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From Comrades to Citizens

The South African Civics Movement and the Transition to Democracy

Edited by

Glenn Adler

Associate Professor

Sociology of Work Unit

University of the Witwatersrand

South Africa

and

Jonny Steinberg

Senior Consultant

Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation

Johannesburg



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Foreword

This book represents the culmination of a long-term, collaborative research project on popular resistance in South Africa. Its specific focus is on the civic organizations—popularly known as ‘civics’—in the country’s black townships which played a key role in challenging and undermining the apartheid government during the 1980s. Both because of the timing and the approach of the project, the papers included here reflect a perspective that is probably unique to the immediate post-apartheid period. Concerned with popular participation in the process of national democratization, each of the authors brought to their research a particular sensitivity to the ways in which that participation might be sustained or sidelined in the so-called ‘new’ South Africa.

The project’s original conception took place in 1989 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, just prior to the dramatic changes in South Africa that followed the unbanning of opposition political organizations in February 1990. At the time, the country had witnessed the most prolonged and widespread upsurge of political protest in its history, and its most brutal experience of repression. Because the upsurge was characterized by a mass-level return to non-violent methods of struggle, it was of particular interest to the Albert Einstein Institution whose central concern is with forms of non-violent direct action and their relationship to democratization in post-authoritarian societies.

In 1992, the Institution established a South Africa Program, providing most of the funding for three research projects, of which the largest, on the nature of black township opposition to minority rule, provided the basis for this volume. The papers included here were produced for the project between 1995 and 1998.

The ‘civics’ project sought answers to a variety of questions about South Africa’s black township organizations in the 1980s. What prompted their burgeoning presence throughout the country? How were they able, albeit unevenly, to sustain themselves during a period of constant police harassment resulting in imprisonment, torture and death? What stimulated their adoption of non-violent methods of struggle, decades after the African National Congress switched to a policy of armed struggle? What influenced their selection of particular tactics, and prompted the elaboration of their repertoire? How was leadership selected or established? How were clandestine pathways of

communication formed? Apart from their interest to South Africans and students of African affairs, it is hoped too that they will be of value in considerations of popular protest, resistance and participation in social processes toward democratization.

The project was housed in the Department of Political Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand through the exceptionally generous support of Professors Alf Stadler and Tom Lodge. Despite heavy departmental and university commitments, Tom Lodge gave unstintingly of his time and efforts as a committee member, mentor, editor and friend of the project. In Glenn Adler, the project enjoyed a dedicated editor and research co-ordinator—a role he took over from Jeremy Seekings who brought his expertise to the earlier shaping of the project. Jonny Steinberg provided the project with his considerable skills as a scholar, contributor and editor, and devotion to the project's completion. Mrs. Hilary Barker contributed far more to the project than the secretarial tasks she expertly and efficiently provided.

The civics project is indebted to the Albert Einstein Institution for substantial support, and not least to Dr. Christopher Kruegler's astute instincts for opportune research, to the Ford Foundation for their financial assistance, and most of all, to the enthusiastic support of all who participated in the project.

BARBARA HARMEL

Formerly Director, South Africa Program of the Albert Einstein Institution

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The editors wish to thank Tim Shaw for his enthusiasm for the project and for his persistence in overseeing an editorial exercise strung over four countries on three continents. We are pleased that the collection can take its place in his superb International Political Economy series. We also wish to thank our colleagues in the Albert Einstein Institution's South Africa Program. Barbara Harmel initiated the project and kept it together through thick and thin. Tom Lodge added his acerbic views on South African politics and keen editorial judgement in guiding the completion of the papers and the production of this book. Jeremy Seekings, in addition to contributing two key chapters to the collection, served as the Program's first research co-ordinator, fashioned its intellectual orientation and oversaw production of the first round of papers. Finally, we wish to thank Philip Stickler for production of the maps used in this collection and Claire Pickard-Cambridge for her editorial assistance.

The contributions to this collection were written and revised between 1994 and 1998. With two exceptions — the chapter by Robins and Seekings' second chapter — they reflect the circumstances at their time of writing before and after the 1994 elections. Content and citations should be read in that context.

GLENN ADLER
JONNY STEINBERG

List of Abbreviations

AAC	Alexandra Action Committee
ACA	Alexandra Civic Association
ACO	Alexandra Civic Organisation
ALPOA	Alexandra Land and Property Owners' Association
ANC	African National Congress
ANCYL	African National Congress Youth League
ARA	Alexandra Residents' Association
ASRO	Atteridgeville–Saulsville Residents' Organisation
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organisation
AZASO	Azanian Students' Organisation
BC	Black Consciousness
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BLAs	Black Local Authorities
CA	Cape Archives
CAHAC	Cape Areas Housing Action Committee
CEI	Community Education and Information
CFP	Community Policing forums
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPF	Community–Police forums
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa
CRADORA	Cradock Residents' Association
CRIC	Community Resource and Information Centre
DHAC	Durban Housing Action Committee
ELNVA	East London Native Vigilance Association
FAWU	Food and Allied Workers' Union
FOSATU	Federation of South African Trade Unions
FRELIMO	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
ICU	Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
IICU	Independent Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union
MACWUSA	Motor Assemblers and Components Workers' Union of South Africa
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement
NDR	National democratic revolution

NEDLAC	National Economic, Development and Labour Council
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NIC	Natal Indian Congress
NP	National Party
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NUSAS	National Union of South Africanist Students
PAC	Pan African Congress
PAGAD	People United Against Gangsterism and Drugs
PEBCO	Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation
PEYCO	Port Elizabeth Youth Congress
PWV	Pretoria/Witwatersrand/Vereeniging
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme (ANC)
RENAMO	Movimento Nacional da Resistência de Moçambique
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACP	South African Communist Party
SACTU	South African Congress of Trade Unions
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAIC	South African Indian Congress
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SANCO	South African National Civic Organisation
SANNC	South African Natives' National Congress
SCA	Soweto Civic Association
SPD	Soweto People's Delegation
UCT	University of Cape Town
UDF	United Democratic Front
UWC	University of the Western Cape

Notes on the Contributors

Glenn Adler teaches in the Sociology Department and is an academic staff associate of the Sociology of Work Unit at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. He has published widely on trade unions and politics in South Africa, and his current research interests focus on the impact of social movements on democracy and economic liberalization in Africa.

Colin Bundy was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand in 1998. He previously served as Vice-Rector (Academic) at the University of the Western Cape. He has taught at universities in South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States, and has published widely on South African agrarian history, historiography, and contemporary history. He is the author of *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* and co-author of *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa*. He is currently writing a biography of the African National Congress and Communist Party leader Govan Mbeki.

Janet Cherry teaches in the Department of Sociology at the University of Port Elizabeth. She completed an MA at the University of Cape Town and is studying for a Ph.D. in politics at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. She has published widely on the history and politics of the Eastern Cape. She recently worked as a researcher for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and previously lectured in politics at Rhodes University. In the 1980s she worked in a number of non-governmental organizations in Port Elizabeth.

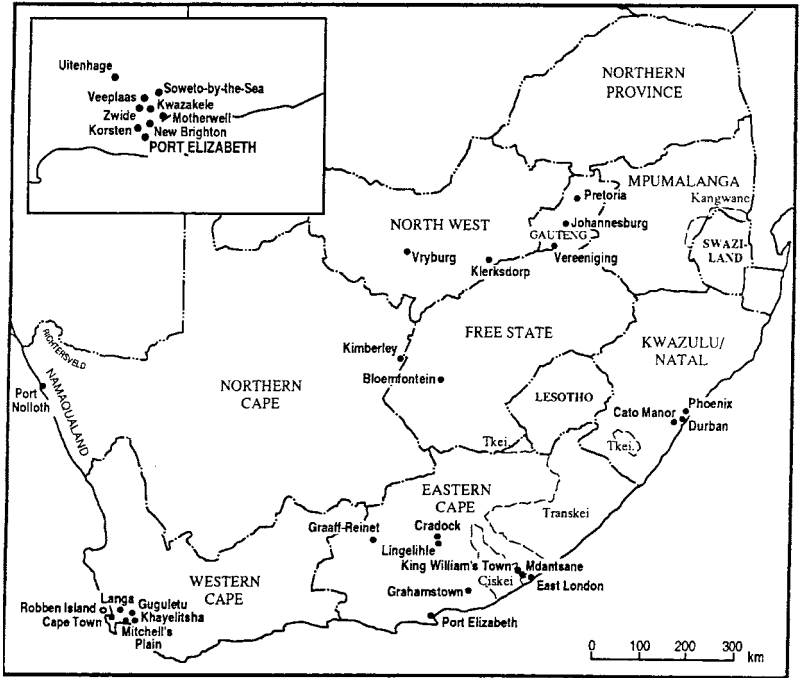
Justine Lucas is completing a Ph.D. on ecotourism in South Africa in the Department of Anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies. She previously lectured in the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand, where she completed her MA on housing and local politics in Alexandra Township.

Steven Robins teaches in the Anthropology Department at the University of the Western Cape. He completed his Ph.D. at Columbia University on development discourses, state power and peasant resistance in Zimbabwe. He has worked on Jewish identity and has published

on questions of cultural hybridity and social memory in Namaqualand, South Africa. He is currently working on local politics and youth and gang cultures in informal settlements, and (with urban planners) on the cultural significance of urban space and place in Cape Town.

Jeremy Seekings teaches in the Sociology Department at the University of Cape Town. He has conducted extensive research on civic organizations and popular protest in the 1980s and 1990s, and is currently completing a history of the United Democratic Front in South Africa. His other research interests include voting behaviour, inequality and public policy, and the sociology of law.

Jonny Steinberg recently completed his Ph.D. in politics at Oxford University on contemporary liberal philosophy and recent transitions to democracy. He is currently a senior consultant at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in Johannesburg.



Map 1 South Africa, Post-1994 Provincial Borders with boundaries of the former Ciskei and Transkei 'homelands'



Map 2 Gauteng Province