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Editorial

Marx and the "International"

by Vishwas Satgar

KARL MARX was an intrepid traveller in the European context in the mid-19th century. Don't imagine the bearded one moving around with a roller suitcase, tourist guides and staying at fancy hotels. Marx, the "red mole," travelled around a tumultuous Europe out of political choice but also because of the strong-arm of ruling-class repression.

The frontiers of struggle and revolution were what kept Marx on the move. His "seditious" missives against aristocratic, religious and bourgeois classes and commitment to revolution earned him infamy amongst ruling classes in Europe. Marx was forced to leave various countries due to legal prohibitions issued by the Prussian Empire, the King of Belgium and the French authorities.

This article is not about Marx's biographical adventures and escapades, which in themselves reveal a great deal about his commitment to internationalism. Rather, this contribution is about how Marx thought about and acted the "international." How was the international part of Marx's theory and practice?

It is also about how Marx's ideas have travelled to South Africa through internationalism, and the contribution South African Marxism has made to anti-racism, including its support for building a powerful anti-apartheid movement.

The third theme in this article is on the current conjuncture and necessity for a renewed internationalism. Finally, this article concludes with possible directions and challenges for 21st century internationalism.

Marx and the "International"

For some international relations thinkers, Marx's work does not have much to offer in terms of thinking and understanding the international.(1)

That is to say, because Marx's political and ideological formation happened in a post-Napoleonic era in transition from the Holy Alliance to the concert of Europe, which secured a relative peace for "a hundred years" (1815-1914), the lived experience of Marx's world supposedly occluded an understanding of international relations.

This is based on a superficial reading of Marx's work and his praxis as a revolutionary. Anybody reading *The Communist Manifesto* and *Capital* would recognize the international character of capitalist expansion.

In the *Manifesto* it is the materiality of capitalism, the role of the bourgeoisie, class struggle and the historical agency of the working class that remakes the world. In *Capital* the self-expanding value of capital is crucial for its expansionary tendencies.

Moreover, the original form of accumulating capital through primitive accumulation entailed a historical role for mercantile capitalism, in terms of slavery, conquest and trade within international relations. Some theorists also read Marx as furnishing his own understanding of imperialism and the importance for class solidarity in the imperial centers of capitalism and with anti-colonial struggles.(2)

Now, Marx was thinking and writing in the context of a Eurocentric milieu of 19th century Europe. White supremacist thinking was also expressed in the Enlightenment, including Hegel's conception of world history, ethnographic accounts of the colonial, and the vaunting of scientific racism linked to 19th century imperialism.



Of course we must be cautious in thinking with Marx, so we don't get infected by some of this distasteful racist thinking. But let us not make the mistake of reducing Marx to a racist or a Eurocentric thinker, as Edward Said does in *Orientalism*.

Said is wrong. Marx was not a white supremacist. As several readings of Marx have pointed out there is a triple epistemological rupture with Eurocentricism in Marx's thought.(3)

The first relates to Marx's break with a linear conception of capitalist modernity and the idea that Western capitalism is the terminus of all non-Western societies. Informing this break is Marx's appreciation of the deleterious impacts of colonialism and his own active opposition to slavery.(4)

Marx was a fervent abolitionist of slavery; he recognized how colonialism divided the working class, as in the case of Ireland; and regarding India he came to appreciate the complex relationship between the colonizer and colonized, particularly the agency of the oppressed.(5)

His second break with Eurocentricism relates to Marx's appreciation that the Western transition from feudalism to capitalism could not be universalized. Initially, attempting to think Asia within this framework led to a realization, as more evidence became available, that Asia has its own distinct social structures, which would shape its transition from pre-capitalist relations.

The third epistemological rupture relates to the transition beyond capitalism. In this regard a lot has been written on Marx's exchange with Vera Zasulich on the Russian Road to socialism and rural social relations, in which he recognizes the Russian commune (mir) as a potential part of the transition. (6)

This affirming of a multilineal approach to socialism, through various pathways based on national histories, cultures and social practices, becomes even more apparent when reading Marx through his own understanding of ecological relations and the limits of productivism.

Universal Working-Class Role

Marx's connection to international relations also emerges in his discussion of the universal role of the working class as the subject of history and as central to the revolutionary transformation from capitalism.

Such a conception of the working class is present in the *Communist Manifesto*, and in the centrality he gives to the sale of labor power in his conception of the labor theory of value and his conception of exploitation in *Capital*.

At the same time, Marx lived out his commitment to the working-class and international struggle in various ways. These included his association with clandestine worker groups in France including the League of the Just (from 1843); his links with the Chartist movement in England (1845) and then again deepened through writings for the Chartist newspapers (1851-1862); his co-organizing the Communist Correspondence Committee in Brussels (1846) to unite socialists and politically engaged workers in various countries; his joining the League of the Just on their invitation (1847) and assisting them to organize and develop an open revolutionary program which resulted in them changing their name to the Communist League, embracing the slogan "Working Men of All Countries Unite" and adopting *The Communist Manifesto* (1848).

His education work amongst workers' groups included delivering lectures on political economy



(published as Wage Labour and Capital). His support of the German Revolution of 1848 through publishing the Neue Rheinische Zeitung provided a platform to call for a unified German state, rally support for workers and peasants' struggles and support national liberation struggles in other countries.

Between 1851-62 Marx contributed journalistic articles to the New York Daily Tribune on various struggles, international affairs and political economy developments.

Finally Marx's involvement in the creation of the International Working Men's Association (1864), the First International, enabled him to foreground various international developments, influence the creation of the social democratic party in Germany, contest the destructive role of anarchists and foreground the importance of the Paris Commune.

The Encounter with South Africa

Marx the anti-racist found his way into the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa through various number of interlocutors in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This included the work of the socialist and anti-imperialist feminist Olive Schreiner, expatriate workers from Europe, the Communist Party of South Africa, Trotskyist groups, and revolutionary nationalists.

Marxism played a crucial role in developing the theoretical and analytical tools to understand the relationship between capitalism and racial oppression. Much later, women's oppression was added to the roster of oppression and the vast corpus of South African Marxism.

Three influential theories, articulation of modes of production developed by Harold Wolpe, "colonialism

of a special type" put forward by the South African Community Party, and "racial capitalism" developed by Trotskyists (e.g. Neville Alexander) all contributed to resistance in South Africa.

Each of these theories have a lineage that can be traced back to Marx. Wolpe's articulation of modes of production and the Trotskyist versions of "racial capitalism" draw from and innovate on Marx's historical materialism and conception of primitive accumulation as it relates to pre-capitalist relations in the transition to capitalism.

The SACP's "colonialism of a special type" involved a structural class analysis of monopoly capitalism and a critique of a colonial social formation in which colonizer and colonized shared a common spatial reality. Again, these theoretical ideas connected back to Marx's understanding of class, racial oppression and his critique of colonialism.

All the theories mentioned are not direct derivatives from Marx, but definitely elaborate aspects in his theory of capitalism, historical materialist framework and political writings.

Marx's abolitionist stance against slavery, for instance, was very similar to anti-apartheid activism. More precisely it was similar to the anti-apartheid movement that developed in various parts of the world, cutting across Cold War fault-lines, to rally resistance in streets, outside embassies, for sanctions, providing aid to national liberation movements and including battle grounds as in Angola.

The anti-apartheid movement made a crucial contribution to isolating the pariah Afrikaner nationalist regime, and to the end of apartheid. As an internationalist movement, the anti-apartheid movement was an important precursor to the more



recent anti-globalization movement-of-movements. Its experience, history and lessons for renewing a 21st century internationalism are crucial.

Neoliberal Crisis and Resistance

Today's world has endured over three decades of neoliberalism, which has engendered a crisis-ridden global political economy. Financial liberalization, conjoined to the inherent instability of globalized finance, has destabilized a number of economies in the global south.

Around 2007-8 the global financial crisis finally reached the heartlands of capitalism. Instead of learning lessons from this general and systemic crisis, global ruling classes are still committed to financialized accumulation. Trump, like Obama, has not reined in finance. The crises of neoliberalism have not ended the neoliberal regime as a class project.

Instead the conjunctural crisis of neoliberalism, grounded in a systemic contradiction of worsening inequality, is now converging with other dangerous systemic contradictions like the climate crisis and the hollowing out of market democracies.

A new fascist menace is rising in the world. Religious fundamentalism, ethno-nationalism, racist border regimes, climate denialism and authoritarian approaches to globalized market economies are emerging. This ideological disposition is being expressed in various combinations, with different emphases, in Trump's White House, Brazil, India, Turkey, Russia and several countries in Europe.

The global left has not been able to resist hegemonic neoliberalism effectively. Today, neoliberalism is becoming neo-fascist-like in response to its own crises and domestic conditions. Global capitalism is

experiencing a conjunctural and a set of systemic crises, yet resistance is episodic, defensive and even being preemptively crushed.

This poses serious challenges for the renewal of 21st century internationalism. National struggles are weaker and vulnerable without international solidarity.

Where to for Internationalism?

The classical inheritance Marx has left us on the centrality of the international in left politics is something we should learn from critically, while being informed by contemporary conditions.

In the global cycles of resistance, against the neoliberal class project, the World Social Forum was a crucial space for convergence. WSF presented a critique of plutocratic class power — expressed through the elites' World Economic Forum — offering a self-reflexive space for the new global left, enabling solidarity-based sharing of anti-systemic perspectives, inciting a 21st century emancipatory imagination, and provided a platform for confrontations with the IMF-World Bank-WTO and other globalizing forces.

However, the World Social Forum did not become a strategic center for the global left, nor did it develop a programmatic approach to global resistance. Institutionalizing left power, in a democratic manner, has eluded the WSF. It just might be that the WSF has exhausted its historic role.

This question requires further debate and clarification amongst the global left. Samir Amin, the leading Marxist thinker from Africa, made it a central priority before his passing to call for a New International of Workers and Peoples.(7)



Feeling strongly that the WSF had “slowed down,” Amin centered his call on the crisis-ridden nature of contemporary capitalism including ecological destruction, its “soft totalitarianism” which can easily become a hard totalitarianism, and the failure of existing left forces in national spaces, particularly the global north, to resist contemporary imperialism. His call for an inaugural meeting of a New International of Workers and Peoples was aimed at anti-capitalist activists, movements, parties, networks and unions from all continents. It envisaged a convergence that would build a democratic organization and critically learn the lessons of historical internationalism.

In short, based on his analysis of the “Autumn phase” of capitalism, Samir Amin believed in the necessity of the “Peoples Spring” informed by a socialist perspective. This is another possible way forward.

At the same time, various social forces on the ground are seeking to build transnational solidarities that can feed into a renewal of internationalism, from below, and through a new strategic politics.

A number of examples stand out on the global terrain of struggle: Campaigning for food sovereignty pathways, inaugurated by La Via Campesina, through various national and continental alliances. Climate jobs, energy sovereignty and just transition campaigning by unions and red-green alliances in various countries. Transnational campaigning platforms for dismantling the power of transnational corporations and for national and global regulation. There are global union struggles: The International Transport Workers Federation, effectively organizing support for workers across national borders to take on the exploitative, low cost, Ryanair. Indigenous peoples’ resistance to carbon extraction, the destruction of eco-systems and more.

In this context, I firmly agree with Marx on the need

for anti-capitalist internationalism but also with Samir Amin on the imperative of building a New International of Workers and Peoples in the 21st century, if we are to survive a rising eco-fascist and ecocidal global capitalism.

We rallied courageous human solidarity against apartheid and its imperial allies. We can do it again, from below and in a democratic manner, before it is too late.

Notes

1. See Vendulka Kubalkova and Albert Cruickshank, 1989, *Marxism and International Relations*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
2. Lucia Pradella, “Imperialism and Capitalist Development in Marx’s Capital,” *Historical Materialism* 21.2 (2013) 117–147.
3. In this regard see Gilbert Achcar (2013) *Marxism, Orientalism, Cosmopolitanism* Chicago: Haymarket Books, in which he deals with Marx’s epistemological evolution. Also see Kevin B. Anderson (2010) *Marx At The Margins — On Nationalism, Ethnicity and Non-Western Societies* for an excellent analysis of what I call the making of Marx’s anti-racism.
4. See Robin Blackburn (2011), *Marx and Lincoln — An Unfinished Revolution*. London and New York: Verso Books. As this text confirms, Marx had a more radical position than Lincoln on the rights and freedoms of African Americans.
5. I agree with Pranav Jani in recognizing that Marx developed a deeper appreciation of India beyond his descriptive commentary on the role of the bourgeoisie. See Jani’s “Karl Marx,



Eurocentrism, and the 1857 Revolt in British India” in Crystal Bartolovich and Neil Lazarus (2002) *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

6. See Teodor Shanin (1983) *Late Marx and the Russian Road — Marx and the Peripheries of Capitalism*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
7. Samir Amin wrote up his analysis and argument, titled “It is imperative to reconstruct the International of Workers and Peoples,” in 2017 and put out an email call on 24 June 2018, titled “Letter of Intent for an Inaugural Meeting of the International of Workers and Peoples.”





International News

In a changing world of work, cooperatives provide security and meaningful jobs to young people, new study shows

Original taken from: <http://www.cicopa.coop/publications/in-a-changing-world-of-work-cooperatives-provide-work-security-and-meaningful-jobs-to-young-people-new-study-shows/>

Brussels, 6 June 2018 – **CICOPA**, the international organisation of industrial and service cooperatives, has published today a new **“Global Study on Youth Cooperative Entrepreneurship”**, as part of its campaign **“We own it! The future of work is ours”**. The study is based on desk research and on an online survey involving 64 youth cooperatives in the five continents, and shows how – in a world of work deeply reshaped by demographic changes, globalization, technological innovations and youth unemployment – **cooperatives can be a concrete tool in the hands of young people for improving their work and entrepreneurship conditions.**

The study reveals a quite fresh and dynamic picture of youth cooperatives who took part in the survey. They are primarily active in the service sector, and are highly involved in activities requiring a certain degree of training, specialized knowledge and skills (e.g. telecommunications and information technologies, programming, legal and accounting activities, management, consultancy, research, marketing...). In most cases, they are micro or small-sized enterprises and have reported a positive economic performance and increasing or stable trends in job creation in recent years. They reveal gender equity in management positions and are extremely keen to implement new organizational methods in their business practices (e.g. workplace organisation and governance practices).

Their cooperative choice is justified by a mix of value-based and pragmatic motivations: **meaningful work (to “work differently”), experience and values-**

related aspirations, but also concrete need for stable jobs, career opportunities and protection.

This picture, albeit partial, strongly suggests that youth cooperatives are riding the wave of changes and represent a valuable and secure option for young entrepreneurs.

The global study also shows how cooperatives can play a crucial role in responding to new challenges introduced by recent work and economic transformations affecting new generations. For example, **they can “inject” democracy and participation inside the digital economy, by giving ownership and control of power to the people who use and work through on-line platforms.** Through their participatory governance, they are a laboratory in the hands of young people for the experimentation of innovative and sustainable forms of work management.

However, concludes the study, cooperatives cannot be considered a panacea. Besides the important and increasing involvement coming from the cooperative movement to answer to youth needs, **cooperatives are only able to display their full potential if a favorable institutional environment surrounds them.** This is particularly true when it comes to providing quality employment and entrepreneurship, which is highly dependent on the institutional frameworks regulating cooperatives, the legal status of young workers and worker-members, but also access to financial resources and user-friendly bureaucracy.

Original taken from: <http://www.cicopa.coop/>



The Future of Work: Where do Industrial and Service Co-ops Stand?

Original taken from: <http://www.cicopa.coop/publications/the-future-of-work-where-do-industrial-and-service-cooperatives-stand/>

The organization of work and of the production of goods and services is experiencing profound changes that may strongly alter the way we work and the future of work itself.

Cooperative employment tends to be more sustainable in time, suffer less income inequality, tends to be characterized by a better distribution between rural and urban areas, and enjoy a higher level of satisfaction and self-identity than the average. Cooperatives are also a large laboratory experimenting innovative and sustainable forms of work and work relations within the enterprise with continuous creativity and innovation. Almost a century-old model of work organisation based on worker ownership is proving its remarkable modernity to adapt to new challenges when work and working conditions are threatened.

The strategic paper analyses four challenges contributing to the transformation of work, present and future:

- technological change and the knowledge economy
 - change in demographic, societal and environmental trends
 - globalization and de-industrialization
 - working conditions, inequality and social protection
-
- How do industrial and service cooperatives react to these challenges? What are the most

recent innovative cooperative models, based on worker ownership, being established in response? CICOPA's strategic paper on the Future of Work attempts to answer to those questions and address recommendations to policy makers in that field.

Full report available at: <http://www.cicopa.coop/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/The-Future-of-Work.pdf>



National News

Launch of the #BanFracking Campaign

By Courtney Morgan, COPAC



From the 16th-18th, COPAC attended the launch of the #BanFracking campaign hosted by SCLC (Support Centre for Land Change) in beautiful Wilderness. The meeting brought together NGOs, civil society formations, community members, first indigenous leaders and activists. Some of the groups in the room along with COPAC were the Karoo Environmental Justice Movement (KEJM), GroundWorks, Earthlife, Friends of the Earth Mozambique, Vaal Environmental Justice Association (VEJA), South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA), AFRA and 350.org. The aim of the meeting was to build a strong alliance for the #BanFracking campaign and develop a declaration for the campaign.

On Friday night we had an introduction to the issue, with 4 comrades from various communities sharing their experiences, and what fracking would mean for them. We also covered all the logistics and objectives for the weekend, that night. On Saturday we were treated to a number of presentations on

the dangers of fracking, and the science behind the actual process as well as the general dangers of the climate crisis. Bobby from Groundworks started off the day with a presentation on the national perspective about fracking, followed by a short panel by some NGOs present, speaking about their work and what they could contribute to the campaign. Dipti Bhatnagar from Friends of the Earth Mozambique then shared with us the dangers of the climate crisis, including reference to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's report on a 1.5° degree increase in global temperatures. After some scary stats and concerning prospects in terms of what fracking would do to our country, and some news from Mozambique we went into some international successes. International statements of solidarity and encouragement were read out and we watched short clips of various mobilisation and protest methods.

On the last day of the meeting, we sat down and got to planning. We developed a strategy for a campaign to be rolled out in 2019, identified allies and opponents and got commitments from various NGOs on what they could contribute to this process. Among capacity building and knowledge dissemination, COPAC and SAFSC committed to taking the call to ban fracking seriously, by adding this into the Climate Justice Charter they are in the process of developing. Finally, there was a declaration written throughout the weekend, finalised on Sunday and endorsed by all the members in the room, the declaration is as follows:

Sunday, 18th November 2018

We the people and organisations from the Karoo met from the 16th - 18th November in the Wilderness to discuss our response to the increased push for fracking in South Africa. We were joined by community people from throughout South Africa



and international and national NGOs.

We remember the families that have lost loved ones in the October 2018 fires in the George area. We recognise that the severity of these fires, like the ones in California are because of climate change. We also recognise that despite this reality, the South African government, and the Ministry and Department of Environmental Affairs continue to facilitate the extraction of fossil fuels, despite the overwhelming evidence and call by various international bodies such as the International Panel on Climate Change and the International Energy Agency that we need to get to zero carbon emissions urgently.

We recognise that we have come a long way since Steytleville in 2012, when we the people of the Karoo supported by the Support Centre for Land Change (then known as the Southern Cape Land Committee) met with community people from throughout South Africa. From the coal fields in Mpumalanga, the oil refinery area in south Durban, the petrochemical area in the Vaal, the mine areas in Gauteng, together with national and international NGOs, people stood in solidarity with the people of the Karoo. We said NO TO FRACKING and YES to transformative development determined by the people of the Karoo through meaningful participation.

In 2013 we met again in the Karoo and launched the "Black Thursday Land Campaign - Mawubuye umhlaba wethu" which was clear: "Don't Frack with The Karoo".

In 2015 we revisited our positions, further educated ourselves, linked with local community people challenging fracking in The Netherlands and we once again confirmed our position of NO TO FRACKING and we committed to push for alternatives which foster food and energy sovereignty including

renewable energy and agro-ecological food production.

In 2016, we together with community people from KwaZulu Natal, with local government, local traditional leaders, political representation from National Parliament, national NGOs we gathered in solidarity with the people of Matatiele challenging proposed fracking on their lands and we reaffirmed that our lives and livelihoods are supported by the ecosystems we are destroying, so we will do all it takes to safeguard them for future generations. We said NO to exploration and extraction.

In October 2018, we the people from the Karoo, KwaZulu Natal, the Vaal and international and national NGO's met in south Durban in solidarity with the south Durban community challenging offshore gas exploration. We said no more fossil fuel exploration, no more coal mines, oil and gas wells and no more associated development such as pipelines, refineries and coal power stations.

Our vision is where we live in harmony with each other and the earth, and the home, community and youth is our bedrock upon which we build a democratic, inclusive and fossil free society and where:

People receive fair remuneration for engaging in productive and creative livelihoods, where the work they do is not demeaning or exploitative but is safe, rewarding and secure;

Communities enjoy decent levels of affordable basic services and infrastructures to be enjoyed by all in society as a basic human right – and not only by 'consumers' who can afford them;

Individuals and families are able to access, at minimum, the basic goods of human life starting



with the most basic levels of goods like nutritious food, and safe and comfortable accommodation and energy that is affordable and socially owned; There are clean healthy environments where people live and work that are nurtured by the very way in which people live and work; and Government is accountable to the people.

We state the following:

We say no to extractives, privatisation of renewable energy, to profits over people, to capitalism, racism and patriarchy.

We want a South Africa without fracking. We want a world without fracking. We want a life without fracking.

We want fracking criminalised.

We want system change - not climate change!

We hereby reaffirm our history and call for a Ban on Fracking in South Africa.





The Food Sovereignty Campaign

Workshop: Toward a Water and Climate Justice Charter for South Africa

By Aaisha Domingo



On the 27th and 28th of September, COPAC convened an event with students, grassroots activists, trade unions and religious organisations deliberating on the theme: Water and Food Crisis: Towards A Climate Justice Charter for South Africa. The idea of a Charter comes out of our activism on food, seed and water sovereignty which began in 2014.

The purpose for the climate justice charter and process is to:

- Unite important players in the fragmented civil society, environmental justice and climate justice and water sectors of South Africa, to encourage a re-alignment of climate justice forces.
- Ensure those most affected by climate change and shocks, particularly the working class, the poor, the unemployed and the landless have voice and lead this process of eco-centric transformation
- Develop a progressive; grassroots inspired Climate and Water Charter to:

- Sustain life
- Recognise the class, racial, gender and ecological impacts of carbon and climate capitalism
- Advance generational justice
- Critique the failed role of political parties in the climate crisis
- Construct a narrative around climate justice and a transformative just transition
- Serve as a tool to engage government stakeholders to ensure that climate change is placed on the national agenda.
- Provide a compass to build pathways from below to achieve systemic change and advance systemic alternatives from below

Key themes for the Charter to be deliberated in grassroots dialogues relate to systemic alternatives that would bring down carbon emissions and ensure we sustain life as climate shocks hit. These themes include:

- Principles for the charter
- Our conception of the just transition for South Africa taking into account class, race, gender and ecological relations
- Systemic alternatives related to land use, water, energy, food, production, consumption, waste, transport, housing, finance;
- The role of the climate emergency state and our international relations as a climate justice society;
- Communication, education and awareness raising to mobilise society



- The role and form of people's power from below

These are the themes that were tackled over our two-day workshop in September. The workshop commenced with a Prayer for the Earth, led by Chaplain Kirun Satgoor (Arya Samaj), Sangoma Anelise de Wet, Fr Anthony Egan SJ (Jesuit Institute South Africa). Thereafter, three panel discussions were held in the following order:

1. Drought, Water Crisis and Climate Change: Assessing our Role, Learning Lessons
Panellists: Nazeer Soday (PHA, WCC), Ayanda Kota (UPM), Ferrial Adam (Activist and researcher), Jane Cherry (COPAC)
2. What is Government's Approach to Energy, Climate and Just Transition?
Panellists: Makoma (Earthlife), Richard Worthington (FES), Vishwas Satgar (COPAC-WITS)
3. Mining Affected Communities and the Challenge of transforming Eskom: Pathways and Challenges
Panellists: Hassen Lorgat (Benchmarks), Thando Lukuko (Project 90by2030), Hameeda Dedat (Naledi), Vuyo Bikitsha (NUMSA)

On Day 2 of the Workshop, the Strategy Concept Document for the Water and Climate Justice Charter was presented by Prof. Satgar and Ferrial Adam, climate justice academics and activists, who outlined the ideas behind this People's Charter. The workshop then broke into groups, each engaging thoroughly on what the Climate Justice Charter means for advancing a deep and transformative just transition in South Africa.

"This initiative could play a very crucial role in terms of the future of the country. There is something inspiring in the fact that we are all rising to the challenge and trying our best. What is very crucial is that we deepen this convergence and share this process and all our tools with our communities", Prof. Satgar.

SAFSC and COPAC would like to encourage the public to take part in the activism around water and climate justice. It is important to get involved in dialogues, share knowledge and take action to protect our natural resources. We want alternatives, answers, viewpoints, inputs from below related to these themes.

South Africa has 18 million children, who need to be centrally engaging in this conversation. Moreover, every sector in civil society (faith-based, civic, cultural, sport, student, gender, NGO etc.), progressive movements and grassroots community organisations must be invited to input. We want self-organisation from below in schools, community halls, under trees, in taxi ranks and workplaces.

Have conversations on the above themes and share your ideas. Own this process and participate. Your inputs will feed into the drafting and adoption of the Climate Justice Charter for South Africa at a People's Assembly in 2019.





Charters are a part of South Africa's history, and we are at a historical moment where a people's charter for climate justice could change the politics of this country. We are not waiting for government, none of our political parties address the climate crisis! This People's Charter will speak to generational justice and have a nuanced perspective to the climate crisis. The time is now!





Masidleni: launch of communal eating space at Wits University

By Courtney Morgan

On the 28th of September, COPAC along with Inala and the WCCO hosted the launch for the communal eating space at the Wits Food Sovereignty Centre. The event was mainly attended by the beneficiaries of the WCCO, Inala volunteers and key members of the Wits community. COPAC also brought along members of a workshop they had convened on climate justice to visit the space. This event was one that was aimed at centering the students, and emphasizing that this space is one which will restore their dignity through self organising and ownership. Having the students centered meant that the event was an amazing experience filled with the vibrancy and the youth bring. To a lot of us, it was also an encouraging site to see young people taking pride in the space, and speaking about concepts of food sovereignty with such passion.

Although the event had a number of short speeches, the aim was not to have lengthy interventions, it was about beginning to build connections and community around the space. One thing that built solidarity was the sharing of a meal, where all those in attendance, students, academics and

activists alike, all sat down at tables and ate a meal together. Although this warm meal is something that is provided to the students on a daily basis, having space to sit and eat those meals, with live entertainment was a new and welcomed change. As mentioned, short speeches were made by an Inala volunteer, Vishwas Satgar from COPAC and an Amnesty International Wits volunteer. There were also messages of support given by two activists that attended the Climate Justice workshop, one from the Children's Resource Centre and one from the Green House Project. For the rest of the afternoon we were entertained by amazing performers while some students played indigenous games. The first performers were the musical duo Identity Disorder who performed four songs to welcome the guests and received a warm reception. While everybody ate, members of Us is Us, a group of young artists, performed a variety of songs including some African songs. All in all the afternoon was a good start to the kind of cultural program that will be a regular thing at the Food Sovereignty Centre. In addition to being a space a step in the journey for Food Sovereignty in the inner city, a space of agroecology and an eco-demonstration for the university, the food sovereignty centre is also intended to be a space of cultural exchange and research.

The launch was a vibrant afternoon which gave us a glimpse into the future where students of all backgrounds will come together, sharing knowledge and experiences and be enriched by the sense of community and self-sufficiency. This was truly a





reflection of Food Sovereignty and how it could drastically change the university experience for vulnerable students.

The PHA soil workshop: Towards achieving a just and soil-sensitive farming

By Elgin Hlaka, Wits Inala Forum

“The land, our purpose is the land; that is what we must achieve”, this is a direct quote from a Judgement delivered in the Gauteng Division of the High court in Pretoria, by Judge Basson. The applicants to this dispute were arguing for the attainment of their consent to the usage of land in their ancestral land. Although the above quote was taken from another Judgement (Daniels v Scribante & Another), it nevertheless resonates with the struggle regarding attainment of the land and the dignity of our people.

On the 22nd to the 24th of November 2018, we attended the PHA (Philippi Horticultural Area) Food & Farming Campaign workshop with 45 other activists, farmers and experts in Cape Town. The overall experience and reception we received regarding the struggle of the local small scale farmers was indeed unavoidable. And, like the broader scheme and narrative that is going on in the country, regarding land reform, the local story which is being advocated by the PHA, hits home, as the rich land lying under an aquifer is vulnerable to be gained and used by developers for commercial use.

The PHA Food & Farming Campaign is an organisation that is fighting for the protection of the land and in particular the protection of the soil, against the use of chemical use to grow crops. The protection is a larger campaign to advocate for the rights of small scale farmers in Cape Town, against the big developers who seek to use the land for housing and other commercial developments. The

PHA seeks to help small scale farmers to get land and be able to earn and produce a good livelihood.



Indeed, this is a broader campaign that resonates with the larger portion of many small scale farmers either in the outskirts rural area or even within the city. Small scale farmers are being drowned in the sea of big commercial farmers who use chemicals. Therefore, organic farming has been the epitome alternative to the usual large scales of commercial farming, which is often unhealthy for the soil.

Therefore, in order to protect the soil and to use it in ways through which healthy food can be produced for the people, who often do not have an alternative to turn to because of financial constraints, organic farming was highly advocated for and emphasised. Amongst the many techniques that were taught, such as covering the soil, was compost making – instead of farmers purchasing the manufactured compost, which is often not compost. The facilitators of the workshop, through a thoroughly planned exercise, showed us all the manner and ways through which compost can be made. Compost is described as the “heart and soul of organic farming”. This is in pursuit to have healthy soil for the sake of having healthy crops.

It is prudent for us to thus emphasise organic farming as a tool and way against the usual unhealthy



pesticides which are often used by large commercial farmers, who seek to gain money faster than usual. This damages the soil, and creates a mess out of a damaged situation already. Thus, the advancement of soil protection through organic farming thus became a factor, a resonance of what needs to be done and what needs to be achieved. The matter of eating local and buying local food would enhance the broader idea of building a sustainable ecology which would produce healthy food, for all local people. Part of the aim, which is important as well, is the use and extraction of carbon from the air into the soil, and thus this would be beneficial for both the air and the soil.

Agroecology instead of commercial agriculture thus became another viable alternative towards achieving a just transition for the use of soil. This aims to consider ecological principles in the process of agriculture, and the health and importance of ecological protection.

We must keep in mind that this workshop and indeed many others like it are part of the larger scheme of debates around the country and indeed the world regarding climate justice, and the many factors concerning this perspective. In the world of geopolitics and international concern, climate justice does not only concern the matters around climate, but have largely got to do with the manner in which we have designed our world, which is centred on a capitalist formation of existence and living.

This matter was well portrayed and conveyed by Prof. Lesley Green from the University of Cape Town, who empathised the matter of rethinking and reshaping our known world, in order to fit the sustainable system that will take care of the soil. Taking care of the soil would ensure that we too are taken care of and that our local people would consume healthy fresh produce.



Comments from the floor at the workshop included the concern around the monopoly power that large pharmaceutical companies have, over much of the local economies. They also abuse their power by providing antibiotics to people, and often these antibiotics do not digest or break down completely within the human body and thus end up being harmful to either the soil, or even the fish in the sea. Much to this contribution is the lack of development and deterioration of infrastructure of the local towns.

Portia Phohlo, a PhD student at Stellenbosch University, gave a thrilling scientific overview of the importance around soil testing, with all the needed micro-organisms in the soil, which we often think to be harm to the soil, happen to be healthy for the soil and much needed indeed. Portia thus portrayed the need to view the soil and our companions mentioning that we are stewards for of the soil and should aim to always be in a protective guard for the soil.

The facilitators of the workshop who head the PHA, were able to summarize the protection campaign for soil in five principles namely:

1. No Till
2. Soil Cover
3. Plant Diversity
4. Living Root
5. Small Animal Integration

What became of particular importance at the



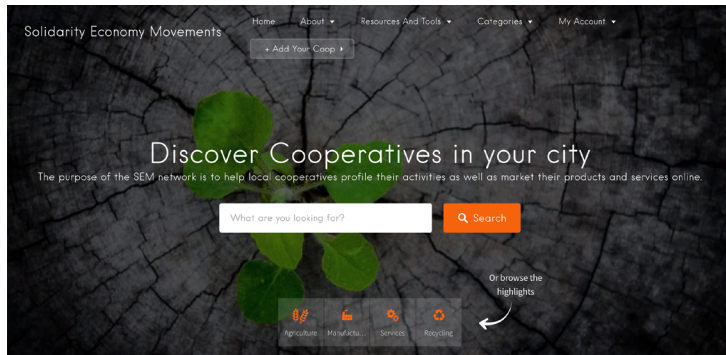
workshop was the fact that much the education which was given, is known by small scale farmers. Thus, small scale farmers have the ability and the knowledge regarding the use of land, and the protection of soil. This thus should be nurtured and propagated to the many small scale farmers around our communities.





The Worker Cooperative Campaign

Call to Cooperatives: Join the Solidarity Economy Movements Website



The Co-operative and Policy Alternative Centre has launched a Solidarity Economy Movements website to serve as a marketing platform for co-operatives in South Africa. The website is a useful tool for all cooperatives as they can register and create a profile of their cooperative, describe their activities and market their products and services online at no charge.

The aim of this website is to promote the Solidarity Economy by providing citizens who want to support cooperatives with a portal that allows them to search for cooperatives near them.

Based on the idea of the Solidarity Economy the aim is to transform production, consumption, savings and ways of living to sustain life and advance transformative values in their practices.

We invite all cooperatives to register on the website by following these simple steps:

1. Type the following address into your internet browser: www.sem.org.za
2. Click on the block in the top right corner '+ add your coop'

3. You will then be asked to register so type in your email address and choose a password
4. Fill out all your coop details and press 'submit'

Share this link with co-operatives you know so that we can strengthen this platform for building the solidarity economy in South Africa.

Profiling Co-operatives on the Solidarity Economy Movements Website

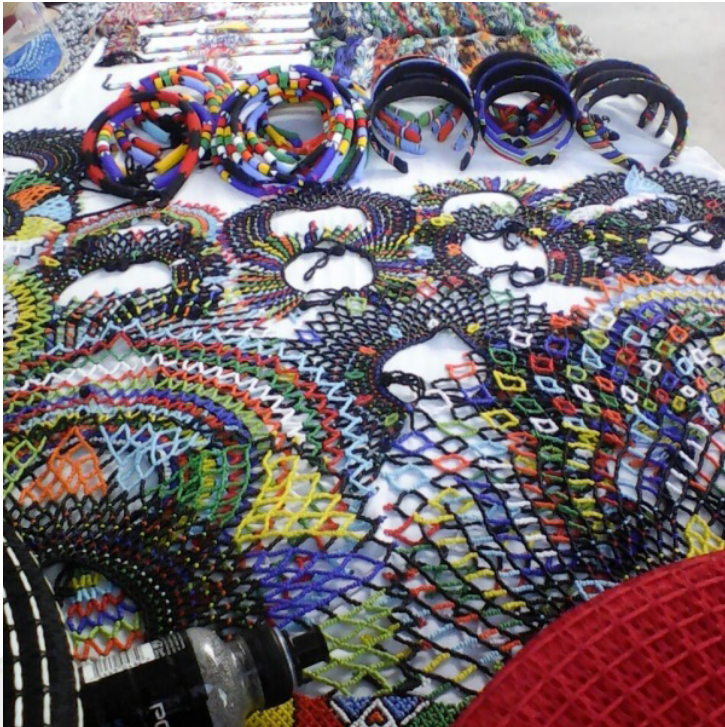
The Tanyanja JW Pty Ltd cooperative is a primary cooperative that classifies itself as an Environment and Waste Management Company. They are involved in environmental education and awareness, recycling, street cleaning, tree felling and planting, grass cutting and project management, among other things.

The Naledi and Rustler's Valley Farming Program Cooperative is a worker cooperative in the Naledi community that grows their own crops, building their own livelihoods and raising their cattle. They are in pursuit of a holistic approach to the development of a sustainable community. The aim is to produce high quality, organic products and to develop systems to support family kitchen gardens and communal farming efforts in partnership with the residents of the area.





Sidla Sonke is a primary cooperative in the Malagazi region who make art and crafts products.





Activist Resources to Advance the Solidarity Economy from Below

Democratic Marxism Seminars available for viewing on Youtube

Karl Marx and South African Marxism: Is it Over?
What Future for the South African Left?

Phindile Kunene, Mandla Nkomfe, Vishwas Satgar and Devan Pillay came together to present a seminar on the crisis that South Africa is facing. What can the Marxist Left of South Africa offer the country in the context of an unravelling ANC, deep corruption, neoliberalism and the challenges around climate change and inequality?

Youtube video available at: https://youtu.be/xqJ_dFKCzPw



Marxist Theories of the State: Old and New

On the 19th of September, Michelle Williams, Devan Pillay, David Masondo and Vishwas Satgar all presented a seminar starting the conversation around Marxists re-engaging with state theory and analysis. Central to this discussion are the following questions:

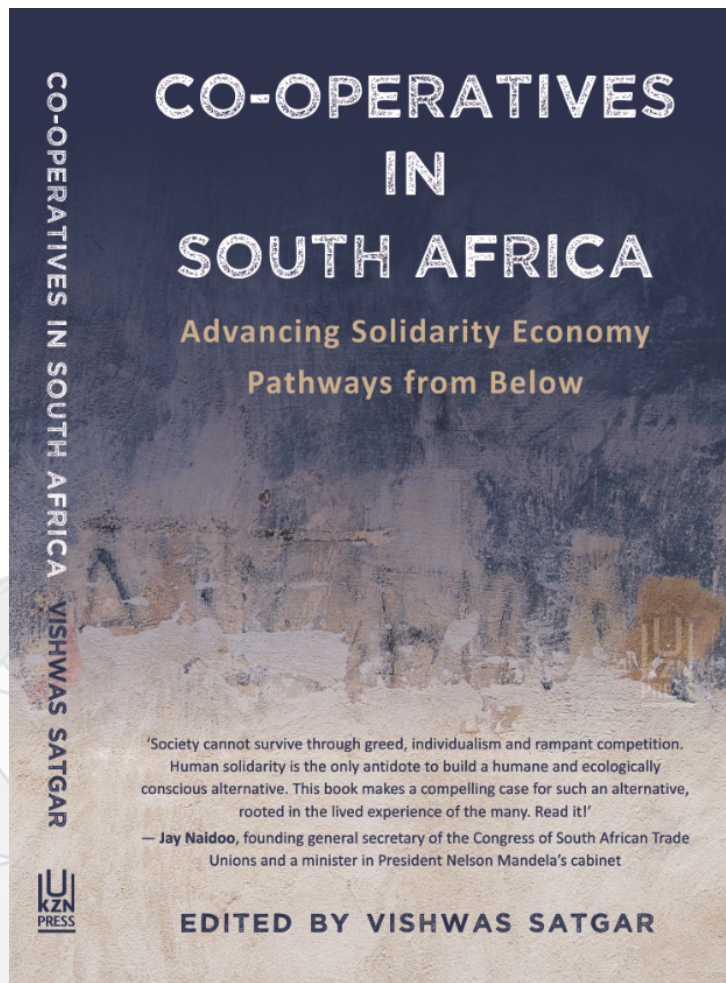
- Has the state been eclipsed by global markets?
- Is a new transnational state in the making?
- How have neoliberal states been remade and constitutionalised?
- Is state theory Eurocentric?
- How should we analyse the state in South Africa?
- What is the future of the state given geopolitics and global political economy conditions?

Video available on Youtube at: <https://youtu.be/KWInX7iC-nU>





Forthcoming book: Co-operatives in South Africa: Advancing Solidarity Economy Pathways from Below



below, both actual and potential, within various co-operative experiences. Solidarity economy practice is not seeking government validation or demanding recognition through adoption. Instead, such forces are seeking to work with, against and beyond the state to build institutionalised and decolonised solidarity relations in a society increasingly grounded in market values of individualism, competition and greed.

This book will be out in March 2019. Watch this space for more details.

Co-operatives in post-apartheid South Africa have featured in the Reconstruction and Development Programme, legislation, vertical and horizontal state policy and various discourses such as Black Economic Empowerment and 'two economies'. In practice, the big push by the government through quantitative growth, seed capital and top-down movement building has not yielded viable, member-driven and values-centred co-operatives leading systemic change. Government looks to the experience of Afrikaner nationalism for keys to success and is breaking new ground in co-operative banking and community public works programmes. Yet government co-operative pathways are facing serious limits. At the same time, solidarity economy practitioners have been fostering pathways from



contact us

We invite organisations and activists to make contributions to the Newsletter by writing stories, contributing photographs or cultural contributions, such as poetry, art, songs etc.

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All back issues of the Solidarity Economy News are available on our website.

