

Part II

WOMEN'S STRUGGLE
FOR DEMOCRACY

Which Workers, Which Women, What Interests? Race, Class, and Gender in Post-Apartheid South Africa¹

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INTRODUCTION

The title of this chapter comes from two main points that I made in a previous paper.² There I attempted to assess the challenges for NGOs and social movements five years after the first democratic government in South Africa. I noted that many of the workers who had founded the militant unions of the 1970s and 1980s, which came to form the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), are no longer members of trade unions today.³ Large numbers of these workers have been retrenched in the past decades and are mostly back in the rural areas. As they are predominantly unskilled, their labor is no longer required in industry, which requires both skilled labor and less labor. Hence, while the numbers of workers who make up COSATU membership remains relatively the same today, the numbers are kept constant by new entrants to the unions, largely white-collar workers, who come from areas such as the public sector and banking. The significance of this point is that it indicates that the militant workers who built the strong union movement have been casualties of the capitalist system. The question this raises is how their interests might be advanced, if at all, in the new South Africa today.

The second point I made in that paper was about women. I noted that the one group within South African society that has made gains in post-apartheid South Africa seems to be women. Yet if we look at which women have made gains it becomes clear that it is not black working-class or poor rural women who have made gains but rather mainly white women, as a result of empowerment strategies that aimed at making proportional the numbers of women workers in public and private sector institutions.

The significance of these two points, taken together with an assessment of how poor black rural dwellers are faring in the post-apartheid South Africa, indicates that the fault lines of the old South Africa are more or less intact. Some black folk and some women have entered the ranks of the elite. But by and large the interests of the majority of South Africa's citizens,

unskilled women and men, and those among the rural and urban poor, remain inadequately addressed.

This situation raises questions about the role of the post-apartheid state in redressing the imbalances created by apartheid capitalism and colonialism. It raises the question of why, despite the African National Congress's (ANC) stated commitment to addressing the needs of the majority, it appears to be failing to do so.

This situation also raises questions about the social movements that fought to bring an end to apartheid—questions of what has happened to these movements and to the individuals who helped to build and take them forward.

While the national democratic struggle privileged race, this has not translated into the interests of the majority of black people being met. An effective women's lobby succeeded in bringing gender under the spotlight within the transition and in the period of democratization, yet the benefits for women so far are shaped by the privileged race and class positions they bring with them from apartheid. The struggles of organized workers did not enable them to keep their jobs in the face of retrenchments and the growth of temporary jobs. This is because of the ways in which race, class, and gender systems of exploitation and oppression interact with and support the status quo.

The ways in which race, class, and gender dynamics simultaneously affect citizenship and democratization need to be considered. Most analyses of South Africa focus on either race and class dynamics, or both, and ignore gender. This results in flawed discussions of transitions, democracy, and citizenship as they fail to consider women's and men's differential experiences of race, class, and citizenship.

The overarching framework of the new government does not place the poor, or the eradication of the massive inequality within South African society, at the center of its agenda. Despite a rhetoric of concern for the poor, and a stated desire to end the injustices caused by apartheid, seven years into democratic rule the government's policies by and large continue to favor the historically privileged. Nor does the overarching framework particularly provide gains for the majority of South Africa's women. The ANC's shift to neoliberalism and the embracing of the Washington Consensus leads to favorable outcomes for a few and for lives of continued hardship for the majority. The former homelands continue to be the most poverty-stricken parts of the country, and together with urban shack settlements continue to re-create apartheid along the lines of race. Commissions are set up by the state to address poverty and issues such as moral regeneration, but these operate within the flawed neoliberal capitalist logic and can take us no closer to redressing the inequalities of our country.

There is little empirical evidence that South Africa is moving away from its position as one of the most unequal societies in the world. Poverty and

inequality take a racial, gendered, and spatial form. Are the same interests being served today as under apartheid, more or less? Are the same prior notions of citizenship in place?

The ANC, ostensibly a party driven by the dreams of the Freedom Charter and, in the run-up to the 1994 elections, by the promises of the Reconstruction and Development Program, has apparently given up these dreams and promises for austerity under its macro-economic GEAR (Growth Employment and Redistribution) policy—referred to as South Africa's homegrown structural adjustment policy.

The promise for the future lies in social movements/groupings in society emerging to make claims and hold the state accountable. Yet this seems to be slow in coming. The social movements of the 1980s and early 1990s are today non-existent or in disarray.

Critical questions for the present include: What has happened to the once strong civil society? What are the gaps and opportunities to shift state agendas? What are some of the actions that carry promise for change in the interests of poor rural and working women?

This chapter looks at some of the explanations offered for understanding the present context—explanations that highlight the transition as an elite pact that dealt with political questions but evaded key economic questions. It argues that movement organizations were able to make and win claims within the transition, particularly as a result of their position in the Tripartite Alliance of the ANC, COSATU, and SACP (South African Communist Party). These gains included the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), the stated policy of the ANC on the eve of elections; institutions such as the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) and the Office on the Status of Women (OSW) to advance women's rights; and significant numbers of COSATU leaders, SACP members, and women on the ANC list of parliamentarians. However, despite these gains, women's organizations and workers' movements⁴ have not been able to sustain their influence, and this has resulted in the government's dropping of the RDP and in economic policies that favor the interests of the rich and powerful.

A critical question for the present is how organizations and groupings representing the interests of the majority who continue to be economically marginalized should position themselves in relation to the state. This question is all the more vexing when the individuals who work the state apparatus today come from those very organizations and who were in many cases their founders. In other words, many in the state are the same people who built the movement organizations.

The crucial issue of maintaining links between the movement organizations and the institutions within the post-apartheid state has been neglected, as has the question of how these organizations may be sustained.

This chapter argues that engagement with state institutions and the state as a vehicle for redressing social inequalities was not sufficiently problematized by these organizations and movements. It was rather assumed that the ANC party would automatically deliver on the basis of its historical record as a national liberation movement. This chapter points to conceptual and political shortcomings on the part of academics, left theorists, policy-makers and movement organizations, arising from inadequate considerations of the ways in which systems of race, class, and gender combine to perpetuate the economic exclusion of the vast majority of South Africans and points out the significance of these shortcomings given the links between theory and practice.

THE CRISIS OF POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

Apartheid capitalism was responsible for alarming rates of poverty and inequality in South Africa. As Jay Naidoo, minister without portfolio in charge of the RDP, told the *Star* newspaper in March 1996, the black 75 per cent of South Africa's population was living in Third World conditions with a standard of living slightly better than that of Congo, while the white 12 per cent of South Africa's population enjoyed a standard of living equal to that of Canadians. In terms of income distribution, land distribution, and water distribution, South Africa was one of the most unequal societies in the world (Lipton *et al.*, 1996).

A report on Key Indicators of Poverty in South Africa prepared for the RDP office (RDP, 1995) highlighted the extent of poverty (as measured by income) in South Africa, as well as the racial, spatial, and gendered nature of poverty. Overall the report found that 53 per cent of South Africa's population were classified poor, experiencing high unemployment, hunger and malnutrition, inability to pay for, or lack of access to, health care and basic services, and the risk of homelessness.

By race, 65 per cent of all Africans were poor and nearly 95 per cent of South Africa's poor are African. Five per cent of South Africa's poor were colored and less than 1 per cent were Indian or white. Thirty-three per cent of all coloreds, 2.5 per cent of all Indians, and 0.7 per cent of all whites were poor.

Poverty was more extreme in rural areas, and within rural areas more extreme in the former bantustans. Hence nearly two-thirds of the country's poor lived in the Eastern Cape, Kwa Zulu Natal, and the Northern Province.

The study did not look at differential access to income between women and men within households, and it is therefore unable to deduce women's differential experience of poverty. The study did, however, make note of household headship by gender and noted that households headed by females were found to have a 50 per cent higher poverty rate than male-headed households.

The study found that less than one-third of Africans had internal taps, flush toilets, electricity, and refuse removal. The greatest concerns of the poor were jobs, piped water, housing, food aid, electricity, and schools, in that order. Among the rural poor, clinics and roads were additional high priority issues.

Five years after the advent of the post-apartheid government there was little indication that poverty and inequality were being alleviated or reduced or that significant moves were being made for their eradication. Instead, as Hemson (1999) points out, there was evidence of increasing gaps between rich and poor, with rural incomes declining, and with the poor not able to afford the services that are provided. For example, large numbers of rural water projects stopped functioning months after they were completed, and many poor households had their newly installed electricity and telephone services disconnected. State spending on health had been drastically reduced, making it difficult to implement new health policies aimed at benefiting the poor. Child support grants intended for the poorest 30 per cent of children reached only 0.8 per cent of them, and only 0.06 per cent of agricultural land had been transferred to black communities (Hemson, 1999).

Today, poor community and school water supplies are constantly under threat of being cut off, or are actually cut off as increasing unemployment and poverty make it impossible for communities to afford payments for water. Such communities call out in protest "end the new apartheid—the rich against the poor" (Chant at a mass meeting in Hammersdale, Kwa Zulu Natal—29 April, 2001).

Rather than addressing poverty and inequality as a central concern, South Africa today bends under global pressures. As Sitas (1999: 6) reflects, "instead of placing the urban and rural poor at the centre of our agenda and encouraging pro-people and pro-poor development, we drifted into the logic of global power—downsize, casualise, subcontract and marginalise" (Sitas, 1999: 6).

Hence South Africa has not achieved even the very narrow notion of emancipation explored by Klug (2000)—i.e., simple freedom from the oppression of structural poverty. The situation today is one where the so-called two nations of First World and Third World continue, where spiraling crime rates create First World walled cities and paramilitary security companies; where South Africa wins a world first in the biggest bird airlift in the recent Cape penguin saga; where a wealthy Cape businessman brings over opera divas to spot opera talent on the Cape Flats, including Kayelitsha, while the taxi and bus war continues to claim lives.

UNDERSTANDING THE TRANSITION—ELITE PACTS AND MOVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

The situation in South Africa today needs to be understood against the background of the nature of the transition and of the political and economic

choices made by government. At the same time, the role of movement organizations needs to be understood within the transition and within the present.

Like most negotiated settlements, the South African settlement took the form of a pact between elites on each side. Like transitions in Latin America and Eastern Europe (Jaquette and Wolchik, 1998), social movements played active parts, but crucial decisions resulted from the negotiations among elites. The settlement required that consensus be reached by the various political parties and most notably by the ANC and the National Party, as well as by capital. Elites had to make a special effort

to learn each other's basic objectives, philosophies and discourses, and they had to begin to make concessions—mainly rhetorical, but to some degree concrete—to build trust between negotiating parties with once vigorously opposed interests. Gradually, across many sectors of society, a kind of “coerced harmony” was imposed. (Bond, 2000: 56)

The consensus reached reflected a middle ground, with extreme elements on each side marginalized. The parties concerned had to shift significantly from previously held positions in order to achieve this middle-ground consensus.

The negotiated settlement was based on restructuring the political sphere while leaving the economic power structures relatively intact. Marais (1998) points out that this was in keeping with the ANC's position of emphasizing the political over the economic.

In addition it is a tendency that negotiated settlements usually frame the broader crisis within society in political terms. As Carlos Villas (quoted by Nzimande in Marais, 1998: 90) points out, transitions do not “project into the economic sphere, nor do they provide the framework for any substantial change in the level of access of subordinate groups to socio-economic resources—by income distribution, creating employment, improving living conditions etc.”

The ANC thus negotiated a settlement without a clear program of dismantling the “two nations” society—one a nation impoverished with living conditions and life chances equal to the poorest countries of the world, the other a nation equivalent to a western nation.

Movements were able to push and win gains, particularly since the ANC was in alliance with COSATU and the SACP. COSATU and the civic organizations under the umbrella of the South African National Civics Organization (SANCO) initiated and developed the RDP to address the gap in ANC economic policy. This became the strategic program and election manifesto of the ANC just before the 1994 election.

Women's organizations came together during the negotiations in the Women's National Coalition (WNC), and made inroads in bringing atten-

tion to women-specific demands. The ANC Women's League spearheaded the formation of the WNC, which brought together women's wings of the parties engaged in the negotiations, with a range of other women's organizations, such as the YWCA, church women, Afrikaans women, and Jewish women. The influence of the women's lobby from within the Tripartite Alliance (of ANC, COSATU, and SACP), as well as through the WNC, can be seen, for example, in the RDP's stated concern for women, especially among the rural and very poor groupings of South African society, as well as in the lobby's ability to prevent the adoption of a clause in the country's Constitution that threatened to exempt traditional leaders from the equality clause in the Constitution, a clause that safeguards gender equality (Meintjes, 1996).

However, perhaps more powerful than the pressure of working-class and poor people's social movements in constitution- and law-making was pressure from more traditional power centers of capital, powerfully organized white agricultural farmers and traditional chiefs.

With regard to traditional leaders, the South African Constitution recognizes the role of traditional leadership and customary law, although these are subordinate to the fundamental rights in the Constitution and to gender equality (Klug, 2000: 29). However, the role of traditional leaders remains a gray area and has not been adequately dealt with within the Constitution or in the arena of the local state, resulting in continued battles between chiefs and the state. During the local government elections in 2000, for instance, chiefs protested the new local authority demarcations and stalled the election process as they saw this as an attempt to erode their powers.

The reality for most rural dwellers who continue to be trapped in the former homelands (and among whom the larger proportion are rural women in a context of continued male emigration to the cities) is a reality under traditional systems within which women's access to land and authority continues to be through men. Democratic rights thus evade these citizens of South Africa. Mamdani (1998) makes the point that democratization in African contexts cannot be a simple reform of civil society, but rather has to include a dismantling of the mode of rule that is legitimized in customary law. He notes that preoccupation in African and South African studies with the mode of production has ignored the mode of rule and the specific form colonial power took in Africa and that there has been a failure to address the mode of power containing rural populations. The focus has been on rights from which the colonized were excluded on the basis of race and this view excluded consideration of the regime of custom through which rural populations were ruled. The focus of movements has thus been urban-biased. Mamdani (1998: 288) notes that “infatuation with the notion civil society conceals the actual forms of power through which rural populations are ruled” and that “without reform of the local state democratization will be superficial, but also explosive.”

THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (RDP)

The Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) had a central commitment to meeting the basic needs of housing, electrification, jobs, the redistribution of agricultural land, clean water and sanitation, a cleaner environment, full reproductive rights for women, universal primary health care, social welfare, and education. The RDP attempted to link the provision of basic needs with economic growth. The RDP document noted that a key catalyst in achieving RDP objectives was an active state, biased in favor of the interests of the disadvantaged majority and a strong civil society.

However, alongside the watering down that had taken place in the negotiated political settlement the RDP too was to be watered down. As Marais (1998: 177) notes, "the paradigm of the transition (inclusion, conciliation, consensus, stability) applied also to the RDP, a non-surprising development." By the time it became a program of government it had lost its transformative thrust.

In April 1996, the RDP office was downgraded. Its offices were closed down and its functions were transferred to the offices of the deputy president and the finance minister on the grounds that the RDP had been integrated successfully into line-function departments.

ADOPTING GEAR

A further shift away from any notion of redistribution was seen in June 1996 when the government released its macro-economic plan GEAR. Instead of placing the fight against poverty and the needs of the majority of black South Africans in the center, this policy focused on consolidating business confidence, enhancing the environment for private sector expansion, and liberalizing the economy. GEAR represents a trickle-down approach. It does not promise an easing of poverty or inequality and hence is not in the interests of poor women or poor men.

The point needs to be made that while economic growth is necessary, growth does not in itself reduce poverty or address inequality. Bond (2000) notes that market-oriented policies have never anywhere in the world made for strides in development areas. GEAR has clearly failed to meet its own targets. Economic growth in 1996 was more than 10 per cent lower than GEAR had predicted, 71,000 jobs were lost—a far cry from the predicted 126,000 new jobs predicted for June that year.

In mid-1994, the government began to implement the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The effect of GATT, as Adelzadeh and Padayachee (in Marais, 1998) point out, would be to erode regulatory domestic laws and government regulation at all levels, to promote programs for privatization and deregulation, and to weaken worker rights and unions.

Neither Bond (2000) nor Marais (1998) looks at the differential impacts of GEAR or GATT on women and men. Feminist scholarship on structural adjustment programs elsewhere has highlighted, for example, how women's reproductive burdens increase as a result of less social spending on the part of states. In South Africa, one of the effects of deregulation has been the closure of clothing and textile firms, and this has affected women's employment since women make up the majority of the workforce in these sectors.

Marais (1998) makes the charge that government policy since 1994 had been consistent, since even the Reconstruction and Development Program was based on liberalization, free markets, and the cultivation of business and investor confidence. In his view, the basic-needs concept and civil society role remained as rhetoric.

Soon after the new government came in it became clear what class interests were to be privileged in the new order. The mass-based organizations no longer seemed to be heard. Mandela, on May Day 1994, as reported in the *Sunday Times*, assured investors that "not a single reference to things like nationalism" remained in ANC economic policies and that these has been "cleansed of anything that will connect us with any Marxist ideology."

Jeremy Cronin of the South African Communist Party, another of the ANC's alliance partners (quoted in Marais, 1998) remarked that the arguments of capital were "more attractive and more persuasive to a wide range of ANC leadership than the counter arguments which are less confident, less coherent."

MOVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS UNDER APARTHEID

In attempting to understand the question of social movements it is important to understand state-society relations and the ways in which movement organizations are shaped by the state at the same time as they impact on the state.

As Alvarez (1990) notes, the political strategies and discourses of movements are responses to state policies. At the same time, movements impact state discourses and public policies. The relationship between states and movements are thus dynamic and dialectical.

In the South African context movement responses were shaped by the repression unleashed by the colonial and apartheid capitalist states, and these movements were able to pressure the state at various points. The history of resistance in South Africa has been characterized by periods of open political resistance as well as by periods of apparent quiescence during which movement organizations operated underground.

Resistance, and accounts of resistance, are also shaped by prevailing ideologies of gender. So, while historical accounts of resistance against apartheid

note the class and racial character of the movements and struggles, most analyses have been silent on issues of gender subordination and treat the social actors within resistance organizations as undifferentiated. Yet it is clear that state repression affected women and men differently. Women engaged in political resistance against the colonial and apartheid states, even though much of this resistance took place within male-dominated political organizations that recognized the women's question (as propounded within Marxist and national liberation discourse⁵) but did not consider gender disparity as a fundamental contradiction that needed to be addressed in order to attain a more egalitarian society.

Hence women were active in the ANC and SACP from their very formation. Individual women made significant contributions within these organizations. And at various points specific groups of women rose up in protest and action, as in the case of protests against beer brewing and pass laws.⁶

With the revival of open political activity in the 1970s and 1980s, dispersed organizational efforts in various parts of the country came together in a strong national trade union federation—the largest the country had ever seen, in the Black Consciousness Movement, and in the establishment of the United Democratic Front (which brought together mainly urban based community organizations from all over the country). This period saw the coming together of student, community, and worker struggles. University students and intellectuals played a significant role in facilitating and supporting the emerging trade union movement through organizations such as the Wages Commission and the Institute for Industrial Education. Political activity was sparse or non-existent during this period in the rural areas, including the white-owned agricultural farms and the homelands.

Black workers resisted the onslaught of racial capitalism that prevented them forming or joining trade unions. In the 1980s trade unions became stronger. There were divisions among the newly formed unions in this period, with some aligned to the ANC/SACP, others under the federation FOSATU (Federation of South African Trade Unions) taking a position that emphasized worker control, and some under the federation NACTU (National Council of Trade Unions) aligned to black consciousness organizations.

In the mid-1980s, the ANC-aligned and FOSATU-affiliated unions came together with several independent unions to form the federation COSATU. In the 1990s COSATU continued to function as an independent organization at the same time as it joined the Tripartite Alliance.

WOMEN ORGANIZE UNDER APARTHEID

What has been referred to as the women's movement in South Africa emerged essentially out of national and worker struggles. The key actors of the women's movement have been UDF women's organizations, ANC

women, and trade union women. Their organization was shaped by the prevailing political and economic repression and to a lesser extent by the gender dynamics within the UDF, ANC and trade union movement.

Women in communities and trade unions became increasingly more vocal and active during the 1980s. Ideas of liberation were framed within notions of nationalism and socialism, with these two isms sometimes coming together and sometimes coming into conflict.

Women active in trade unions and community organizations as well as women students engaged in discussion on women's role in the liberation struggle and within trade unions at the same time as they engaged in struggles alongside men in these organizations. Women's concerns were shaped by socialist and nationalist ideas, and, as they faced these challenges, many women activists were inspired by second-wave feminism and by black and Third World national feminism.

Women in trade unions made links between struggles in the factory, the community, the country, and at home. Given their position in society, in relation to the state and capital their struggles brought together race, class, and gender.

There was much debate about the place of feminism within the national liberation movement. For some, taking up women's struggles was seen as diverting the struggle from the major contradiction that might be cast as either national liberation or socialist revolution, depending on who was doing the casting. However, these debates took place in a context where the more pressing and more critical debates were between socialists and nationalists, debates that intensified as the UDF was formed and as FOSATU became COSATU. At times, in deference to what were perceived as more pressing issues, women's activism took the form of supporting the general movement without raising specific gender issues.

Yet the very agreement that women should be active and involved in organizations, even if this was framed in terms of male-dominated movements needing more numbers (to fight the state or individual capitalists), highlighted key issues of gender oppression—issues of reproductive responsibilities, for example, which prevented many women from active participation in organizations.

Some of the discussion on the need for shared reproductive responsibilities between women and men in the household was thus framed within the context of strengthening women's role in the struggle. The discourse was therefore couched largely as one of instrumentalism—women's membership in trade unions, for example, as a means to signed recognition agreements with individual factory managements, since in order to be recognized unions had to show a membership comprising 51 per cent of the total workforce.

However, things did not stop there. Once they were union members women raised issues such as maternity leave, sexual harassment, and the sharing of reproductive work with men. Women also raised the issue of

violence from male partners. The challenge to bosses was extended to challenges at home as well as to male comrades in the union. Trade union women began to form separate structures—women's forums—as safe spaces where they could voice their concerns, strategize around how to get the male leadership to take up their concerns, and discuss how to get women into the trade union leadership structures that were all male.

As women's involvement in trade unions grew so did their involvement in the emerging community organizations and in women's organizations such as the United Women's Organization (based in the Western Cape), the Natal Organization of Women, and the Federation of Transvaal Women. Attempts were made to bring the various provincially based women's organizations together into a Federation of South African Women and later into the UDF Women's Congress. These attempts at a national formation did not sustain themselves.

During the mid-1980s, tension erupted between UDF organizations and women in COSATU. UDF women questioned the existence of the COSATU women's forums, which they saw as parallel structures that prevented women from joining the UDF aligned women's organizations. Women's forums also came under fire from another quarter, for different reasons—from men in trade unions who saw women's forums as a waste of time.

Women in COSATU have not had an easy time getting their interests met. For example, in the late 1980s and early 1990s they lost on their demands for unions to take on the issue of sexual harassment in the union, and they lost battles for a quota in COSATU's leadership. However, their framing of these demands led to much discussion within COSATU Congresses on these issues. Trade union leader Maggie Magubane makes the point that many of the gains made have been paper gains, since COSATU membership and leadership continue to carry patriarchal attitudes. "We have to listen to male comrades saying there is no way they can be led by a woman. We have to listen to certain shop stewards insisting women can't be elected as office bearers—it is against tradition" (Magubane, in Meer, 1998: 74). Women trade unionists found themselves having to defend the need for the women's forums they had won in earlier years since male leaders were of the view that "gender was about women and men"—a view that depoliticizes by removing the notion of male power as well as the notion of women's subordination. Sexism and sexual harassment continue as features of women's experience in COSATU and its affiliates today.⁷

When the ANC was unbanned the question of the future of the UDF affiliates was a key strategic issue. The ANC was about to embark on setting up branches in every corner of the country and the UDF organizations including the civics were seen as competing structures. Discussion ensued on whether civics should continue to exist and, if so, what their relation would be to ANC branches (Marais, 1998). Some UDF affiliates collapsed

into the ANC branches, but some civics under SANCO withstood pressure to disband, and even extended into new areas such as the former homelands where they had not previously had a presence. The UDF women's organizations all disbanded and collapsed into the ANC Women's League. This meant that organizations set up and sustained over five to ten years, which had developed memberships, infrastructure, and projects, were suddenly no more.

Cronin (1992, in Marais, 1998) notes that the disbanding of the UDF organizations was evidence of thinking that the UDF was the B team that was not required once the A team (the ANC) was back. This also contains evidence of the notion that movement organizations serve the role of transmission belts for the party. The disbanding of the UDF organizations was a tragedy and it has been difficult to remobilize in more recent times.

In the period preceding the negotiations, when negotiations were already on the cards, ANC women strategized to get women's concerns on the agenda of ANC policy discussions. Notable among these initiatives were the November 2 statement committing the ANC to gender equity, the commission on the emancipation of women, the inclusion of the demand for safe abortions within health debates, and an ANC policy department conference on unpaid labor.

ANC women pushed for a quota on the ANC executive in 1991 in order to ensure that women made up at least one-third of the party's leadership, but lost this demand. In the intervening years ANC women campaigned on this issue, and picked it up again in the run-up to the country's first democratic elections, this time winning a one-third quota for women on the ANC list for parliament. This won for women 101 of the 400 seats in the first democratic parliament. Two points need to be noted in relation to this gain. First, it was facilitated by the electoral system of proportional representation, a system that has the shortcoming of not facilitating direct accountability to constituencies. Second, it needs to be borne in mind that the quota is party policy rather than state law (as is the case in Uganda) and that a continued quota is therefore at the whim of the party.

Alongside the resistance organizations of the 1980s and 1990s there were a range of supportive NGOs and a vibrant independent press. On questions of women and gender, two publications—*SPEAK*, a magazine for grassroots women, and *Agenda*, a journal—contributed to the airing of debates among community, trade union and political activists, students, and academics.

MOVEMENTS AND THE STATE IN THE TRANSITION AND IN THE NEW DEMOCRACY

As the ANC took part in negotiations, the relationship between movement organizations and the apartheid state shifted away from direct confrontation.

Movement organizations came out in protest from time to time as the negotiations faltered.

Southall and Wood point out that COSATU's membership in the Tripartite Alliance (of ANC, SACP, and COSATU) was a means to ensuring that "working class bias prevailed in the politics and programmes adopted by the ANC once in government." That is, even though as a governing party the ANC would have to be committed to pursuing the national interest, "the Tripartite Alliance was forged to ensure that, henceforth, the newly democratic government in South Africa would be labour friendly" (Southall and Wood, 1999: 68).

In the post-1994 era, however, relations between the state and unions have been tense, particularly around GEAR, and certain labor laws. An issue that has been raised in discussion and debate is on whether workers' interests would be better met if COSATU left the Alliance. COSATU itself has raised criticism around its role in the Alliance. Bhulungi (1997: 72) cites a COSATU discussion document, 'A Draft Program for the Alliance', which notes: "The Alliance never sat down to systematically look at the challenges of the transition and formulate a strategy, and what role our various formations should play in that strategy." In this document COSATU laments that policymaking has become the domain of consultants, conservative economists, bureaucrats from the old order, and international financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF. It notes that the RDP has been undermined by a range of forces and that organizations of the people have been demobilized and "most activists are no more sure of what the strategic objectives are" (Bhulungi, 1997: 72).

The dominant COSATU position is however for continued involvement in the Alliance while challenging government when workers' interests are threatened.

Southall and Wood point out that COSATU was critical of the substance as well as the lack of consultation around GEAR. Yet COSATU gave its full backing to the ANC in the 1999 election, "pronouncing it in favour of workers and the poor." COSATU has engaged in mass demonstrations at the same time as it engaged in negotiations with business in NEDLAC (National Economic Development and Labor Council) and opened a parliamentary office to pressure parliament.

Continued retrenchments have meant the loss of large numbers of union members, for example, from the male mining and female garment and textile sectors. COSATU's attempts to organize unemployed workers in the 1980s have been abandoned. With the demise of the South African Domestic Workers Union, for instance, COSATU has not seen it as a matter of priority to address the needs of domestic workers. Nor does COSATU see it as a matter of priority to address the needs of the survivalist end of the informal sector (largely a women's sector). Given its change in membership—from

predominantly blue-collar to increasingly white-collar and its increasingly narrow bent to addressing member interests, COSATU seems to be drifting away from the strong political unionism that linked national liberation and class interests.

Neither COSATU nor the Tripartite Alliance has considered systemic gender discrimination or the position of women as a priority. These organizations are themselves both male-dominated and imbued with patriarchal ideologies.

Women in trade unions were on the defensive in the 1990s—having made gains in the mid-1980s, they had to struggle to defend these. While ANC women won a one-third quota in the ANC party, COSATU women have to date not won this, and talk of the glass ceiling within trade unions remaining intact.

THE WOMEN'S NATIONAL COALITION

In 1991 the ANC Women's League spearheaded the formation of the Women's National Coalition (WNC). The WNC brought together some 60 organizations, including women from the major political parties for the single purpose of developing a charter of women's rights.

By strategically taking up the opportunities opened up by the transition and the unfolding process of democratization, the WNC was able to get gender higher up on the agenda. It played a key role in ensuring that women's equality took precedence over customary law in the South African Constitution. It campaigned for and won the national gender machinery (the OSW, CGE, and gender focal points in almost all line-function departments) intended to advance women's interests. It also played a role in sensitizing all political parties to women's votes and therefore to the advisability of increasing the numbers of women in leadership.

The WNC came close to being a movement. Criticism leveled against the WNC, however, notes its domination by political parties; that it seldom arrived at consensus because of the diversity of its members (Abrams 2000); that it never resolved the issue of abortion, for example; that it raised more middle-class issues rather than those of women who were working, unemployed or not organized; and that ultimately it failed to form a women's movement, although it tried (Duarte, quoted in Meer, 1998).

Members of the WNC executive and steering committee were involved in the national negotiations as advisors and lobbyists. They devised this strategy to counter the problem of a male-dominated negotiation process during the first round of national negotiations (CODESA). Women from various political parties were concerned that women were excluded from the various delegations, and to address this concern they came together to set up a Gender Advisory Committee (GAC) within the first round of nego-

tiations (CODESA). But political violence within the country led to the breakdown of the CODESA talks just as the GAC was getting off the ground. When the second round of talks—the Multi-Party Talks—took off in March 1993, the WNC had set up a national office, a campaign strategy and a monitoring process through a Negotiations Monitoring Team. This enabled the WNC to make its significant contribution when traditional leaders objected to the equality provisions in the bill of rights.

The WNC-inspired Women's Charter was released in June 1994. However, the hope that the charter would become the focus for the mobilization and organization of a strong and effective women's movement in South Africa has not been realized. Meintjes attributes this in part to the diversity of interests represented within the organization with no unifying issue to sustain it, and to leadership problems since its leaders were "sucked into parliament where energies have been dispersed in national politics and the tasks of the moment, rather than in fighting the gender struggle" (1996: 61).

Accounts of the WNC highlight the success in bringing together a diverse group of women but in emphasizing this tend to obscure a more textured understanding of the WNC itself as well as of the period with its opportunities and constraints (Meintjes, 1996; Hassim, 2000).

A number of points need to be noted.

First, the WNC needs to be seen in relation to the pre-1991 struggles within and between women's organizations, as these tensions shaped outcomes within the coalition. These include tensions between "workerists" (socialists) and populists (nationalists), which took the form among women of tensions between COSATU and UDF women, and tensions between exiles and non-exiles. One outcome of these tensions was the tentative engagement of the trade union women in the WNC, and this influenced the class bent of the organization.

Second, it needs to be noted that the demobilization of the UDF women's organizations resulted in the absence of a strong core of resistance organizations that the WNC could draw on.

Third, because of the key strategic role played by the ANC Women's League in the WNC, tensions within the ANC Women's League had an impact on the WNC. The split in the ANC Women's League after the 1994 election, when two competing groups fought for control of the organization, resulted in the ousting from leadership of the more feminist and strategically directed group, which had spearheaded the WNC and the challenges to the negotiations. Even before this defeat tensions in the ANC had made participation of the ANC in the WNC more erratic. The loss of these strategists, together with the exodus of WNC executive members into parliament and the decision that parliamentarians could no longer be WNC members, was a blow to the organization and it has to date not recovered a strategic role in gender politics in South Africa.

Fourth, the charter and the strategies of the WNC seem to reflect a middle ground in much the same way as the negotiations among the major parties did. It would seem fair to say that this was translated into something close to a liberal feminism with liberal strategies that did not challenge class or race privilege in any significant way.

Fifth, that women from diverse backgrounds were able to come together when they did is not surprising since the men from these organizations were already talking to each other in CODESA and later in the final round of negotiations. In the first instance, what these women had in common was their exclusion from the process of talks.

Sixth, it needs to be noted that while in effect the WNC functioned as an independent organization, key players within the organization were women's wings of political parties. These organizations were themselves not independent but rather bound by party policy and discipline.

What is significant is the way the WNC was able to use the space opened up by the transition to set up a Gender Advisory Committee, and a Monitoring Committee to monitor and shape the outcome of the negotiations. Most significantly, the WNC (together with its affiliate the Rural Women's Movement) was able to intervene in the process of developing the constitution and able to overturn a clause proposed by traditional leaders to exempt traditional authority from the equality clause of the constitution, which enshrines gender equality (Meintjes, 1996).

At the same time, a climate conducive to getting gender and women's issues heard had been developed from the early days of the struggle: women's involvement in the struggles in significant numbers and with significant impact including the pass campaigns of the early 1900s and the major protest of 1956; women's active raising of their concerns and their active involvement in COSATU and UDF; the discussions and debates about women's liberation and national liberation; gender as an international human rights issue; the UN decade for women; and the increasing pressure from international donor organizations had all contributed to a climate where no self-respecting revolutionary or aspirant to state office could ignore gender.

Overall, the WNC was not able however to sustain its organizational impetus beyond the development of the charter. Alongside the changing political context, the difficulties in keeping its diverse member organizations together after the charter had been completed, the conflicts within the ANC Women's League, the exodus of large numbers of WNC members into parliament all contributed to the weakening of the organization. This exodus affected other movements such as trade unions, civic organizations, and NGOs as well.

FACING NEW CHALLENGES

The ANC in South Africa had to make the shift from a liberation movement to a majority party in the state. Having come from movements did not translate into a positive relationship between movements and state. A glaring gap between RDP rhetoric about movements and the actual approach to movement organizations soon appeared.

The ANC government's attitude toward organization in civil society has been ambivalent. The RDP had noted that the existence of a strong NGO sector was an important contribution to ensuring a strong vibrant civil society, which in turn was vital to ensuring the delivery of basic needs.

Contrary to the strong call made in the RDP document for partnerships between the state with civil society government, attitudes to civil society have in reality been ambiguous. During the period of negotiations, movements were turned on when a show of mass support was needed by the leadership engaged in negotiations, and then turned off again when no longer needed, and at times elements in the ANC viewed civil society (and NGOs) as irritants (Marais, 1998; Cronin, 1992).

There has been an increasing push that NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs), which had in the days of anti-apartheid activism supported mass-based movements, shift their attention from "struggle" to "development." And development activity increasingly came to be defined in relation to the mainstream international development agencies, such as UN agencies, the World Bank and IMF, that is, in purely technicist rather than political terms—as though power and struggles are not factors that determine whose interests will be met in the name of development in post-apartheid South Africa.⁸

THE Pervasiveness of Neoliberalism

The new context in which we find ourselves is framed by neoliberal economic policies and liberal notions of democratic rights. There is an over-reliance on markets and the law as though access to markets and the law are not shaped by race-, class- and gender-based advantage and disadvantage.

The goal of the national liberation struggle was to take over the state machinery and this resulted, despite the sunset clause that apartheid-era civil servants would remain in office, in large numbers of individuals from the ANC, its allies and the many struggle organizations going into the national parliament, the nine provincial parliaments, local government and the various tiers of the state and parastatal bureaucracy.

Many former activists are in the state machinery. Those in trade unions challenge the state in defensive action as gains won in the past come under threat. Some former activists located in NGOs attempt to make inroads for

the most marginalized in various sectors, such as land reform, AIDS, and development; women activists are active in land reform, reproductive rights, health policy, in work against violence against women and rape, and in AIDS work. Initiatives such as the Women's Budget Project, the Gender Advocacy Project and the New Women's Movement represent new initiatives to bring women's concerns to current processes of democratization.

Much of this activity takes place in terms set by the government, and from a perspective that privileges law-making as a means of redress. Women in all of these organizations engage with state departments, state personnel, and the gender machinery (CGE and OSW). They use the space in the present to research, train, and lobby individuals and structures within the state. So, for example, magistrates and police are trained on issues of rape and gender-based violence in order to make these institutions more responsive to women's concerns.

They struggle in the new context with the challenges of entrenching the new democracy. As Jaquette and Wolchick (1998: 7) note in the context of Latin America and Eastern Europe, the return to democratic politics created unexpected problems for the women's movement and for social movements in general. Democracy meant that:

brave new concepts had to be turned into workable legislation, that sustained organisational effort would be needed to ensure women's issues would be taken up by the political parties and that legislation would be implemented and monitored. [...] Heady enthusiasm of the transition with its sense of mass involvement and solidarity gave way to smaller and more focused efforts.

Alvarez (1990), writing on Brazil, notes that inroads made by feminists during the transition will not automatically be transformed into permanent paths to effective power and political influence. This is borne out by the situation in South Africa.

Gains made by women in South Africa include a range of legislation of specific concern to women as well as relatively more women-sensitive general legislation. Overall, however, gains made by legislative and political reforms won by activists remain mired in a framework that does not question neoliberal economics or notions of liberal democratic rights. Ideas of socialism seem to have disappeared overnight and the dominant discourse for all parties (including most trade unionists and gender activists) is on neoliberal terms.

A central problematic is that many of the activists in trade unions, communities, or NGOs do not problematize sufficiently the outcome of their strategic decisions. Miller and Razavi (1999) point to the danger of feminists (and this applies to other movements as well) becoming locked in the dominant neoliberal trend. They note that with the growing influence of neoliberal philosophy, which is inherently opposed to policy interventions

aimed at achieving social equity, feminist policy advocates tend today to link gender equity to more acceptable policy concerns such as growth and market efficiency. Feminists thus use the efficiency discourse of neoclassical economics. They talk of gender-based distortions instead of human rights. They frame domestic violence in terms of economic cost. They do this because they will be heard more readily by those concerned with promoting economic growth and removing market distortions. However, as Goetz and Mayoux (both in Miller and Razavi, 1999) argue, reframing gender-equity concerns in terms of social and economic efficiency gains has the effect of depoliticizing the issue. It also runs the risk of making women more exploitable, as the tendency to highlight investing in women can mean an intensification of women's workloads.

Fraser (in Miller and Razavi, 1999) notes that policy-making institutions tend to depoliticize certain issues by framing them as impersonal market imperatives, or private ownership prerogatives or technical problems. Struggles take place over the meaning of concepts.

Miller and Razavi note tensions between those feminists who advocate win-win scenarios and call for policies for "the common good," very often in the language of liberal individualism, and those using confrontational discourses that tend to be rooted in a more structural understanding of women's subordination. Approaches cast in neoliberal terms are open to co-optation and instrumentalism and to risks of neutralizing the transformative nature of the feminist agenda. On the other hand, contestation over concepts such as efficiency can be a way of subverting the dominant neoliberal discourse.

Within government departments, NGOs, and the private sector in South Africa, the notion of transformation takes the form of a number count of black and female bodies without addressing ways in which the state continues to reinforce existing race, class and gender disparities in society. At the same time assessments of how people are faring in these institutions seem to focus more on whether the new entrants (for example, women parliamentarians) are fitting into these institutions and less on whether they are able to make significant changes in the interests of the most marginalized (see for example the CGE study, 1999).

In addition, transforming state institutions tends to be treated as an end and the focus is on making them more representative of the demographics of South African society. There is little focus on the role of these institutions in entrenching democracy. Entry into these institutions thus becomes a means to embourgeoisement rather than as a means to improve living conditions within society (Sitas, 1998).

A state-centric perspective has become the dominant trend, so, for example, the CGE book *Redefining Politics* talks only of parliamentary politics, as though politics does not exist outside the formal state arena. An article by Tenjiwe Mtintso in the same publication calls for women outside parliament

to organize in order to constitute a base and support for women in parliament, ignoring the possibility that women outside parliament should organize to hold parliamentarians accountable. It is as though the leaders of the liberation movement, having moved into the state, have also moved the spotlight on to the state and anything outside this arena is devalued and/or invisible.

Then there is the big question—one that many try to understand—of how it is that those who championed other causes in the past are now pursuing goals so contrary to what they stood for (or seemed to stand for in the past). And coupled with this is the question of why this has happened so soon—hardly two years into the new democratic order.

What of the hopes that trade unionists and women would make their mark in the interests of workers and the poor once in parliament? The track record on this score is not good. The South African minister of trade and industry, a former trade union and SACP leader, now serves as chair of the WTO and promotes GEAR and WTO policies. The current minister of land and agriculture, who was the secretary of the Women's National Coalition, today promotes policies geared at creating a black farming elite, offering very little for the likes of the women marchers in Mpumalanga.

Collins (1997) raises questions of accountability in relation to trade unionists on the ANC list of parliamentarians. She points out that COSATU did not consider questions of accountability when they took the decision to send 20 of its senior leaders to parliament as ANC candidates in the 1994 national election. She notes that there was a lack of a structured relationship between these leaders and the unions they came from, a lack of any labor caucus in parliament, and confusion over which organization these leaders represented (ANC, COSATU, or individual affiliate). Issues of accountability came into question also when some of these trade union leaders begin to leave parliament to join investment companies—it was not clear whether this had the support of the unions and COSATU.

For women in parliament questions of accountability are more difficult since there is no national organization representing women today. Yet accountability could be exercised in relation to community-based movements that exist and in relation to ensuring links between women inside parliament with women in trade unions and community-based groupings. However, this seems to be non-existent. And what is worrying is the state-centric perspective that suggests that links between women inside and outside parliament should focus on the needs of women inside parliament.

This is understandable, since ANC women and men who entered parliament for the first time in 1994 were overwhelmed by the rules of the game within this institution and have had to make huge adjustments. However, what this view ignores is the importance of continued organization in society to hold parliamentarians accountable.

Mtintso (1999) notes that new women MPs had to prove themselves, that women progressed from being completely overwhelmed to feeling empowered and able to function in the system, that women needed to learn the rules and how to change them. However, it would seem that the experience to date has been for most more about learning how to function in terms of the rules, with little change taking place.

Mtintso also refers to the gap between gender activists inside and outside parliament and notes that an active gender contingent is needed, at the core of which should be women in parliament. She asserts that gender activism from all sectors of civil society should be strong and work with those in parliament. Such activists, she notes, should be organized in a strong women's and feminist movement to act as a power base for activists in parliament. Miller and Razavi also refer to the link between women inside and outside in a way that tends to privilege the insiders, in noting the importance of "strong external women's constituencies to support internal gender policy advocacy."

While it is clear that a link between outsiders and insiders is crucial, the nature of this link, and on whose terms the link is made, seems a crucial question that needs to be explored. For example, what class interests are to be served by such an alliance?

Miller and Razavi (1999) summarize key issues raised by feminists in considering entryism as a strategy. They note that pushing transformative agendas from within while adapting to the techniques and practices of the bureaucracy is a complex business. Feminist engagement strategy, they point out, aims to promote change within existing bureaucratic structures even if it is recognized that change will be incremental.

The strategy of implementing change from within demands a wide variety of skills—an in-depth understanding of how the bureaucratic machinery works, astute political skills to identify where the strategic points of leverage in the policy establishment are, and how allies can be cultivated despite the distrust of traditional bureaucrats.

In addition to the problems of links and accountability is the question of embourgeoisement and a new morality that takes over alongside the transformation. As Buhlungu points out, "processes of class formation or elite formation have accelerated with many of the leading activists who were part of the tradition of democratic participation as beneficiaries of new opportunities created by the deracialized society." In this context, the "discourse of collective participatory democracy has been overtaken by one of individualism and careerism where empowerment is seen to emanate from taking advantage of opportunities created by deracialization" (Buhlungu, 2002: 163).

The transition opens up new opportunities and contradictions (Sitas, 1998). The version of nationalism that survives is about "empowerment and accumulation paths of a new power bloc of pragmatic populists who are heirs

of global processes of empowerment. This reshaping of the political elite has been a further nudge toward a logic of disintegration of social movements."

Saul (1999) asks whether the ANC leadership has chosen market solutions to serve leadership's nascent class interests or because market solutions are developmental or inevitable under current global and local conditions. He suggests that in order to make their conservative economic choices palatable government dresses up policies in radical rhetoric and in "African Renaissance" speak.

It is clear that a range of forces shapes the present. Sitas (1998) notes that trends such as globalization, institutional transition, and the developing new circuits of power all shape the new. The capacity of the state to shape outcomes is reduced by South Africa's new entry into world markets. Change is also limited by struggles between power blocs with competing agendas—between old apartheid-era civil servants and the newer ANC-aligned entrants.

The transition "generates a logic of disintegration" (Sitas, 1998: 43) that shapes and affects social movements that have ushered in the transformation in the first place. Broader political arrangements shape the form and functioning of social movements that in their turn continue to shape the logic of the broader process in subtle ways. "Revolutionary vanguards and organizations can never shape transitions at will, rather they are shaped and the conditions they face are shaped by broader structural forces, not least of which are the international and political parameters" (Sitas, 1998: 43).

The former liberation movement transforms itself as processes of transformation, accompanied by class formation and realignment, and former goals are no longer shared (Buhlungu, 1997).

REINVENTING SOCIAL EMANCIPATION

Saul (1999: 64) asks

just how long the mass of South Africans—so used to mobilising historically to advance their interests—will themselves rest content with the kind of bleak perspectives granted them by 'magical market realism' before they are also moved to reactivate the struggle to realise more humane and genuinely developmental socio-economic strategies in their country is one of the key questions as we approach the millennium.

Over the past seven years, poor rural and urban communities and workers have mobilized around a number of issues. Their actions have taken the form of land invasions, protest marches, and demonstrations on a range of issues.

As Sitas (1998) notes, there has been a "shift from a militant social movement approach to a variety of initiatives, not necessarily connected, each with its own dynamics, compromises and innovations that spell both

resistance and accommodation to central arrangements" of the post-apartheid government.

More recently there is more glaring evidence of desperation among the poor and marginalized. So, for example, in Mpumalanga, in November 1999, rural women marched naked in the streets to make their demands heard. Seventy-year-old Josephine Tsabedza and 27 other rural women spent a week in jail after being arrested for marching naked down the main road of Beffelspruit in Mpumalanga in protest against a local chief who refused to recognize their rights to land. Tsabedze said: "We marched all along the streets naked to show the chief we are angry and we wanted to show him our empty stomachs. My main worry is the children. That's why I ended up in jail. I did all this because of hunger" (Shongwe, 2000: 18). The women felt guilty about their week in jail because they had better meals in jail than their children and grandchildren at home. On average each woman has between five and nine children to feed and clothe. Often these women are the sole breadwinners. They need land so that they can grow food for their children.

In Isipingo, outside Durban, in February 2001, residents held protest meetings and marches against evictions by the local ANC-dominated council. One of the families facing evictions was 65-year-old Mrs. Munisamy, her 27-year-old daughter, Kantha, who has cancer, and her 6-year-old grandson. They live in an empty council flat. Their income used to be Mrs. Munisamy's pension of R540 a month, which was stopped for seemingly bureaucratic reasons. Their rent is R268 a month, rates R61 a month, and they must pay lights and water bills in addition. Mrs. Munisamy is asthmatic but cannot afford to go to the hospital. A speaker at the protest meeting of 800 people reminded residents that they beat apartheid and urged them to defeat this new enemy and to fight the evictions together. Legal action resulted in a stay of the evictions. The residents coming together resulted in action (Pithouse, 2001).

In Mpumalanga Township, outside Hammersdale, in Kwa Zulu Natal, residents attended a rally on 29 April 2001. The township is located in a semi-rural area as a result of apartheid's design that blacks should not live near white suburbs. Most residents had jobs in the nearby poultry industry, but are now unemployed as the industries have closed down. Residents cannot afford to pay for services and have been threatened with water cuts. The rally was to resist this.

Whether and how such actions will all come together is yet to be seen. However, what seems clear is that it is unlikely that the movements of the 1980s will play much of a role in bringing together the various individual protests.

The women's movement organizations of the 1980s—the Women's National Coalition, the Rural Women's Movement—are no more. The UDF

women's organizations are no more because they disbanded to form the ANC Women's League, and the Women's League seems immobilized as a result of key executive members being in parliament and hence not available to build a movement.

The NGOs of the 1980s, which supported community and trade union struggles in the 1980s when the perpetrators were the agents of the apartheid state, are silent on these struggles today. Development NGOs pressure government but at same time try to do so within the neoliberal logic and within an agenda set by the state. In addition, NGOs are dogged by the lack of funds, a crisis that it was hoped government would address on recognizing the importance of a strong NGO sector.

The form and nature of the trade union movement has changed and its ability to shape the transition is wavering. Within trade unions today organization building is not a priority—leaders spend more time in policy-related efforts in a bid to influence state law and policy. Union activists and the rank and file have been demobilized. They neglect to build their independent power and confuse strategic direction with those of the ruling party (Bhulungu, 1997).

CONCLUSION

The role of a strong movement organization outside state structures is crucial in ensuring that representatives do in fact represent the interests of their constituencies. However, the continued existence of the South African trade union movement together with trade unionists in parliament has not resulted in worker interests being met by the new government. This is seen in the ongoing tensions between COSATU and government on issues of GEAR, the Labor Relations Act, and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act over the past few years, as well as in the increasing retrenchments that have meant a change in union membership from mainly blue-collar to increasingly more white-collar. In the present context, rather than promising to constitute a strong pressure on the state, the trade unions seem instead to be weakening.

Women's organizations today are represented by a range of smaller, more focused initiatives, rather than by an umbrella organization, and these attempt to work on advancing specific interests. The significant women's organizations of the 1980s were wings and sections of the male-led trade union and liberation movements. Given the extremity of apartheid capitalist repression, women activists engaged in the liberation organizations at the same time as they organized separately as women. The fate of women's organizations was thus tied to the broader movement.

The women who went into parliament, as was the case with the trade unionists and the SACP members, went in as ANC party representatives and their allegiance therefore has to be in the first instance to the party.

The question of interest representation is linked to broader processes including the ways in which the global and national systems of race, class, and gender systems articulate. Policies of government in South Africa today, as well as responses by activists, tend to be framed within an overwhelming neoliberal logic. The interests of women and men among the rural and urban poor are not being adequately addressed. The high rates of poverty and inequality, as highlighted in this chapter, continue along lines determined by apartheid legislation and policy.

Attempts to understand the transition and the present moment of entrenching democracy highlight that elites made decisions, although movements played a role; they also highlight the fragmenting effect of transitions. Thus, while transitions open up opportunities, they also seem to have a destabilizing effect on movements. And the weakening of movements allows the state to move ahead relatively unchecked. Hence policies such as GEAR, which do nothing to address the issues of poverty and inequality that continue from the days of apartheid.

In South Africa today, race, class, and gender continue to determine access to economic privilege. The transition led to a balancing act and a search for a middle ground. The nature of the democracy being entrenched is one based on liberal notions of rights, comparable with neoliberal economic doctrine.

This chapter has attempted to show how movements were shaped by state responses during apartheid, the period of the transition, and the period of emerging democracy. It also attempted to highlight the dialectical relationship between movements and the state.

The danger in the present is in the tendency for demands to be framed on neoliberal terms. The dangers of entryism lie in new entrants fitting into the system without challenging it, and in using entry as a means to embourgeoisement.

The seeds of challenges to neoliberalism lie perhaps in the dispersed movements that are developing in various parts of the country. Challenges need to be made to shift the rules of the game, rather than tinkering with capitalism. We may perhaps have to accept the idea of incrementalism but we need to be clear about the direction in which incremental shifts are taking us.

Notes

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- 2 "The Demobilisation of Civil Society: Struggling with New Questions in Development," *Development Update* 3(1) (1999).
- 3 The workers who formed the militant trade unions were predominantly black workers.
- 4 In referring to these movements I do not mean to suggest that the category workers does not include women—rather I am referring to organizations that were set up to take up these specific interests. Women in trade unions have organized to make unions more responsive to their interests, with mixed results. While making gains in certain areas women in trade unions have to date not won the demand for a quota to ensure representation on the national executive committee of the trade unions.
- 5 See Hutchful, 1999.
- 6 See for example Kros (1980) and Wells (1980).
- 7 See Orr (1999).
- 8 See Escobar (1994) and Ferguson (1994) on critiques of the development industry and the depoliticization of what are essentially political issues.

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