

Amandla 90/91: Stop The Genocide

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After the review of the last 30 years of agrarian reform in Amandla! 89, the feature in this issue looks at 'The housing mess'. Patrick Bond goes back to what he calls "the developer-driven, bank-centred model" of Joe Slovo's housing policy, and notes how it has failed, as acknowledged by the current minister, to reduce the housing backlog. He poses the question - is it sufficient to fight for a right to housing, or is more radical urban transformation needed?

We go to the front line with two housing activists, Zama Timbela and Mabhelandile Twani, leaders of the Intlungu Yasematyotyombeni, an organisation of occupations in and around Khayelitsha, Cape Town. They explain why occupation is the only option for large numbers of people and how this was precipitated by the pandemic. They tell the story of their struggle for recognition by the government and for services to the occupations.

We hear from the Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI), situating the housing situation in Joburg in its broader historical context and urging the Khampepe Commission of enquiry to cover the systemic housing crisis. And finally, we publish the transcript of a conversation with architect and long-time housing activist, Malcolm Campbell, reflecting on his disillusionment with the ANC government and its delivery of housing. He argues, controversially, that the state is so dysfunctional that it makes no sense to expect mass delivery of houses and that we must accept site and service instead.

We then present a special feature on Palestine, focusing of course on Gaza. In a conversation with Gilbert Achcar, we put the events of the last weeks in their historical and strategic context. We try to cut through a lot of the misinformation surrounding this struggle with two articles, one on Zionism and the other on Hamas. And we have an article on the widespread suppression of support for the Palestinian struggle in the US and Europe, and the (largely successful) attempts to suppress anti-Zionist sentiment by conflating it with anti-semitism.

Our moment of history in this issue is the 70th anniversary of the CIA-backed and instigated coup of 1953, which removed the democratically elected prime minister, Mohammad Mossadeq, and replaced him with the notoriously repressive regime of the Shah. The reason of course was Mossadeq's attempt to nationalise oil production.

We have economic articles on the Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement and profits in the mining industry. We have a political analysis, with a broad theoretical article on democratic eco-socialism and a lively argument against seeing the EFF as an ally of the Left. Trevor Shaku argues that the BRICS trade union forum must take a clear class position in order not to be compromised as a rubber stamp for the policies of national governments. And, in a powerful article, Naomi Klein argues that AI can only represent danger in a capitalist society in which exploitation of technology for profit trumps any consideration of the social, and even existential, cost.

Au Loong Yu follows up his article in Amandla 89 on the growth of opposition in China, with a view of the Chinese economy, focusing on the crisis in the property sector. He argues that the solution to the problem cannot lie in the corrupt state bureaucracy, which is primarily responsible for the problem.

In the culture section, we have a review by Andile Zulu of Andre de Ruyter's book on his experiences in Eskom. Andile observes that his account is "hindered by a lack of political, economic and historical context". While de Ruyter heads off down the privatisation route, Andile explains the roots of the problem in the neoliberal corporatisation of Eskom and how challenging that is necessary to solve the problem.

Sadly, we end with an obituary by Patrick Bond of John Saul, a Canadian academic and activist, who focused so much of his solidarity work and acute political analysis on southern Africa. *Hamba kahle John*.

Roger Etkind

P.S.

- Amandla!. Nov 30, 2023:
<https://www.amandla.org.za/amandla-90-91-stop-the-genocide/>