

10 Marikana's Meaning for Crisis Management

An Instance of South Africa's Resource Curse

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INTRODUCTION

The future of multinational corporate management from the standpoint of social and environmental responsibility and community investment is grim, given how the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC) regularly bragged about the "developmental success" of the South African operations of a major mining firm, Lonmin. In reality, 5 years after committing U.S. \$200 million to Lonmin, the firm's Marikana platinum mine quickly became one of the most notorious recent cases of economic-labor-social-ecological-gender relations in the world's extractive industries. The 2012 Marikana Massacre was preceded by IFC financing—a U.S. \$15 million equity stake and U.S. \$150 million loan commitment in 2007 due to be fully repaid by 2014—and the introduction of IFC "best case" practices ranging from economic development to racially progressive procurement and community involvement to gender work relations (IFC 2006).

The IFC was not the only agency to laud Lonmin's Marikana management. In 2008, the South African commercial bank most actively greenwashing its record of minerals and coal investment, Nedbank, awarded Lonmin and the World Bank its top prize in the socio-economic category of the Green Mining Awards (Daily Business News 2008). By 2010, Lonmin's *Sustainable Development Report* was ranked "excellent" by Ernst and Young. The World Bank was especially delighted with Lonmin's "gender equity" work (Burger and Sepora 2009). Moreover, according to its 2012 *Sustainable Development Report*, Lonmin

has established community resettlement policies which comply with the World Bank Operation Directives on Resettlement of Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Property. There were no resettlements of communities and no grievances lodged relating to resettlements. In terms of the Restitution of Land Rights Act 22 of 1994, the Company is in the process of addressing several land claims lodged against it before 2011. The resolution of these claims is being managed within the legislative framework of the regional Land Claims Commission and Land Claims Court.

(Lonmin 2012)

This justification for mining on stolen land ignores the long historic context of pre-1913 land dispossession, as well as the relegation of the platinum-rich area just west of Marikana to “Bantustan” status (as the tyrannical “Bophuthatswana” dictatorship) from 1961 until 1994. Another important and related bit of historical context, ignored in all IFC literature promoting Lonmin, is the company’s roots—from 1909 until 1999—as “Lonrho,” the London and Rhodesian Mining and Land Company Limited. Lonrho gained a very poor reputation for its role in Africa, especially in the years 1962–93 when Roland Walter Fuhrhop (“Tiny Rowland”) managed it, for as Brian Cloughly explained:

A British prime minister, Edward Heath, observed in 1973 that a businessman, a truly horrible savage called “Tiny” Rowland, represented “the unpleasant and unacceptable face of capitalism.” The description was fitting because Rowland was a perambulating piece of filth who had indulged in bribery, tax-dodging, and the general range of ingenious whizz-kid schemes designed to make viciously unscrupulous people rich and keep them that way.

(Cloughly 2008)

Mismanagement at Lonmin’s Marikana operation was legion, in spite of IFC marketing propaganda. The church-founded Bench Marks Foundation reported in 2007 (just as the IFC was getting involved) and 2012 (after the main IFC work had been completed) about the ways Lonmin had demonstrably failed in the main areas of corporate social responsibility: job creation and subcontracting (including labor broking); migrant labor, living conditions, and the living-out allowance; ineffectual community social investments, lack of meaningful community engagement and participation; and environmental discharges and irresponsible water use, especially in relation to local farming (Bench Marks Foundation 2007, 2012). Considering the broader gender oppression, Samantha Hargreaves (2013) reaches back into the migrant labor system itself:

The Marikana story is about much more than a strike for higher wages, it is also a story about a crisis in social reproduction. State neglect and corporate greed have fomented household crises stretching from the mines back to the sources of migrant labour in far-flung regions and neighbouring countries. Narrow male-dominated trade union and worker interests mean that hope for a radical resolution lies in the struggles of women in places like Wonderkop. The challenge is linking these with (mainly male) worker struggles and environmentalist solidarity to challenge the extractivist model of development, the social, economic and environmental costs of which are principally borne by working-class and peasant women.

Linking these issues is something the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) argued the World Bank had done—in a negative manner—in a report immediately after the massacre:

The mine has had a troubled history with the communities and its workers. A stakeholder perception survey commissioned by Lonmin in 2005 shortly after it acquired the mine and before IFC's investment showed that most respondents regarded the mine with "negativity combined with mistrust, suspicion and in some cases hatred." In fact, the conflict between the unions, which is thought to have sparked the violence this week, was visible even seven years ago. The survey reported a history of mistrust between all three unions. Participants reported union favoritism and discrimination at the mine and urged Lonmin to "treat people equally, regardless of race, job level or union affiliation." Despite criticism from communities and NGOs that industrial mining projects often result in serious human rights violations and little economic development, the IFC continues to justify its investments as a "key source of jobs, economic opportunities, investments, revenues to government, energy and other benefits for local economies." In documents disclosed on the Lonmin deal, IFC asserted that: "This investment is expected to have beneficial results for the workforce and surrounding communities." Indeed, IFC documents state that Lonmin "supports the protection of human life and dignity within their sphere of influence by subscribing to the principles laid down in the United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights." And yet despite attesting to a close working relationship with the South African police force on matters of security, a statement made yesterday [i.e. 16 August 2012] by Lonmin chairman Roger Phillimore characterized the violence as "clearly a public order rather than a labour relations associated matter". . . . In addition to seeking a full investigation into the violence and what led to it, CIEL has called on World Bank President, Jim Yong Kim, to revisit the Bank's investment in this project in light of recent events, specifically, and its approach to lending in the extractive industries more generally.

(CIEL 2012)

Exactly 2 weeks after the massacre, Kim went to nearby Pretoria and Johannesburg for a visit. Tellingly, he neglected to check on his Lonmin investment in Marikana and instead gave a high-profile endorsement to an IFC deal with a small junk-mail printing/posting firm that was prospering from state tenders (Bond 2012).

The *mismanagement* of mining at Marikana can be addressed from macro to micro scales, from economic to political to social to ecological. Doing so allows a strong political and financial reality check on the discourses of managerial harmony and prosperity that the IFC and Lonmin long maintained about the huge platinum operation in Marikana, which was long the main source of Lonmin's profits and its status as the world's third-largest platinum miner. The reality is that thanks to Lonmin's exploitative practices—especially paying just U.S. \$500/month for extremely dangerous rock-drilling until the 2012 strike forced a 22 percent wage increase—and its cooptation of

the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), added to the African National Congress (ANC) government's willingness to send in police to defend capital against labor, communities, and environment, 34 mineworkers were killed and 78 injured within a 20 minute barrage of fire on August 16, 2012. The prior week, 10 other mineworkers, two police, and two security guards were killed, and in the subsequent year, more than a dozen more mineworkers and Marikana Massacre survivors lost their lives due to residual tensions at the mine, including several cases of homicide and suicide directly related to the massacre's aftermath. A government body, the Farlam Commission, set up to investigate dragged on, creating yet more conflict given police reluctance to admit often grotesque errors. As one example, several of the bodies of empty-handed dead mineworkers were photographed by police shortly after the massacre, but soon crude weapons were placed in the corpses' hands for new photographs, but by accident *both sets were submitted to the Farlam Commission*. Wide-ranging mismanagement of public order policing at Marikana is frankly conceded by police professionals.

The case of Lonmin's and the IFC's mismanagement of the Marikana mine is critical not only for South Africa but as an example of the more general "Resource Curse." When a ruling party in any African country sinks to the depths of allowing its police force to serve white-dominated multinational capital by killing dozens of black workers so as to end a brief strike, it represents an inflection point. Beyond just the obvious human-rights and labor-relations travesties, the incident offered the potential for a deep political rethink, unveiling extreme depths of ruling-class desperation represented by the fusion of ANC Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa's black capitalism, the London mining house Lonmin's collaboration (through Ramaphosa) with the mining and police ministers, the brutality of state prosecutors who charged the victims with the crime, the alleged "sweetheart unionism" of the increasingly unpopular NUM, and the fragility of a Congress of South African Trade Union (Cosatu) split between Zuma/Ramaphosa loyalists and those with worker interests at heart. The split became untenable in August 2013, the very day of the Marikana Massacre anniversary, when the left-leaning Cosatu leader Zwelinzima Vavi declared war against the Cosatu president after he was forcibly suspended following an office sex scandal. But it was thanks to Marikana that positions hardened and those culpable became defensive. Only a few in the society—including several former ANC leaders who began openly questioning tactics of the dominant political class—confronted the chilling lessons about the moral degeneration of a liberation movement that the world had supported for decades. The first set of lessons regards the broader economic context.

A CONTEXT OF MACROECONOMIC MISMANAGEMENT

Lonmin "has had a hugely beneficial impact on South Africa's economy," according to a promotional film about the mining house produced by the IFC

in 2011 (IFC 2011). The context for this inaccurate statement is macroeconomic management by Trevor Manuel, a political appointee who chaired the World Bank Board of Governors in 2000 and whose 1996–2009 reign as South Africa’s finance minister was mainly celebrated by conservative and neoliberal economic commentators. Yet the policies Manuel imposed did not work, and 4 months before he left office to become Planning Minister, *The Economist* (2009) gave Manuel the highest mark for instability and risk amongst emerging market peer countries. Aside from a high exposure to potential bad lending and a high foreign debt, the main reason South Africa rated so poorly was the outflow of profits, dividends, and interest, which soared in 2007–08, creating a huge current account deficit (i.e., the combined huge payments outflow and a smaller trade deficit). Lonmin is directly implicated in this outflow, given that the vast majority of its shares are held in London.

With such a massive outflow of capital, hard currency was required so as to permit the multinational corporations (including Lonmin) to pay their shareholders. As a result, there was a rise in South African’s foreign debt from U.S. \$25 billion in 1994 to U.S. \$135 billion in 2013. What makes the very high global and local debt load much worse is the interest rate; among the largest trading partners, only Greece’s has been higher, according to the Department of Trade and Industry (2011). One reason why interest rates have been so high in relative terms is to guard against the capital flight that periodically crashes the currency. South Africa’s liberalized exchange control system initially compelled a massive interest rate increase in 1995–96 to guard against the flight of capital that accompanied the exchange control deregulation of March 1995. But this policy change—overwhelmingly beneficial to rich white South Africans, including Lonmin managers—generated a sustained high real interest rate that shifted flows of capital away from potential productive capital investment into the financial sector.

All of these processes correspond with international trends and beg the question: Should the post-apartheid government have so enthusiastically endorsed globalization? The past 40 years have witnessed much lower growth rates in South Africa, in comparison to the 40 years before (1943–83). The period of globalization, in other words, was a far more difficult environment for an increasingly uncompetitive South Africa than the earlier epoch (1931–46 especially) of “deglobalization,” which as a result of the Great Depression and World War II compelled the economy to be more self-reliant. As a result of lower foreign direct investment, loans, and trade, South Africa had birthed its secondary manufacturing industry (beyond the mining equipment sector) and become much better balanced in the process. With labor demand higher, the rate of growth of the black wage share rose more than 50 percent (from 11 percent to 17 percent; but the black share of wages only hit 21 percent in 1970). The overall GDP growth rate (8 percent) from 1931–46 was fastest recorded in modern South African history.

Finally, the combination of slower growth, higher interest rates, and a declining share of wages to profits meant that, like much of the world, the

South African working class soon became overly indebted at the household scale. As a political-economic phenomenon, this was actually not unusual, for the move to liberalized economic relations across the world shifted many power systems from direct coercion in the spheres of labor control (in South Africa especially migrancy from Bantustans under apartheid-allied dictators) and socio-political power, to indirect coercion by finance and law. The formalized migrancy system and evolution of labor relations on South Africa's mines did not improve the socio-economic conditions of workers, given the rising debt burden. By 2012, this combination of adverse economic dynamics left "anywhere between 10–15 percent of SA's workforce with a garnishee order issued" to compel repayment, according to Malcolm Rees of *Moneyweb* (Rees 2012). Wages as a share of the social surplus had fallen from 55.9 percent in 1994 to 50.6 percent by 2010, which in absolute terms translated to U.S. \$17 billion (Forslund 2012). In addition, much greater inequality in wage income was also a factor, contributing to a rapid rise in the Gini coefficient over the same period. One reaction by the working class was to turn to rising consumer debt in order to cover rising household consumption expenditures. Having risen rapidly to U.S. \$4.96 billion in late 2007, the outstanding unsecured credit load registered with the national credit regulator had then escalated to U.S. \$13.75 billion by March 2012 (Steyn 2012). From 2005 to 2008, the average repayment of household debt doubled, from 6 to 12 percent of disposable income. This was actually a huge load when distributed across the spectrum of workers in a context of severe inequality, for according to Rees (2012), "*Moneyweb* reports indicate that at least 40 percent of the monthly income of SA workers is being directed to the repayment of debt."

In this macroeconomic and microeconomic context of mismanagement, the implications for a labor dispute were sharp, as we see in the detailed study of the massacre.

THE MARIKANA MASSACRE

The site of the immediate conflict was the platinum belt. South Africa's share of world platinum reserves is more than 80 percent. The belt stretches in a distinct arc around the west side of the Johannesburg-Pretoria megalopolis of 10 million people, and up towards the Zimbabwe border. The area also has vast gold and coal deposits, and the nine main mining firms operating in this region recorded U.S. \$4.5 billion in 2011 profits from their South African operations.

There are six basic factual considerations about what happened at Marikana, 100 km northwest of Johannesburg, beginning around 4 pm on August 16, 2012:

- The provincial police department, backed by national special commando reinforcements, ordered several thousand striking platinum

mineworkers—rock drill operators—off a hill where they had gathered as usual over the prior 4 days, surrounding the workers with barbed wire and firing teargas.

- The hill was more than a kilometer away from Lonmin property, the mineworkers were not blocking mining operations or any other facility, and, although they were on an “unprotected” wildcat strike, they had a constitutional right to gather.
- As they left the hill, 34 workers were killed and 78 others suffered bullet-wound injuries, all at the hands of police weapons, leaving some crippled for life, with 16 shot dead while moving through a small gap in the fencing and the other 18 murdered in a field and on a smaller hill nearby as they fled.
- No police were hurt in the operation—although it appears that a sole miner with a pistol fired as he entered the gap—and some of the police attempted a clumsy cover-up by placing crude weapons next to the bodies of several men after their deaths.
- Two hundred and seventy mine workers were arrested that day, followed by a weekend during which state prosecutors charged the men with the “murder” of their colleagues (under an obscure apartheid-era “common purpose” doctrine of collective responsibility), followed by an embarrassed climb down by the national prosecutor after the society registered utter disgust.
- There was no apparent effort by police to discipline errant troops in subsequent months, except when massacre-scene photographs showed that weapons were planted on dead mineworker bodies, and indeed the police moved into Marikana shack settlements again and again to intimidate activists in the wake of the massacre, including fatally shooting—with rubber bullets one Saturday morning—a popular local councilwoman (from the ruling party) who sided with the protesting mineworkers and communities.

The details about how the massacre unfolded were not initially obvious, for mainstream media embedded behind police lines (unaware at the time of the “killing kopje”) and official police statements together generated a “fog of war,” as former Intelligence Minister Ronnie Kasrils remarked (Kasrils 2012). The effect was to stigmatize the mineworkers. It was only a few days later that observers—the September Imbizo Commission, University of Johannesburg researcher Peter Alexander and his research team, and *Daily Maverick* reporter Greg Marinovich—uncovered the other shootings (Alexander, Lekgowa, Mmope, Sinwell, and Xezwi 2012). Most journalists relied on official sources, especially the police and National Prosecuting Authority, even when they were discredited by persistent fibbery.

Such media bias allowed the impression to emerge in conventional wisdom that police were “under violent attack” by irrational, drugged, and

potentially murderous men from rural areas in the Eastern Cape's Pondoland, as well as from Lesotho and Mozambique, who used *muti* (traditional medicine) to ward off bullets. Plenty of press reports and even the South African Communist Party's (SACP's) official statement refer to the workers' spiritual sensibilities—"a sangoma is today still able to convince sections of the working class that bullets turn into water if you have used 'intelezi'" (Nzimande 2012b)—to try to explain why they might have charged towards the police, through the 5-meter gap in the barbed wire, with their primitive spears and wooden sticks. *Business Day's* editor opined that the strikers "were convinced by a *sangoma* [traditional healer] a few days earlier that if they let him smear some black powder into cuts on their foreheads they would become invincible. This is not necessarily a demanding audience" (Bruce 2012).

Although the facts will always remain clouded, it seems far more likely that as the first few dozen mineworkers came running through the gap and saw the police line-up, they then began edging alongside the fence rather than moving directly at the heavily armed police—although it is apparent that one of the workers fired with a (sole) handgun. The police claim six handguns were recovered from dead, wounded, and arrested mineworkers, but this was thrown into question by evidence of systematic post-massacre tampering at the scene of the crime—police troops placed weapons next to bodies at some point after the massacre—because, by mistake, they surrendered photographs taken both before and after the deed to the Farlam Commission that Zuma mandated to investigate the massacre.

Another layer of complexity related to prior murders of six workers, two security guards, and two policemen close by, starting when a march on August 11 by striking workers against the NUM—accused of selling out the workers—was met with gunfire, allegedly from NUM officials. Tension in the area mounted quickly, and when the security guards and police were killed, apparently by some of the Marikana mineworkers, this generated a sensibility of vindication; gruesome footage of the murdered cops had circulated amongst the police who were on duty on August 16. Later, the assassination of NUM shop stewards increased in pace as well. But it must be recalled that this was not brand new conflict, for strike-related violence over the prior year at Lonmin and the other major platinum mining operations left scores of other workers dead, with 50 murders just six months earlier when 17,000 mineworkers were temporarily fired nearby at the world's second-largest platinum firm, Implats, before gaining wage concessions.

South Africa learned a great deal about labor's desperation in subsequent days, because explaining the intensity of the Lonmin workers' militancy required understanding their conditions of production and reproduction. The typical rock-drill operator's take-home pay was said to be in the range of U.S. \$511 per month, with an additional U.S. \$204/month as a "living out allowance" to spare Lonmin and other employers the cost of maintaining migrant-labor hostels. Most workers were from the Eastern Cape's

Pondoland, Lesotho, and Mozambique; many therefore maintained two households, having families to support in both urban and rural settings. At the same time, structural changes in the mines were blurring the distinction between shop steward and foreman, hence drawing NUM local leaders into a cozy corporatist arrangement with the mining houses. But controlling the workers would be another matter, and NUM found itself challenged by a new union that had come from its own dissident ranks, the Association of Mining and Construction Union (AMCU).

Indeed, the tens of thousands of workers who subsequently went on wildcat strikes in the Northwest, Limpopo, Free State, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, and Gauteng Provinces did not do so out of the blue. They began leaving NUM in droves from late 2011 because of its worsening reputation as a sweetheart union, mostly moving to AMCU. The workers had participated in various forms of labor and community-based protests over the prior few years, as the 350 percent price increase for the metal during the 2002–08 boom left the main companies—AngloPlats, Implats, and Lonmin—extremely prosperous, without evidence of trickle-down to the semi-proletarianized workforce. So it was that 3,000 Lonmin rock-drill operators demanded a raise to U.S. \$1420/month as a basic gross “package” amount; they struck for over a month (3 weeks beyond the massacre) and ultimately received what was reported as a 22 percent wage package increase, which in turn catalyzed prairie-fire wildcat strikes across the immediate mining region and then other parts of the country in September to November. Similar militancy was soon evident in trucking, the auto sector, municipal labor, and other sectors.

But as with a vast proportion of ordinary South Africans, this was a time of extreme household indebtedness. It soon became clear that the Marikana workers were victims not only of exploitation at the point of production, but also of super-exploitative debt relations, in which, as Milford Bateman (2012) remarked: “We have perhaps just witnessed one of the most appalling microcredit-related disasters of all in South Africa.” Financial desperation was compounded by legal abuse, carried out by the same race/gender/class power bloc—white male Afrikaners—who had, in their earlier years and in the same geographical settings, been apartheid beneficiaries. Microfinance short-term loans that carry exceptionally high interest rates were offered to mineworkers by institutions ranging from established banks—one (Ubank) even co-owned by NUM and another (Capitec) replete with powerful ANC patrons—down to fly-by-night loan sharks (whose local nickname is “mashonisa”). The extremely high interest rates charged, especially once arrears mount, were one of the central pressures requiring workers to demand higher wages.

Still, none of this labor-capital conflict—implicating mining houses and financiers—would have flared into such an explosive situation at Marikana, many believe, were it not for the mismanaged relationships between state, ruling party, and trade union elites that developed over the prior two decades

with the major mining houses. These cozy relations, even relegitimizing companies with very low morals that regularly engaged in labor-broking, apparently incensed the ordinary workers, raising their staying power to such high levels.

CORPORATE-STATE-LABOR MANAGEMENT

Tiny Rowland died in 1998, after losing control of the company 5 years earlier due to his ties to Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi. Lonmin then rebranded—its “Integrity, Honesty & Trust” slogan adorns billboards at Marikana—and by 2007 must have been confident that with the World Bank backing its community investment strategy, it could mainly ignore the nearby Nkaneng shack-settlement’s degradation. The lack of clean running water, sanitation, storm-water drainage, electricity, schools, clinics, or any other amenities make Nkaneng as inhospitable a residential site to reproduce labor power as any other in South Africa, yet Lonmin’s approach to the community’s troubles was insignificant. Instead of building decent company housing for migrant workers, for example, it relied on the inadequate living out allowance, much of which was just added to wages targeted for remittance to the home region, leaving Nkaneng nearly uninhabitable. Mine-workers had continued migrancy relations but the rise in dependents per mineworker was apparently noticeable, from 8 to 15, according to labor expert Gavin Hartford (2012).

Lonmin’s successful public relations onslaught probably gave its executives confidence that long-standing abuse of low-paid migrant labor could continue, with NUM itself having become so coopted that shop stewards were reportedly paid three times more than ordinary workers. NUM general secretary Frans Baleni earned U.S. \$160,000 per year at that stage and gained notoriety when he had advised Lonmin to fire 9,000 of the same Marikana mineworkers at its Karee mine in late 2011 because they went on a wildcat strike. As Baleni’s former deputy, Archie Palane, put it:

It’s absolutely shocking—completely unheard of—that a union advises an employer to fire workers. No matter what your differences or what they did, this should simply not happen. It gives the impression that you just don’t care. How can you ever expect those workers to trust you to represent them in any negotiations? (De Lange, 2013)

Of the 9,000 workers, 7,000 were rehired but they quit NUM and joined the rival AMCU. One result, at nearby Implats, was that of the 28,000 workers, 70 percent had been NUM members in late 2011, but by September 2012 the ratio was down to 13 percent (de Lange 2012).

On the ecological front, the entire platinum belt contributes to the toxicity and overall pollution so that South Africa’s *Environmental Performance*

Index slipped to 5th worst of 133 countries surveyed by Columbia and Yale University researchers in early 2012 (Environmental Performance Index). The Mineral Energy Complex's prolific contribution to pollution is mainly to blame, including its coal mining that generates coal-fired power used in electricity-intensive mining and smelting operations. In this context, Lonmin might have considered its ongoing destruction of the platinum belt's water, air, agricultural, and other eco-systems to be of little importance—within a setting in which pollution was ubiquitous.

Moreover, the North West provincial and Rustenburg municipal governments were apparently rife with corruption. Emblematic was the 2009 assassination of a well-known ANC whistleblower, Moss Phakoe, which a judge found was arranged by Rustenburg mayor Matthew Wolmarans. Again, in this context, Lonmin and the other big mining houses in the platinum belt might have considered South Africa just one more Third World site worthy of the designation “Resource Cursed”—a phrase usually applied to sites where dictatorial and familial patronage relations allow multinational capital in the extractive industries to, literally, get away with murder. Around two dozens of anti-corruption whistleblowers like Phakoe were killed in the first few years of Zuma's rule.

And, of course, family enterprise suited the Zumas, who had a reported 220 businesses. It was not surprising to learn, for example, that along with the Gupta family—generous sponsors of Zuma's patronage system—son Duduzane was co-owner of JIC Mining Services, the platinum belt region's largest firm specializing in short-term labor outsourcing (sometimes called “labor broking,” though JIC denies this, and NUM has a recognition agreement with the firm). Nor was it a secret that the president's nephew Khulubuse Zuma played a destructive role in nearby gold-mining territory as Aurora co-owner, along with Nelson Mandela's grandson and Zuma's lawyer. Indeed, that particular mining house had perhaps the single most extreme record of ecological destructiveness and labor conflict in the post-apartheid era, reflecting how white-owned mining houses gave used-up mines with vast Acid Mine Drainage liabilities to new black owners who were ill equipped to deal with the inevitable crises (Mangcu 2012).

This in turn was all part of the much-proclaimed deracialization of apartheid capitalism. As *Business Day* editor Peter Bruce wrote in 2003: “The government is utterly seduced by big business, and cannot see beyond its immediate interests” (Bruce 2003). Those interests were to facilitate capital accumulation—“we must strive to create and strengthen a black capitalist class,” said Thabo Mbeki, upon taking over from Mandela in 1999—specifically within the ANC's leading political power blocs, as well as to underwrite sufficient power of patronage to ensure the ANC could gain voting majorities into the indefinite future (Mbeki 1999). Here, a critical factor was the ANC's investment arm, Chancellor House.¹

COSATU, MALEMA, RAMAPHOSA, AND A FRACTURED RULING PARTY

The stage was set, immediately after Marikana, for renewed debates over whether the Tripartite Alliance was a progressive or now regressive political arrangement, especially between the center-left unionists and communists who are close to official power and thus defensive of the political *status quo*, on the one hand; and on the other, critical, independent progressives convinced that South African politics could become more acutely polarized. Overlaying the crisis and these debates was the internal ANC split between pro- and anti-Zuma forces, which spilled over into Cosatu prior to its September 2012 congress before, at the Mangaung electoral conference of the ruling party, Zuma squashed his opponent and then deputy president Kgalema Motlanthe with three quarters of the vote. It was this political battle that initially paralyzed labor leadership, given the danger Cosatu would unleash centrifugal forces that its popular leader Vavi could not control. There was even talk of NUM opening up a leadership challenge to Vavi, on grounds that the 300,000-member union (Cosatu's largest single member) was strongly pro-Zuma and insisted on the official Cosatu support that Vavi had initially resisted (Munusamy 2012).

Such political maneuvering left Cosatu mostly silenced about Marikana, as NUM's weight and the parallel subversion of other union leaders made it too difficult for the federation to visibly back the upstart platinum, gold, and other mineworkers. In any case, what these wildcat strikers were doing might, more conservative unionists believed, even throw the institutions of centralized bargaining into chaos. The demand for higher wages was both extreme, and thus opposed by NUM, and ultimately successful in the case of Marikana's courageous workers. The 22 percent raise—at a time inflation was around 6 percent—that the workers won after a month of striking was remarkable. It inspired the country's labor force to look at their particular pay packets askance.

But by failing to issue immediate statements about Marikana, many fewer workers mobilized in solidarity against the joint onslaught of multinational capital and the state, so that Cosatu was simply unable in late 2012 to intervene when so many cried out for a shift from the proverbial "War of Position" to a "War of Movement." Cosatu's longing gaze to Zuma for a genuine relationship reminded many of its support for him during the darkest 2005–07 days of corruption and rape charges. Yet it was now, in the Marikana moment, even more apparent that Cosatu's conservatism was the principal barrier to social progress in the country. Its weakness was tangible at two levels.

First, and in sharp contrast to Cosatu's posture, there was a partially filling of the void by Julius Malema, the ANC's former youth leader. Malema himself had been somewhat discredited by his alleged implication in corrupt "tenderpreneurship" (insider deals for state contracts) in the neighboring

province of Limpopo. Yet he managed to gather 15,000 angry people at Marikana 2 days after the massacre and voiced powerful critiques of Zuma, Lonmin, and their associated black capitalist allies, such as Lonmin part-owner Ramaphosa.

Meanwhile, the second way in which Cosatu's weakness was manifested was in the subsequent rise of Ramaphosa to renewed power within the ANC. Any such rebirth of Ramaphosa had seemed virtually inconceivable immediately after the start of the Farlam Commission. At this occasion, a startling series of revelations emerged about Ramaphosa's "smoking-gun" emails sent to other Lonmin executives and government ministers exactly 24 hours before the massacre (Smith 2012).² To further contextualize this information, one has to remember that Ramaphosa's company Shanduka was the majority shareholder of the Lonmin black empowerment subsidiary, which gave him 9 percent ownership in Lonmin and a seat on the board. Shanduka was in 2012 being paid U.S. \$360,000/year by Lonmin for providing "empowerment" consulting, not to mention Ramaphosa's board salary and dividend returns on Lonmin share ownership.

This was not a bad arrangement for the mining house, for one of Ramaphosa's emails on August 15 reflected the power relations that Lonmin gained in its association with the former mineworker leader: "The terrible events that have unfolded cannot be described as a labour dispute. They are plainly dastardly criminal and must be characterized as such. There needs to be concomitant action to address this situation." Ramaphosa wrote to Lonmin's Albert Jamieson: "You are absolutely correct in insisting that the Minister, and indeed all government officials, need to understand that we are essentially dealing with a criminal act. I have said as much to the Minister of Safety and Security. I will stress that Minister [Susan] Shabangu should have a discussion with Roger [Phillimore, Lonmin chairman]." Revealing these emails, the lawyer for the 270 arrested mineworkers, Dali Mpofu, explained:

It's a long line of emails under, in the same vein, effectively encouraging so-called concomitant action to deal with these criminals, whose only crime was that they were seeking a wage increase. . . . At the heart of this was the toxic collusion between the SA Police Services and Lonmin at a direct level. At a much broader level, it can be called a collusion between State and capital, this phenomenon is at the center of what has occurred here. . . .

This collusion between State and capital has happened in many instances in this country. In 1920, African miners went on strike and the government of Jan Smuts dealt with them with violence, and harshly, and one of the results of that was that they reduced the gap between what white mineworkers were getting and what black mineworkers were getting and the pact that had been signed in 1918 of introducing the color bar in the mines was abandoned. That abandonment precipitated a massive strike by the white mineworkers in 1922 and that

strike was dealt with by the Smuts government by bringing in the air force—the air force and about 200 people were killed. This is one of the most important happenings in the history of this country, and in 1946 under the leadership of the African Mineworkers Union, the African workers, 70,000 African workers also went on a massive strike and the government sent 16,000 policemen and arrested, like they did to our, the people we represent, some of the miners under an act called the War Measures Act.

So this has happened, this collusion between capital and the State has happened in systematic patterns in the history of, sordid history of the mining industry in this country. Part of that history included the collaboration of so-called tribal chiefs who were corrupt and were used by those oppressive governments to turn the self-sufficient black African farmers into slave labour workers. Today, we have a situation where those chiefs have been replaced by so-called BEE partners of these mines and carrying on that torch of collusion.

(Mpofu 2012)

The BEE billionaire Ramaphosa's collaboration with white elites was also reflected in his attempt a few months earlier to purchase a prize buffalo at a game auction for U.S. \$2.3 million (City Press 2012a), an event underscored by Malema as indicative of the gulf between the new South Africa's 1 percent and the workers. Not surprisingly, Malema was quickly rewarded with overwhelming support from Marikana miners on two occasions—including a memorial ceremony he arranged, at which he kicked out several of Zuma's cabinet ministers who had come to pay respects. But, on his third visit, police denied him his constitutional rights to address another huge crowd. Even while contesting fraud charges in his home base (where facilitating provincial tenders had made him rich), Malema thus became, briefly, an unstoppable force across the mining belt in North West and Limpopo Provinces, and even Zimbabwe, calling for radical redistribution. At one point 3 weeks after the massacre, the South African National Defense Force was declared on "high alert" simply because Malema addressed a group of disgruntled soldiers (van Wyk 2012).

Yet money still talks in South Africa. By December 2012, Malema's own apparent power had ebbed. And Ramaphosa had won the ruling party's deputy presidency against Malema's two main allies—with more than three quarters of the vote. Cosatu was also very clearly in retreat with Vavi nervously appealing to Ramaphosa not to act like a capitalist. And Malema himself was completely out of the national political equation, humiliating himself with a co-authored letter to the ANC leadership just before the Mangaung conference began, begging that he be allowed back into the organization: "We remain loyal supporters and members of the ANC, willing to be corrected and guided under its principles" (City Press 2012b). This request was simply rebuffed by Zuma's team.

AuQ19

In addition to expressing relief at Malema's fate, business openly celebrated Ramaphosa's defeat of anti-Zuma candidates Tokyo Sexwale and Matthews Phosa. With Ramaphosa as the new deputy president, ANC Secretary-General Mantashe could brag: "He will open up avenues for the ANC to interact with business, and maybe reduce the suspicion on the part of business about an ANC that is supposedly hostile to business—although it is not" (Mkokeli & Paton 2012). There remained some questions as to whether Ramaphosa would himself simply be swallowed up by the Zuma team's own corrupt practices. Indeed, this was precisely the equation posed by *Business Day's* Bruce (2012a): "He [Ramaphosa] will provide Zuma with the sort of credibility cover only the likes of Trevor Manuel still have to offer. . . . Of course, as much as Ramaphosa can save Zuma, so can Zuma defile Ramaphosa if he is unable to wean himself off what appears to be a staple diet of financial dependency on friends of one kind or another, or business 'associates' who see in the president an easy mark." Time alone will tell I would say.

For the moment, however, the vociferous endorsements of Ramaphosa by big business at the end of 2012 meant the ANC's economic talk-left-so-as-to-walk-right strategy was well understood. In the words of commentator Adam Habib: "The ANC says it's committed to the notion of economic transformation. If that is true, how do you elect a billionaire as your deputy president? He has an admirable political record, but his track record on economic transformation is abysmal" (de Waal 2012). The potential for Ramaphosa to act in the interests of South Africa's untransformed business-in-general coincided perfectly with his own personal portfolio's tentacles, spread right across the South African economy, as Mandy de Waal pointed out:

Ramaphosa has interests in resources, energy, financial services, food and beverages, and property. Shanduka has investments in some of the most influential and powerful businesses in South Africa (and in some cases globally). These include Macsteel, Scaw Metals SA, Lonmin (through Incwala Resources), Kangra Coal, McDonald's SA, Mondi Plc, Lace Diamonds, Pan African Resources Plc, Coca-Cola, Seacom, MTN, Bidvest, Standard Bank, Alexander Forbes, Investment Solutions, and Liberty Group. Besides the executive role he has at Shanduka, he is the joint Non-Executive Chairman of Mondi Group, and the non-executive chair of MTN, and a number of other companies Shanduka has interests in like Standard Bank and Bidvest. He is also on the board of SABMiller. (Dixon 2012)

REBUILDING FROM MICROPOLITICS

With Zuma reelected ANC president at Mangaung and with Ramaphosa as his deputy and presumed replacement in 2019 after Zuma's second term would end, the ruling party's political turmoil appeared to stabilize, and the

stage shifted again to the issue of civil society versus state and capital. An early 2013 call for a national strike from the most militant of mineworkers reflected ongoing frustrations. By the end of 2012, the forces for genuine change had not been well gathered from below. Prospects for labor and community activists unifying at the base needed more attention. To exist in Marikana and similar mining towns meant to face incessant police repression bordering on unqualified brutality.

Nonetheless, the brief emergence of a women's mutual-aid movement amongst mineworker wives and girlfriends, as well as other women from the impoverished Marikana community was one reflection of a new bottom-up politics. At least one martyr emerged from their ranks: Paulina Masuhlo, an unusually sympathetic ANC municipal councilor in Marikana who sided with the workers, was shot in the abdomen and leg with rubber bullets during a police and army invasion of Nkaneng on September 15. She died of the wounds on September 19. Yet for the subsequent week and a half, police and malevolently bureaucratic municipal officials refused the women's attempts to memorialize Masuhlo with a long protest march from Nkaneng to the Marikana police station. Persistence and legal support prevailed, so 800 demanded justice in a women's-only trek from Nkaneng to Marikana police station on September 29, dignified and without casualties.

But the political opportunities that might fuse worker, community, and women's interests in improving conditions for the reproduction of labor power—perhaps one day to be joined by environmentalists—were fragile and easy to lose. Male migrant workers typically maintained two households and hence channeled resources back to the Eastern Cape, Lesotho, Mozambique, and other home bases. This process of mixing short-term residents with long-term Tswana-speaking inhabitants was fraught with potential xenophobia and ethnicism, not to mention gendered power relations. Migrancy has also facilitated syndicates of illicit drugs, transactional sex (even forced sexual labor), traditional patriarchy, dysfunctional spiritual suspicions (e.g., the use of traditional medicine *muti* against bullets that allegedly wears off quickly in the presence of women), widespread labor-broking, and other highly exploitative relations.

As a result, as discussed earlier, it was extremely expensive to swim within this sea of poverty, with desperation microfinance leading to even more extreme exploitation. It remains to be seen whether this fusion of mining and financial exploitation will generate strategic responses. New versions of a debt moratorium or organized debtor's cartel—such as the “bond boycott” strategies that were so common in the early 1990s, in which borrowers banded together to gain strength for collective defaults—would be a logical progression for a micropolitics of resistance in Marikana and many other similar situations. The bank staff responsible for credit control (and repossessions, hence “repo man”) tended to resort to threats and practices of violence so that this is not a decision to be taken

lightly. In Mexico in early 1995, it took a jump in interest rates from 14 to 120 percent to catalyze the *Movimiento El Barzon Agrupación Civil*—“*El Barzon*,” meaning the yoke-ring on an oxen—movement, which gathered 1 million members to renegotiate debts on the basis of the financial reality: “*Debo, no niego, pago lo justo*” (I owe, I can’t deny it, I will pay what is just) (Greider 1997).

The South African precedent was the earliest recorded bond boycott, in Port Elizabeth’s Uitenhage township in 1988 in which a Volkswagen autoworkers strike led to Standard Bank attempting to repossess workers’ newly-built houses, because of loans that they were having trouble servicing as a result of the strike. Labor and community activists successfully turned the tables on that alliance of a multinational car corporation and domestic financial capital by engaging in a collective refusal to repay. The strategy and tactic changed power relations sufficiently so that instead of Volkswagen compelling Standard to pressure workers to go back to the assembly line, the workers and communities compelled Standard to request Volkswagen to settle the strike. With many dozens of such local bond boycotts and a semi-successful national bond boycott campaign by the South African National Civic Organization (Sanco) in 1992,³ there was some sense by the mid-1990s that, from below, society could and should unify against financial power.

In mid-1996, a “Campaign against the Bank Rate Increase” began, fusing “Cosatu and its affiliate unions, the ANC, ANC Youth League, SACP, Sanco, SA Students’ Congress (Sasco), Congress of SA Students (Cosas), Muslim Youth Movement, Young Christian Students, and the Call of Islam,” as *The Shopsteward* reported:

The campaign’s immediate demand was for the reversal of the one percent increase. But there was agreement that, even if the big four drop their one percent hike [of May 1996], interest rates are still too high, particularly when compared to other countries. This has a detrimental effect on economic growth, housing, job creation and the budget deficit, to mention but a few. Many coalition organizations want to take the campaign a step further to review monetary and interest rate policies and there are moves afoot to look at measures, including legislation, to regulate banks’ behavior. . . .

The coalition is the first of its kind since the 1994 general elections, involving a broad alliance of organizations, unseen since the days of the anti-VAT campaign in 1991. The campaign has also pleased alliance activists concerned that the ANC has neglected grassroots campaigns in favor of exclusively parliamentary politics. There is a view that parliamentary avenues should complement campaigns at a mass level and that the ANC should continue to act in concert with civil society organizations in transforming the country.

(The Shopsteward 1996)

That brief 1996 campaign did launch several mass actions, but suddenly, in mid-June, momentum was reversed when the ANC acted against civil society by unilaterally imposing the *Growth, Employment, and Redistribution* homegrown structural adjustment policy. Nonetheless, in spite of its truncated nature, the bank campaign was, in concept, one of the ways the “small-a alliance” vision found an early manifestation. Later the SACP too attempted several banking reforms but without substantial benefits, as the balance of forces continually grew more adverse under Mbeki’s rule. But this was not unusual during the early 2000s; the country with one of the world’s fastest growth rates, India, also suffered a quarter of a million suicides by small farmers, invariably because of over-indebtedness. Bankers did rule the world, as was obvious when the bailout funding of 2008–09 went entirely to creditors and not to the debtors. However, even in countries such as the United States, impressive attempts to generate social pressure against banks suddenly emerged soon after, with Occupy Wall Street only the most visible.

South Africa missed out on the first phase of the complaining against the “one percent,” one reason being that the traditions of South African progressive politics always paralleled classical socialist reasoning. As a result capitalist malevolence—Marikana being only one example—invariably called forth the simple demand that the means of production be nationalized. In late 2012, Zuma, Shabangu, and their pro-business allies succeeded rather easily in ridding the ANC of such chatter, not least because Malema’s own troubles rose to crisis proportions, thus temporarily neutralizing his more populist voice. Indeed, the expulsion of the ANC Youth League faux radicals left virtually no major figures aside from the general secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, Irvin Jim, to demand nationalization of strategic resources.

Nationalizing Lonmin and other platinum corporations would have been a smart move as South Africa controls more than 80 percent of world platinum reserves. The price spike occasioned by the Lonmin, Implats, and Angloplats strikes—30 percent over 6 weeks—suggested great potential for a platinum cartel similar to OPEC’s oil cartel. The main buyer of platinum in 2012 was the European auto industry, but while the EU economic crisis continued, demand was intrinsically soft. Major platinum mines could thus make plausible threats arguing that if workers did not return, they would simply close shafts. The same week that Lonmin conceded the big wage increase to several thousand Marikana rock-drill operators, the company found it could cancel even more precarious short-term contracts of another 1,200 workers.

REVOLUTION, REVULSION, AND REARGUARD DEFENSE

Because of this convoluted political conjuncture, the most hopeful outcome of Marikana was to be an “economistic” one, namely the wage increase won by the striking workers. This in itself was no mean feat, as Peter Alexander argues:

In other settings, events of this kind have led to the defeat of a movement, or at least its abeyance. But that is not what happened here. On the contrary, the strike got stronger. Workers faced trauma, the tribulations of burying their dead in far-away places, threatened sackings, lack of money for food, and attacks from unions and politicians. But, by 7 September the company was reporting that attendance at work was down to two per cent, and after that it gave up providing statistics. There was an undeclared state of emergency and a community leader was killed, but still the workers fought on, until, on 18 September, they agreed to a settlement that secured them victory. Had the strike collapsed, people across the country fighting poverty and injustice would have been cowed. The opposite happened and, from the perspective of the state and the bosses, the killings were an appalling miscalculation, an enormous setback. Somehow, despite 34 colleagues being killed and with many more injured or detained, workers found the strength to pull themselves together and determine that the strike would continue. This was one of the most remarkable acts of courage in labour history, anywhere and at any time.

(Alexander et al. 2012)

But if the acts of courage were, Alexander reminds us, forged from frustration and anger, they also lacked a sufficiently strong and clear political agenda. And such agenda was necessary to mobilize the tens of millions of disgruntled South Africans into a force capable of breaking sweetheart relations between state, ruling party, labor aristocrats, parasitical capital, and the London/Melbourne mining houses. For some, Marikana was potentially the breakthrough event that independent progressives long sought, one that could reveal more graphically the intrinsic anti-social tendencies associated with the ANC-Alliance's elite transition from revolutionaries to willing partners of some of the world's most wicked corporations. And such a narrative was indeed the one promoted by the otherwise extremely fractured South African left.

Some factions associated with the relatively broad-based (though laborless) Democratic Left Front and the Marikana Support Campaign, did sponsor regular political meetings from Johannesburg and Cape Town and also solidaristic activities in the platinum belt. Nonetheless, the first of such meetings at the University of Johannesburg a week after the Marikana Massacre provisionally included a leading NUM representative on the program (he was shouted down and chased from the hall),⁴ another left faction led by Johannesburg's Khanya College broke away to found the "We are all Marikana" campaign.⁵ Resolutely opposed to any legitimization of Cosatu's Alliance unionism, this network also gathered ordinary workers for educational events (although momentum appeared to slow within a month after the massacre). In contrast, one other small revolutionary party in Marikana engaged in much higher profile recruiting and consciousness-raising: the Democratic Socialist Movement (associated with the Committee for a

Workers' International). However, its limitations were also obvious, for in December 2012, as its representative conceded: "The modest founding of the Workers and Socialist Party with just 20 delegates present has made concrete the idea of an alternative based on a socialist program committed to nationalization of the commanding heights of the economy of which the mining industry remains a key component" (Democratic Socialist Movement [DSM] 2012).⁶

The fact remains that even though it may often have seemed that a "pre-revolutionary" situation existed in a South Africa that had one of the highest protest rates in the world, the lack of connection between those with grievances remained the most crippling problem. And this "disconnect" continued amongst traditional critics of ANC neoliberalism in late 2012. One critical example was the lack of any real attempt to coordinate international solidarity. Here, in fact, was a huge void in Marikana-related political work, an opportunity lost by South Africans despite the willingness of NGOs to call on the World Bank in order to divest from Lonmin just one day after the massacre (CIEL 2012) and the fact that at least a dozen spontaneous protests broke out at South African embassies and consulate offices across the world in subsequent days.

There was, though, the hope that, as another example, the women of Marikana, organizing across the divides of labor and community, could set an example so desperately needed by the broader left. Their organizing efforts ranged beyond Marikana itself, as they briefly helped to connect the dots elsewhere in the society, including in nearby terrains ranging from mining dorpies to land struggles in North West, Limpopo, and Gauteng provinces. Yet South African women are as diverse and ethnically divided as the broader society: wives, girlfriends, mothers, daughters, sisters, health-workers, educators, sex-workers, cooks, cleaners, and salespersons. These women had the additional burdens of handling trauma counseling for victims of violence and providing mutual aid to those who were suffering enormously, directly and indirectly, as a result of the wildcat strike wave's reduction of immediate cash in communities. As in other societal sectors, much political work was needed in order to create a coherent oppositional voice amongst women.

The same could be said of "progressives" who had long been associated with the ANC because of the century-old party's best instincts. After 1994, many of them continued their determined work of liberation from within civil society. In this political space, organizations could be found that jumped into the Marikana political breach with much needed support activities. These included, for example, the Socio-Economic Rights Institute, Sonke Gender Justice, Studies in Poverty and Inequality, Students for Law and Social Justice, the Treatment Action Campaign, and Section 27 (which is named with reference to the country's Bill of Rights). Yet where was the organizational and ideological coherence that could render this trend a cumulative and defining force?

As for the official “left” nothing worth salvaging appeared. As *Business Day*’s Peter Bruce (2012b) wrote 4 days after the massacre: “What’s scary about Marikana is that, for the first time, for me, the fact that the ANC and its government do not have the handle they once did on the African majority has come home. The party is already losing the middle classes. If they are now also losing the marginal and the dispossessed, what is left? Ah yes, Cosatu and the communists—Zuma’s creditors.” It was almost surreal to find Cosatu and communist leaders anxiety-ridden at the prospect of widening worker revolt. It was no wonder that controversy-seeking liberal journalist R.W. Johnson could easily find an SACP ideologue to serve as his “useful idiot” in making this bizarre case:

This time the Left was in favor of the massacre [emphasis added]. Dominic Tweedie of the Communist University, Johannesburg, commented, “this was no massacre, this was a battle. The police used their weapons in exactly the way they were supposed to. That’s what they have them for. The people they shot didn’t look like workers to me. We should be happy. The police were admirable.” The Communist Party’s North West section demanded the arrest of AMCU’s Joseph Muthunjwa and his deputy, James Kholelile.

(Johnson 2012)

Yet in a context where social protest in the townships had reached very high levels in mid-2012 with no hope of relief, the panic of bosses and their spokespeople—neoliberals such as Peter Bruce—was easy to discern. Some commentators feared the potentially uncontrollable contagion of disrespect. Thus Frans Cronje of the South African Institute of Race Relations immediately rose to the ANC’s defense, declaring in mid-September that “a myth has taken hold in South Africa that service delivery was a failure” (Hedley 2012). Cronje’s defense of state provision of water, electricity, and housing reverberated well with *Business Day* editorialists as well as SACP leader Blade Nzimande (2012b), who warmly endorsed the “research.” Yet when Cronje was asked whether he had determined what percentage of post-1994 communal water taps were still working among those given to more than 15 million people, he conceded that he had no clue (Cronje 2012). The last serious audit—a decade earlier by researcher David Hemson, at the request of the then water minister, Ronnie Kasrils—put the share at less than half, using even the most generous definition of what is “working,” and the sector’s management has degenerated since then (Hemson 2003).

Plenty to be frightened about, one would say. It’s a small wonder that someone in the camp of the apparently frightened, like *Business Day* columnist Steven Friedman (2012), could, in the wake of Marikana, appeal for a return to a “social partnership” strategy because such an approach “has not failed us—it has not been tried.” Meanwhile, the corporatist elites did meet in mid-October 2012, issuing what were soon seen as meaningless

statements against wildcat strikes and worker violence against scabs. However, the big business representatives at that gabfest were apparently loathed to even name themselves publicly (Cohen 2012).

CONCLUSION

The strike wave continued rising through late 2012, no matter narratives about social “leadership.” Truck drivers received an above-inflation settlement in October 2012 after resorting to sometimes intensely violent methods to disrupt scab drivers, in the process creating shortages of petrol and retail goods in various parts of the country. While Durban’s Toyota workers, municipal offices, and the farm workers of the Western Cape also engaged in wildcat strikes, no one was taking the signals from Pretoria seriously. By March 2013, with vineyards having been burnt to the ground by angry workers, the state and most large farmers agreed to a 52 percent increase in the daily wage (to U.S. \$12). This militancy was not new, of course, for in September 2012, the World Economic Forum’s *Global Competitiveness Report* placed South Africa in the world’s number one position for adverse employee-employer relations (in a survey done prior to Marikana) (World Economic Forum 2012).

Partly as a result of labor militancy, major rating agencies began downgrading the country’s bond rating, for example, to BBB level by Standard & Poor’s. The resulting higher interest rates to be paid on the country’s prolific foreign borrowings—about six times higher by 2014 in absolute terms than inherited from apartheid in 1994—created yet more fiscal pressures as well as household and corporate repayment stress. Given Europe’s crisis, a potential hard landing in China, and South Africa’s vulnerability to the world economy, much lower GDP growth rates in 2013 and beyond were anticipated. And instead of countering that prospect with an interest rate cut by the South African Reserve Bank, as was projected, the country’s shaky financial standing put countervailing upward pressure on rates.

In the period after Marikana, the situation remained fluid. In spite of the shift in bargaining power away from NUM, it was impossible to assess which forces would emerge from the chaos given ongoing labor contestation. The strategies of crisis management deployed by Lonmin, the ANC and NUM, the South African Police Service and the Farlam Commission, all proved inadequate to restore legitimacy. Even if Lonmin’s share price rose 23 percent in the year from August 16, 2012, following the 30 percent crash in the week immediately after the massacre, the sector is in trouble. The largest producer, AngloPlats, lost half of its output in 2013 and threatened to lay off several thousand workers, and the second largest, Impala, lost more than a fifth of share value in the first half of 2013. Lonmin had raised U.S. \$817 million in a share rights issue in December 2012 and repaid its vast debt. Its profits increased marginally, and after replacing its sickly CEO Ian

Farmer with Zimbabwean Ben Magara, finally in July 2013, Lonmin moved to recognize AMCU—with 70 percent worker support—as majority trade union negotiator (in turn causing extreme tension with NUM and several more deaths) (Peters 2013).

However, AMCU's National Treasurer, Jimmy Gama, remained dissatisfied that in August 2013: "There have not been any significant changes in the last 12 months regarding the issues that labour was protesting for, before they were killed in Marikana. . . . Workers are still living in shacks, in the hostels but, it is incumbent on all stakeholders—labour, government and the companies—to deal with those issues." He expressed hope that Magara would "take discussions to another level" but his NUM opponent, union spokesperson Lesiba Seshoka, was even more pessimistic: "I would say that things have remained the same, and worse, actually because of a number of things. Before the big massacre on the sixteenth, the situation in Rustenburg was very tense, people were dying, they were attacked, and killed and the situation remains like that. This is why, we think the ground is getting fertile for another Marikana, because nothing much has changed threats and intimidation remain the order of the day, people are dying." A mining industry executive, Neil Froneman, remarked: "Unfortunately very little has changed from a visible point of view. I think what has changed and it's not that visible is that stakeholders have recognised and have accepted that there's a need to do things differently" (Candy 2013).

The Farlam Commission contributed to *status quo* retention and, along with the Department of Justice, lost credibility for not using its substantive budget to fund the lawyers of the massacre victims and their families' presence at the Commission hearings. One of the public interest lawyers for the mineworker victims, Jackie Dugard (2013) of the Socio-Economic Research Institute, identified these problems in September 2013:

[I]t is clear that the overly bureaucratic and insensitive way in which the commission began had set the tone for an inquiry that has been continually hampered by problems. The most recent setback is the issue of the lack of funding for the legal team representing the 270 mineworkers who were injured (but not killed). This has been sharpened by the government's announcement last month that it would not provide funding for the injured mineworkers' legal team. . . . If the process so far has taught us anything, it is that we need to place victims at the centre of such inquiries. We also need to spend enough time planning and establishing appropriate procedures, ensuring funding arrangements (including possibly excluding lawyers), clarifying the role of evidence leaders and meticulously managing the evidence and testimony. If justice is to be served effectively and sensitively, we cannot afford to repeat these mistakes.

In addition to the Farlam Commission, public relations problems also haunted Ramaphosa as well as Manuel, both in major speeches at the

University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. On August 29, 2013, Manuel delivered the Ruth First Lecture (in honor of a revolutionary assassinated by the apartheid regime 31 years earlier). It was a creditable account of the multiple kinds of damage done by the Minerals-Energy Complex to South Africa. But he refused to take questions, leading to a protest by a dozen Marikana mineworkers and community activists who were kicked out by security guards while holding posters saying: “Trevor Manuel, was your Cabinet behind the decision to fire on Marikana with live ammunition?” (Montsho 2013).

On September 9 at the same university, Ramaphosa gave a lecture on the government’s National Development Plan (NDP), the commission about which he was co-chairing (under Manuel’s chair). As a newspaper report recorded:

Several members of the audience used the question and answer sessions to level criticisms at Ramaphosa and the NDP. One man criticised Ramaphosa, saying that the election of one of the richest people in the country as deputy president of the ANC was worrying. “The NDP is old wine in new bottles, and that’s what we are asking for,” he said sarcastically. “We are asking for more Marikanas, more shooting, more inequality, more brutality and less service delivery.” Earlier, Marikana Support Campaign members sang and danced in the hall. The group sang against capitalism and held up posters saying: “Don’t let the politicians get away with murder” (Areff 2013).

Would they, indeed, “get away” with Marikana, or would the massacre’s stain forever spread? The public relations battle will remain critical for many years, insofar as ANC leaders must try to win back many hearts and minds lost at Marikana, initially for the 2014 national election, in which Malema’s new Economic Freedom Fighters would contend as the “left” force. But the PR flops a year after the massacre were more revealing.

What was definitive, by then, was the waning of any remaining illusions that the forces of “liberation” led by the ANC would take South Africa to genuine freedom and a new society. Marikana had these consequences and Ramaphosa’s December 2012 election could do nothing to restore faith in the ruling party. Just the opposite, as Malema’s Fighters arose to become the main left challenger to the ANC with vast support amongst Marikana mineworkers (notwithstanding Malema’s dubious past). In the coming years, if protesters keep dodging police bullets and moving the socio-economic and political-ecological questions to center stage, and if the crony corporatist arrangements between the ruling party and firms like Lonmin do not change, the ANC’s neoliberal nationalism could either arrange a properly fascist backlash or, more likely under Zuma’s ongoing misrule, continue shrinking in confusion with regular doses of necessary humility.

NOTES

1. To illustrate, one notorious deal included buying a quarter share of the local subsidiary of Hitachi, which in a suspicious deal, won a tender for the supply of U.S. \$5 billion worth of boilers to the vast coal-fired power plant now under construction not far from Marikana, at Medupi, and its successor Kusile. The World Bank made its largest ever project loan to support that deal. With then Eskom chair Valli Moosa also a member of the ANC Finance Committee at the time, the South African Public Protector labeled his conflict of interest “improper.” But reflecting the balance of political power and financial facilitation by Robert Zoellick’s World Bank, the deal went through and two subsequent years of delays could be blamed, perhaps not surprisingly, on faulty boilers. (The day that Jim Kim arrived in Johannesburg, several hundred Medupi construction workers embarked on a strike that included burning some of the facilities, resulting in the evacuation of 17,000 workers, a problem that did not attract his attention while in the country or in his blog upon returning.)
2. For more on his battered credibility, see Mkokeli (2012).
3. As a result of the resistance, township housing foreclosures that could not be consummated due to refusal of the defaulting borrowers (supported by the community) to vacate their houses, and the leading financier’s U.S. \$700 million black housing bond exposure in September 1992, was the reason that its holding company (Nedcor) lost 20 percent of its Johannesburg Stock Exchange share value (in excess of U.S. \$150 million lost) in a single week. Locally, if a bank did bring in a sheriff to foreclose and evict defaulters, it was not uncommon for a street committee of activists to burn the house down before the new owners completed the purchase and moved in. Such power, in turn, allowed both the national and local civic associations to negotiate concessions from the banks. The practice is reviewed in Mayekiso (1996) and Bond (2000).
4. The most evocative description of that meeting is probably by Athi Mongezeleli Joja (2012). To illustrate the divisions that quickly emerged, although an impressive revival of the Black Consciousness (BC) tradition had risen since the early 2000s through the *New Frank Talk* series, the sole public intervention on Marikana by the September National Imbizo was to visit 2 days after the massacre in order to begin the reconstruction of events, but without subsequent commentary or activism. A month after the massacre, BC adherents along with an unusually subdued left-autonomist network conjoined in an intellectual conference at Johannesburg’s Wits University, in an event known as the “Tribe of Moles,” led by an emerging black intelligentsia suspicious of classical socialist formulations and friendly to insurgent opportunities. But surprisingly, in a whole day of debating race, representation, and radical politics, the word Marikana was not mentioned once from the stage or floor. When asked during a break about the evolving situation, including Marikana women’s organizing, the country’s most prominent BC proponent, Andile Mngxitama, called the cross-racial/class/geographical gender organizing underway (including middle-class women from NGOs) a distraction, for after all the corpses were “black bodies”—and hence he gave impetus to the frequent claim that contemporary South African BC argumentation soon degenerates into race essentialism.
5. <http://www.facebook.com/KhanyaCollegeMovementHouse/posts/139762889503120>.
6. <http://www.socialistsouthafrica.co.za/> and see Workers and Socialist Party (WASP) founding statement online at <http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page71654?oid=347787&csn=Detail&cpid=71616>.

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