oppression, Modisane argued:

Prepaid is ... the way they want to recover that debt, but people cannot afford to pay, because the people are not working. The prepaid [meters] cause problems [amongst] the poor, because if you haven’t got money, you haven’t got water. ... You must pay before you use, and that is oppressing the poor. The poor haven’t got the right to free basic services. They must

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Radebe, Interview, 1 September 2006.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Mokolo, Interview, 24 August 2006.

buy their own basic services. But they [the government] keep on promising, but at the same time, they attack them with the prepaid.⁵⁹

From discussions with APF activists, it was quite clear that oppression was not being experienced to the same degree by all black people. While opportunities in the post-apartheid era facilitated the emergence of a miniscule black elite and a burgeoning black middle class, persistent race and class inequalities continue to be experienced most acutely poor black Africans, many of whom are unemployed or rely on limited grants or casual, insecure forms of employment that provide them with irregular and meagre incomes. Under such circumstances it is difficult – and, in some cases, impossible – to pay for basic services. Modisane explained:

The owners of these [Soweto] homes are old now and they get [a] pension [of R780] and of that ... they want R200 for electricity, R200 for water and then they've got [an] extended family; maybe there are ten [people in the household] and then the balance for those people is R400 which must serve the whole family for the whole month. [Do] you think R400 or R300 ... is enough? It's not enough.⁶⁰

Highlighting dimensions of change and continuity in past and present periods of popular protest, Lehlohonolo, a Pimville (Soweto) resident who is sympathetic to the views of the APF, pointed out that, 'in the liberation movement we were looking at state intervention, more than anything. Water, health care – those are basics, so we didn't foresee a situation where we will be buying those basic services which make people to survive, so for me there is something wrong at the political level.' He added that the country 'seem[s] to be adopting what some people, call neoliberalism, and that's the kind of policy that is saying we must buy water. It is saying we must privatise more and more. For us it's really a step backwards in terms of what the people have been fighting for in the past'.⁶¹ From these discussions it is evident that championing the cause of public ownership and provision of water services is not a novel issue that emerged simultaneously with the rise of the social movements in the late

⁵⁹ Modisane, Interview, 4 April 2006.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Lehlohonolo, Interview, 7 July 2006, Pimville.

1990s. Indeed Rosenthal's chapter (in this volume) shows that there were socialist strands within the resistance movements under apartheid, but that these tendencies were less dominant than those that promoted democracy and entrepreneurship. Thus, while the ideological roots of some of the new social movements can be traced back to community resistance movements under the apartheid regime, the key difference is that socialism is being vehemently and openly espoused by the leaders of some of the contemporary social movements.

Ideology in Action: Continuity and Change in Street Politics

The APF has threaded its anti-capitalist ideology through its mobilisation efforts as a way of bringing about coherence between what the organisation says and what it does. As part of its campaign against the commodification of water, the APF has engaged in protest action such as marches and street rallies that have drawn crowds of different sizes, ranging from a few hundred to tens of thousands. Banners on these demonstrations typically read, 'Our Water is not for Sale!', *Amanzi Ngawethu* (The water is ours) or '*Phansi* Privatisation! *Phansi!*' (Down with privatisation) and are sometimes emblazoned with pictures of padlocked taps to symbolise that access to water is denied to some as a result of the increased costs attached to the provision of the service. During these demonstrations, protesters are generally jubilant. '*Amandla!*' (the power) is often shouted out at rallies, on marches and at meetings before a speaker addresses the crowd, and the people assembled respond, '*Ngawethu*' or '*Awethu!*' (is ours). This rallying cry is commonly associated with the ANC during the liberation struggle, but is still used today by the ruling party and by social movements like the APF. Demonstrators also *toyi-toyi*⁶², chant slogans and sing many of the same 'struggle songs' that were sung at anti-apartheid demonstrations, fund-raising concerts and mass rallies in South Africa and abroad, as well as in prisons across South Africa and at the training camps where soldiers were being prepared for the armed struggle.

At its AGM in 2007, the APF launched a CD of 'working class songs', which was produced in the 'backyard shack studio' of one of the activists who lives in Sebokeng, in the Vaal region. The APF regards the songs as 'a source of energy' that provides communities and APF members with a 'sense of solidarity and determination in the struggles'.⁶³ Moreover,

⁶² A militant dance associated with anti-apartheid protest action, but still performed today during demonstrations.

⁶³ Anti-Privatisation Forum, 'APF Launches CD of Songs.' Press Release, 5 May 2007.

the Forum claims that ‘the CD [reflects] how the APF has been handed over a baton of struggle and resistance by the movement that struggled and defeated apartheid in a formal sense. The cultural heritage that comes from the anti-apartheid struggle and the mass struggles of the 1980s continue to inspire members of the APF and working class communities. The older generation of APF members were part of the liberation movement and songs [o]n the CD reflect this’.⁶⁴ One of the songs, ‘*We Nyamazane Yiyo Ehlala Ehlathini*’ (which, roughly translated, means, ‘The prey lives in the bush’), deals with ‘freedom fighters’ who lived in exile:

It has also been adapted to suit new conditions. One of the lines in the song shows the link between the liberation fighters of that time and the APF today. It also calls upon the working class and the poor to join the APF and become self-liberators under the new conditions of capitalist neoliberalism.⁶⁵

These sentiments are clear in the song ‘*Amanzi Ngawethu*’, meaning ‘The water is ours’:

[This song] is sung during struggles against water privatisation, water cut-offs, and the installation of water pre-paid meters in the townships. The song tells the ANC government, local authorities and private water companies that access to water is a basic human right and therefore should not be privatised.⁶⁶

The song, ‘That’s Why I am a Socialist’, which is sung regularly on marches and at meetings, ‘is an attempt at defining a vision of, and for, the APF. Socialism here means an egalitarian society governed and controlled by producers of wealth. It is about a society free from wars, occupation, xenophobia, oppression of women and imperialism’.⁶⁷ Some of the songs are sung in Zulu, some in English, and others in a combination of languages. The APF songs reflect a combination of past and present activism. Some of them predate the existence of the

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

APF, but the lyrics of widely-known struggle songs have been adapted to suit the context of post-national liberation resistance and new lyrics have been set to well-known beats and melodies. However, some of the songs are distinctive APF creations that have been newly penned and composed. Most of the songs express a desire for an end to social and economic exploitation.

Other forms of street politics – reminiscent of the struggle against apartheid – have included threatening local government representatives. In 2001, supporters of the SECC stormed on the home of Councillor Ndhlovu of Ward 22 (Pimville, Soweto) and destroyed his electricity meter. In 2002, SECC and APF supporters marched to Amos Masondo's home to confront him on the issue of unaffordable, corporatised services. Mobilisation efforts have also included sit-ins at the offices of Eskom and various forms of direct action aimed at reclaiming people's power. 'Operation *Khanyisa*', which means 'Operation Light Up', refers to the SECC's scheme to re-connect residents whose electricity supply was cut by Eskom to the electricity grid. Eskom responded by launching an advertising campaign that depicts self-reconnection as a criminal activity and urges people to report illegal connections.

When trenches were dug in 2003 to lay water pipes in Phiri as part of Operation *Gcin'amanzi*⁶⁸ residents filled them up to halt the progress of the installation of prepaid water meters. Johannesburg Water then obtained a court interdict preventing community residents and supporters of the APF and the SECC from coming within 50 metres of sites where Operation *Gcin'amanzi* was being carried out.⁶⁹ 'Operation *Vulamanzi*' (literally meaning to open the water, but translated as 'Water for All') represents another direct action strategy informed by the APF's socialist ideology to reclaim public ownership and control of water. Inspired and assisted by the APF, thousands of residents of poor communities in Johannesburg have enabled the water to flow by removing and destroying prepaid meters and reconnecting residents to the water supply without the interference of these meters. This tactic is now widespread, being carried out by groups and individuals beyond the APF. In 2004 and again in 2006, protestors marched on the Johannesburg Water offices, meters in hand, in an

⁶⁸ As part of the government's cost recovery plan, and in accordance with the terms of iGoli 2002, Johannesburg Water started introducing prepaid water meters into the homes of township residents. This project is called 'Operation *Gcin'amanzi*', which means 'conserving water'.

⁶⁹ D. McKinley, 'Water is Life: The Anti-Privatisation Forum and the Struggle Against Water Privatisation' (2003). Available at <http://www.sarpn.org.za/>

act of defiance against the installation of prepaid meters.⁷⁰ Those performing the reconnections are variously referred to as ‘struggle plumbers and electricians’ or ‘guerrilla technicians’. These direct action strategies are an integral part of the offensive against water prepaid meters launched by the APF and its affiliates. For example, a strategy used frequently by the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee (OWCC) involved blockading the main highway into Soweto and Orange Farm⁷¹. As Mokolo, a key figure in the OWCC, explained, ‘Highways are the arteries and veins of the capitalist body’.⁷² As such, they connect townships to the city and wealthier suburbs and serve as a link between workers and their workplaces.⁷³

Alongside its street struggles and direct action repertoires, the APF also participated in a legal battle against Johannesburg Water, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) and the City of Johannesburg⁷⁴. Considering its efforts on the streets and in the courts, it could be argued that the APF has followed a ‘legal-activist route’ in its water struggles, which according to Greenstein aims to ‘change policy but also to put in place an expanded definition of rights that may have implications beyond each specific case ... [and thus] ... potentially poses a fundamental challenge to the organisation and the reach of state power’.⁷⁵

The final aspect of continuity and change in street protests that will be addressed here deals with the post-apartheid state’s efforts at clamping down on popular protest by social movements, which have reminded many APF activists of South Africa’s apartheid past. Some

⁷⁰ C. Smith, ‘Guerrilla Technicians Challenge the Privatization of South Africa’s Public Resources.’ *In These Times*, 30 August 2002. Available at <http://www.inthesetimes.com/>; McKinley, ‘Water is Life’; J. Beall, ‘Decentralizing Government and Decentering Gender: Lessons From Local Government Reform in South Africa’, *Politics and Society*, 33, 2 (2005), p. 263; A. Earle, J. Goldin & P. Kgomo, ‘Domestic Water Provision in the Democratic South Africa – Changes and Challenges.’ Paper produced for the Nordic Africa Institute’s Conflicting Forms of Citizenship Programme (2005), p. 22; M. M. Kavanagh, ‘South Africa’s Freedom Charter at 50’, *ZMag* (2005). Available at <http://zmagsite.zmag.org/>

⁷¹ A township situated approximately 45 kilometres south of Johannesburg.

⁷² Anti-Privatisation Forum, ‘Orange Farm Residents Continue Protest Actions to Demand Basic Services.’ **Press Release, 13 September 2006.** Available at <http://www.polarisinstitute.org>

⁷³ For more on the water struggles of the OWCC, see Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee, Anti-Privatisation Forum, & Coalition Against Water Privatisation, ‘Destroy the Meter / Enjoy Free Water’ (OWCC, APF, CAWP, Johannesburg, 2004). Available at http://apf.org.za/IMG/pdf/orange_farm_prepaid_booklet.pdf

⁷⁴ It is beyond the scope of this chapter to elaborate on the court case. More information can be found in Dawson, ‘Social Movements’, 2008, pp. 294-304; J. Dugard. ‘Rights, Regulation and Resistance: The Phiri Water Rights Campaign’, *South African Journal of Human Rights*, 24, 3 (2009); J. Dugard. ‘Legal Mobilisation in the Struggle for Water in Phiri, Soweto.’ In A. Nilsen & S. Motta (eds). *Social Movements and the Development of Resistance in the Global South*. (Palgrave, London, 2010).

⁷⁵ R. Greenstein, ‘State, Civil Society and the Reconfiguration of Power in Post-Apartheid South Africa.’ Centre for Civil Society, Research Report 8: 1-56 (CCS, Durban, 2003), p. 37.

of those directly involved in the APF argue that, despite significant changes between the former and current political regimes in South Africa, ‘the mindsets and practices that structured apartheid responses to dissent and conflict have crept into our new democracy’.⁷⁶ Silumko Radebe went as far as to say that ‘[w]hat we have witnessed in the past six years of the APF has been state repression at its highest, highest, highest force’.⁷⁷ Other APF activists, however, adopted a more measured view. For example deputy chair, John Appolis, suggested that while the state’s response to protests by social movements has indeed exhibited highly repressive behaviour, the ANC government has not shifted completely into ‘a phase of repression’.⁷⁸ In response to what some APF activists have perceived as increased levels of repression the organisation has stepped up its struggle. As McKinley explained, ‘The state’s response of repression and delegitimisation, of attacking [verbally] as well as describing people as ultra-left, as anarchists ... creates ... an environment where ... the social movements themselves and the community organisations that make them up begin to respond to that. It creates a much more confrontational situation.’⁷⁹ Dissidents have been harshly dealt with in the state’s effort to ‘manufacture consent’. In the arena of basic services, however, APF activists have stood their ground. As is often the case, efforts to clamp down on civil liberties tend to be met with increased commitment to one’s principles and goals and, in line with this trend, the APF has not shown any signs of backing down and falling in line with the kind of ideology that underpins the government’s economic policies and its approach to service delivery. Commenting on the activities of the OWCC, McKinley and Veriava noted that, ‘[r]ather than quieten the OWCC, such attacks spurred the organisation to intensify and broaden its community activism and strengthen its view that the politics of the ANC, its local representative and the policies flowing from the state institutions it controls had become the main “enemy” of the community’.⁸⁰ Thus, instead of repression leading to movements being squashed, it encourages the movements to enter into new and broader terrains of struggle. Histories of resistance – in South Africa and elsewhere – are replete with examples of this trend. Even in cases where a movement is disbanded, the ideology of the movement does not necessarily evaporate, thus allowing for ideological continuity over time.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 44.

⁷⁷ Radebe, Interview, 1 September 2006.

⁷⁸ Appolis, Interview, 30 March 2007.

⁷⁹ McKinley, Interview, 10 August 2006.

⁸⁰ McKinley and Veriava, *Arresting Dissent*, pp. 41-42.

The themes of continuity and change are evident in the work of Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow. In his work, *The Contentious French*, Tilly introduced the concept ‘repertoires of contention’, which he used to refer to ‘the whole set of means [a group] has for making claims of different kinds on different individuals or groups’.⁸¹ In a later publication on popular protest in Britain between 1758 and 1834, Tilly refined the definition to read, ‘the ways that people act together in pursuit of shared interests’.⁸² Customary social movement repertoires include, for example, peaceful demonstrations, sit-ins, effective use of the media, destruction of property and other, more violent forms of protest. On one hand Tilly emphasised the importance of continuity in collective action and, commenting on this aspect of his work, Tarrow suggested that repertoires should ‘involv[e] not only what people do when they are engaged in conflict with others but what they *know how to do* and what others *expect* them to do’.⁸³ On the other hand, however, Tilly also acknowledged that repertoires need to be sensitive and responsive to the context.⁸⁴ Similarly, Tarrow suggested that these modes of mobilisation depend heavily on ‘major fluctuations in interests, opportunity and organization’,⁸⁵ which implies that repertoires can and should change over historical periods since certain modes of protest, no matter how well-versed activists are with the repertoires, may lose their effectiveness or may become obsolete, while others become much more striking and convincing. Continuity and change in popular protest – whether ideological or in terms of the modes of protest that are employed – can therefore be understood as a particular form of political expression through which movements are built.

Conclusion

Assessing the global picture of popular protest, Dwyer and Seddon point out that ‘[t]owards the end of the 1980s and certainly in the early 1990s ... popular protest was already ... becoming increasingly “political”, both in the sense of [being] self conscious, organised and

⁸¹ C. Tilly, *The Contentious French* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1986), p. 2.

⁸² C. Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834*. (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1995), p. 41.

⁸³ S. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 2nd edition (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998) p. 30, emphasis in original.

⁸⁴ C. Tilly, *The Contentious French*.

⁸⁵ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, p. 31.

orchestrated, and in the ideological sense of having longer term aims and objectives than “protest””.⁸⁶ Some of South Africa’s new social movements tend to fit in with this global picture. For example, the APF’s approach to grassroots mobilisation has sought to point out how daily struggles around poverty, inequality, lack of access to services, housing evictions, exclusion and unemployment are inextricably linked to the ANC’s adoption and implementation of a neoliberal economic policy, and also to imperialism at a regional, international and global level. Thus, the APF is not only fighting against national capital and the black elite in South Africa. Popular politics in the post-apartheid context is defined by the APF as a struggle against neoliberalism and global capitalism. As such, the struggles of the APF, although nominally issue-based, are inherently ideological and thus wide-ranging.

A closer look at the ideological currents within the Alliance reveals that, within certain quarters, socialism was never upheld as an objective. Instead, the overarching goal was always to incorporate black people into the capitalist economic system. Under the ANC’s rule, however, large sections of the black population remain poor and unemployed. The broadly-defined socialist ideology of the APF pits the movement against the ANC-led alliance, whose pro-capitalist politics clearly have not benefitted the majority of the population. There has been no trickle-down effect from the rich to the poor. The country’s wealth is still firmly in the hands of an elite, a small part of which is black. Informed by its socialist ideology, the APF’s mobilisation strategies around water, for example, are geared towards gaining equal access to, and public ownership and control of, the resource. Some of the mobilisation efforts of the APF have evoked a hostile response from the government. Brutal means of control are employed by the police, reminding many activists of state repression during the 1980s.

Organisations like the APF came to the fore from the late 1990s onwards, not only to resist and oppose the ANC’s ideological stance, but also to remind the ruling party of the promises it had made. The APF, for example, has continued to engage in struggles aimed at re-prioritising some of the objectives that are spelled out in the Freedom Charter and the original demands that were put forward during the liberation struggle, but it also attempts to go beyond these goals. The Forum’s attempts to nurture a socialist consciousness at the grassroots level have thus not been forged in a post-apartheid vacuum. Instead, the

⁸⁶ P. Dwyer & D. Seddon, ‘The New Wave? A Global Perspective on Popular Protest.’ In C. Barker & M. Tyldesley (Eds). *8th International Conference on Alternative Futures and Popular Protest Conference Proceedings* (2002), Manchester Metropolitan University.

organisation argues that its efforts have been directed at reclaiming and re-introducing the socialist alternatives that were proposed by many of the same people who were involved in the liberation struggle, but who distanced themselves from these alternatives when they began to occupy positions of power within the Alliance. While some of the APF's demands are reminiscent of those put forward during anti-apartheid struggles, these battles are now being fought in a changed political context alongside newer struggles that are symptomatic of contemporary socio-economic problems. A key difference between the apartheid period and the current political context is that there are indeed spaces for movements like the APF to operate without being forced to go underground. A certain measure of democracy has made this possible. However, the APF's struggles – which have been largely informed by dire socio-economic circumstances that affect the majority of the population – encourage a re-thinking of democracy in ways that reintroduce collective approaches to the political economy and to social organisation. In this way, the APF – ideologically and practically – actively resists top-down definitions of democracy that benefit a wafer-thin layer of society, and promotes more inclusive and more meaningful forms of democracy under which the majority of the population can flourish.