

OBITUARY

South Africa: On the death of Carl T Brecker, AIDC Chairperson 1996 - 2006

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It is with a profound sense of sadness that we at AIDC have heard the news of the passing of Carl Brecker, the first Chairperson of the Alternative Information and Development Centre (AIDC). We send our condolences to his family, especially his devoted daughters Tania and Dee, their children as well as his sister Valerie and her husband Ivan.

Our sadness is that much greater as we were not able to reconcile and heal our differences and hurt, arising from an acrimonious disagreement and break-up in our relationship. Nevertheless, all through the years of our estrangement, the role Carl played in the building of AIDC and the contribution he made materially, intellectually and politically was never forgotten.

In fact, it was with a small legacy of his wife Kate Truscott, that Mercia, Brian and Carl set out on the road of building a space for reflection, research and activism that could respond to the profound changes that had occurred in South Africa, with the ending of Apartheid and globally with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

From the Chair of AIDC, Carl guided the work of the organisation and ensured that through its infant stages and right up to its maturity AIDC was embedded in an anti-capitalist politics. Although, AIDC was successful in winning donor finance from a wide range of sources, church, foundations and state, Carl's commitment to working class politics ensured that AIDC never lost focus and retained its radical and militant edge.

Under Carl's leadership the Board of AIDC was never reduced to playing a nominal role simply to meet statutory or donor requirements. On the contrary, the AIDC Board was an active board that shaped the strategy and politics of the organisation. Carl would almost weekly be in touch with the Director, wanting to know details of the organisation's programmatic work, interacting with staff and drafting documents for the organisation. Most significantly, Carl was a teacher, formally in his contribution to the political education courses, such as our leadership training courses, youth camps and schools, but also informally in every-day discussions, when staff and the Board would be able to draw on his wealth of knowledge and myriad of experiences.

The rupturing of our relations was a great loss to the organisation but equally we believe it was a great loss to Carl. AIDC, and the associated political activities enriched Carl's life and provided a sense of meaning and a certain fulfilment.

In some senses AIDC was a vehicle where Carl could take forward his life-work of constructing a socially just and equitable world.

At AIDC we will continue to take forward this legacy of Carl and make sure that our programmes are devoted to the emancipation of working class and poor people.

Hamba Kahle [1]

Brian Ashley, MP Giyose

P.S.

* IVP: <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article5358>

Footnotes

[1] Hambe Kahle means go well or stay well in Zulu.