

South x South
(U.S.) x (Africa)
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Note: This reflection paper is written in the context of connecting Lowndes County, Alabama and the Southern Movement Alliance Assembly and the broader US South struggle for Emancipation and Freedom, and the travel to and experience in South Africa (Capetown) and the Democratic Revolution and social transformation taking place there after Apartheid in 1994.

Coming from the Southern Movements (organized by project South & Southern Movements Alliance) gathering the Southern Movements Assembly, held in Lowndes County, Alabama, I am struck by the connection (geo politically) between both regions, the US South and South Africa, as a travel to Capetown, separated by thousands of miles, yet connected by people and history. The connecting tie is the trans-atlantic connection, historically based on the slave trade triangle lasting five (5) centuries, where millions of Black people from Africa ended in the South of the United States under forced labor (slavery) and developed the original accumulation of capital that served for the development of several industrial revolutions, 19th and 20th centuries. The US South became the home of millions of Black that have been in continual resistance and struggle for full emancipation.

The 300 people who participated in the Southern Movement Assembly (SMA) were young people, Black, and females. Generationally, the SMA had people whose ages ranged from children and toddlers, Adolescents, teenagers, young adults, and elders. The SMA organized by Project South was made up of the participating organizations were diverse, including Indigenous, Latinos/as, Blacks, Asians, Whites, and LGBTQ community. Lowndes County, Alabama is the place where 'Black Power' was developed in the struggles of 1965, the LCFO, the Freedom tent City set up after people were pushed off their land, because the people dared to vote, who were stopped from exercising their right to vote by the white establishment and the KKK violence. The racial violence resulted in many activists murdered. Moreover, the actions in the South and Southwest, the POWER movements with the Liberation thinking and organizing, led to the enactment of the Civil Rights Act, and the Voter Rights Act of 1965.

Project South and the Southern Movement Alliance, the organizers of the Southern Movement Assembly (SMA) held in September 2012 in Lowndes County, Alabama and who resurrected Freedom Tent City in the same spot where it stood in 1965. Gwen Patton and Scotty B, the Jackson family, and the other folks we met that were protagonists of the struggle against racism and racial segregation and for voting rights. They spoke about the moment of Black power and the slogan that centered their struggle in the slogan Power to the People. Project South is a 30 year social movement organization in Atlanta, Georgia. Project South a few years ago underwent a leadership transition, and the SMA represented

the full turn circle of that leadership transition. The new leadership developed, organized and mobilized the SMA that covered organizations from 13 states in the South. It was very important outcome is to have an process that is 'integrating' that is that unites the groups beyond intersection and this happens through methodologies of participation (relationship building) that have an end game of synthesis (collective & consensus).

Moreover, connected to the process of colonialism and liberation, emancipation and the end of slavery, and riches beyond compare made from the backs of people forced into slavery. Why? Because they happened to be BLACK (skin). "Five centuries of White Supremacy have given world history a racist character. The once vaunted class contradictions have been subsumed under the racial contradiction, swallowed up in race conflict." The five centuries of colonialism and slavery considered as the cornerstones of capitalist economic system, allowed for the renaissance, and later the enlightenment and the illustrator philosophic periods/developments paid for on the slave work as the original accumulation of capital. However, Race and the color lines come from the western/european philosophies centered on thinking of racial (White) superiority and inferiority (Black, Asian, Indigenous, etc.).

The new Republic of South Africa came to power in April 1994, with a popularly elected president and a new constitution that also ended racial apartheid. "Malcom X once described this extraordinary moment, this long decade from the end of WWII to late 1950's as a tidal wave of color." The *Discourse on Colonialism* is indisputably one of the key texts in this 'tidal wave' of anti colonial literature produced during the postwar period---works that include WEB Du Bois's *Color and Democracy* (1945) and *The World and Africa* (1947), Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), George Padmore's *Pan-Africanism or Communism?; The Coming Struggle for Africa* (1956), Albert Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1957), Richard Wright's *White man Listen!* (1957), Jean Paul Sarte's essay, "Black Orpheus" (1948), and journals such as *Presence Africaine and African Revolution*.

"WEB Dubois conceived of imperialism as a system as a system whereby white workers viewed themselves as having a self-interest in colonialism, racism and wars of colonial suppression". In this line of thinking, Race came before class, and race is part of the bigger epistemology; not just the superstructure laid down by the capitalist system and ideology of race. "By merging of the working class movement with capitalism, racism, and colonialism, the working class became part of the global system of oppression based upon the color line". "The monster was presented socially by the marriage of manufacturing capitalism with western hemisphere Black slavery".

The South (US) and the South (Africa) connections are numerous going back to the Treaty that divided the World; between Spanish and Portugal, and the trans-atlantic slave trade of Blacks from Africa. Going back to the colonial occupation first by the absolute monarchies and later by imperialisms. The creation of the plantation, capitalism, and slavery as an early form of globalization. Arica suffered from under slavery, imperialism and colonialism and violence that suppressed the people in order to establish this oppressive and

racist system. The impact was not just slavery and the forcible removal of people from their homes, families and communities and culture but also the destruction of their community, knowledge and culture.

Visiting the prison island of Robben Island, where most of the political prisoners were held including Nelson Mandela for 27 years, and the leader of the Pan African Congress, Subuki, who was held first as a political prisoner, then as a detainee held in a separate house at Robben Island prison, later under house arrest until his death. Thousands of the future leaders and founders of the new Republic of South Africa, imprisoned at Robben Island had their discussions in the cave at the limestone quarry developing ideas and analysis of their nation building project and life long struggle.

The District 6 visit was heartbreaking experience with the shared knowledge that some 75,000 to 100,000 people were removed by force from their homes that were bulldozed to the ground. This was the beginning of apartheid in Capetown. Apartheid established in 1948, established a racist state based on colonial domination and gross violations of human rights of an entire Black majority population as a means of retaining economic and political power. Visiting the museum of district 6, we learned about the community that was destroyed and about the protected struggle to stop the government from first removing the people, then destroying the homes, and later to get organized to stop the re-development of the area and reclaiming the property and returning to their properties in order to re-build. Today many of the blocks and blocks of District 6 stand empty with grass and flowers growing wild. Noodhr gave us a presentation about how he stood there in front of his families house while the apartheid government bulldozed his house to debris. He was the founder of the museum, and he is proud to still be fighting to return to a new home in the District 6 neighborhood. Across the museum still stands the Police center where many of the activists who resisted both apartheid and the destruction of District 6, were taken prisoners, processed in the racist courts, and send to various prisons including Robben Island prison and the forced labor in the limestone quarry.

“The striking mineworkers at Marikana mine continue on their strike that has now spread to three other mines...it is a stark reminder that the mine worker; a modern subject of capitalism, is in this part of the world also the product of a colonial encounter.” (Cape Times Oct 2, 2012). “Many of us are trying to make sense of the massacre at Marikana through the obvious dire economic conditions, wage rates, and inequality these worker face.”

Marikana Truth

by [Arthur Anderson](#)

Oct11,2012...*Marikana Truth Marikana Massacre: All this to protect an Oligarch*Posted on September 5, 2012 by Arthur Mackay–Arthur Mackay is an analyst of global economic and political issues

Amidst all the confusion after the shooting of 44 protesting miners at Lonmin's

Marikana platinum mine in South Africa, we should not lose sight of the astonishingly simple underlying issues. We are told the workers are demanding that their wage be raised to R12,500 per month (about \$1,500) but the workers claim their salary is already at this level. They say they are sub-contracted by a company owned by billionaire South African oligarch Cyril Ramaphosa. He only pays them R5,400 or less and pockets the rest paid out by Lonmin. If this is so then agreeing to the workers' demands would cost Lonmin nothing and the whole dispute is between the workers and Cyril Ramaphosa. Instead of saying this however, Lonmin has placed itself between the two and taken responsibility for negotiating a pay rise which no one has asked for. Doing this, Lonmin is placing Cyril Ramaphosa's private interests above those of its common stockholders and is neglecting its fiduciary duties. It is also leaving itself open to litigation. Cyril Ramaphosa in fact owns 9% of Lonmin but was paid out \$304m in cash by the company in 2010 in a deal backed ultimately by Xstrata. By comparison common shareholders have received only \$60m in dividends in the last two years and have incurred over \$2.5bn of paper losses. What the workers are requesting is that Ramaphosa share with them about \$18m which he is taking from their wages. When Cyril Ramaphosa bought 50.03% of Lonmin's Black Economic Empowerment partner Incwala Resources in 2010, Lonmin put up the \$304m in cash which he needed. Lonmin funded this with a share issue to which, according to Lonmin, Xstrata was the key subscriber. Since then a further \$51m of credit has been extended to Ramaphosa.

2. Ramaphosa's company also provides all of Lonmin's welfare and training services and for this he may have been paid at least \$50m in 2011 alone. Based on the worker's demands and their living conditions, we can guess at how much of this reached its stated purpose. Companies linked to Ramaphosa were also paid "advance dividends" by Lonmin of \$20m in the last two years. All-in Lonmin seems to have paid Ramaphosa and his related companies well over \$400m since he bought into the company. This is about 25% of Lonmin's current market value and is a very large amount for a man who was supposed to be doing the paying when he bought his stake. And this is not all. The Marikana conflict is portrayed as a dispute between two unions, the hegemonic NUM and a small new union, the AMCU. But the NUM has been Cyril Ramaphosa's vehicle since he founded it in 1982. He was its Secretary General until 1998, the year he went into private business to become a billionaire. This has led to claims that the ANC has instituted a form of modern day slave labour. The workers' employer and their union are effectively the same person. Is it surprising that the workers worry that their union is not wholeheartedly defending their legal rights? All this casts the Marikana conflict in a very different light to what we have heard so far. The dirt-poor Marikana workers, many from Lesotho, living in slums, wearing rags, are asking for an extra \$750 per month from one of the most powerful figures in the ANC and one of the richest men in the world, and they are openly calling him an exploiter. Such a debacle, which calls into question not only Lonmin, Xstrata and Ramaphosa but also the whole ANC hierarchy, the reality of the "New South Africa" and the credibility of the ANC's many foreign supporters, not least those in the United States, helps to explain the speed and the savage brutality of the reaction. On 16

August, 6 days into the strike, the police opened fire injuring 112 and killing 34. Local witnesses claim the workers were not charging at the police but were fleeing from them as tear gas was thrown at them by another police detachment. Autopsy reports apparently confirm many were shot in the back. At the time Jacob Zuma, President of South Africa, was in Mozambique at an SADC meeting. He returned to South Africa but only one day later. He visited Marikana briefly but stayed away from the main area. A full five days passed and only then did he return and visit the crime scene. On the day of the attack Ian Farmer, the CEO of Lonmin, was diagnosed with a "serious illness" and still has not returned to work. A few days later the 270 men who were arrested were charged with committing murder. They allege that they were stripped in their cells and beaten with sticks. Once an international outcry began and it became apparent that the publicity of a trial could be counterproductive, they were quickly released.

3. Even with the above illumination, some crucial questions still remain. How could Cyril Ramaphosa exercise such influence over Lonmin's Executive Board to be able to effectively bend it, and potentially the Board of Xstrata too, to do his bidding? And what truth could the South African government have been so desperate to hide that it was judged better to risk everything and open fire on its own people, rather than let it see the light? The answer lies at the heart of the bitter fallacy of the South African commodities boom and the emerging markets paradigm which we have lived in the last 15 years. The sad truth is that nothing has changed, or, more accurately, nothing has improved. In the past there was one oligarch, Harry Oppenheimer, who controlled Anglo American. Mr Oppenheimer officially opposed the apartheid regime and was a liberal but conveniently continued to export gold and diamonds from South Africa up to and beyond 1994. Today there are five to ten oligarchs. They are black and they are African. They too oppose apartheid and they too are exporting all of South Africa's gold and diamonds at the present time. The reason Cyril Ramaphosa could ransack Lonmin in the way he has is because he effectively is Lonmin. Lonmin exists in many ways to serve his interests and its foreign shareholders would do well to understand this. The whole debate about nationalisation is therefore completely moot. South Africa's mines have already been nationalised and given over to a ruthless tyranny, signed, sealed and delivered by the many cheerleaders of the ANC overseas. So what will happen next? In fact the next Marikana has already occurred. Tear gas was fired and four workers were shot two days ago on a gold property near Johannesburg controlled by another oligarch, Tokyo Sexwale. The strategy of the ANC's opposition, which is correct given the extent of the disenfranchisement since 1994, will be to now target every oligarch. It will be demanded that they return much of what was taken. But this will never be done voluntarily and so this conflict, just like the apartheid struggle, will go on for many years. Will this really be the lasting legacy of the post-apartheid era? Is this what Nelson Mandela's years in prison, Bill and Hillary Clinton's ringing endorsements, Bob Geldof's concerts and Bono's songs were meant to bring to us? Will they all now leave the world in darkness, with a set of fearful problems for a future generation to sort out? We will have to hope for the best but

prepare for the worst. (Arthur Mackay is an analyst of global economic and political issues).

According to the *Cape Times* article by Professor Suren Pillay from the Centre for Humanities research at the University of the Western Cape “The dominant response to violence in South Africa, whether in its political or criminal forms, reveals a post-apartheid state more and more relying on law, order and administration of govern, and less on its anti-colonial and democratic idealism of its founding political and moral vision. While law is celebrated as the highest form of civilization, we should also recall that history of law is entwined with colonial conquest and rule.”

The *Cape Times* article on Marikana continues by writing “the rule of law and constitutionalism, the scholar James Tully tells us, drawing from the Australian experience, is not a culturally neutral set of ideas but is rather the hegemonic imposition of a set of norms which originate in colonial conquest and are imposed on subject populations in order to transform their behavior to what we might call good modern subjects.” Liberalism has historically relied on the force of law to enact its paternalism on populations in order to transform conduct into what is seen as good subject and good citizen, who acts and thinks in a particular way. Apartheid was after all a legal policy.”

According to historian, Martin Chanock, “as it been nearly a century earlier, South Africa was colonized in the 1990's by a new kind of internationally sanctioned state: this time not the 'Westminster system' but the 'constitutional state'. The constitution inflated the rule of law, and the political power of judges, in an attempt to remedy the faults of the previous state's version of the 'rule of law'.” The concluding results is that “the recasting of the mass as an object of development has meant that majority rule has been interpreted by the state to mean rule on behalf of the majority not rule of the majority. In other words, they have become, in the eyes of many in government, 'the problem' to be solved, not the majority to be represented”. It would seem to me this indicated a growing divide between 'Majoritism' and the popular mass and workers movement.

“The battle over the popular is becoming a babbling scene of contention, where rival unions, expelled youth league leaders, and new political leaders on the ground battle for hegemony with the traditional ruling party figures of the tripartite alliance-ANC, the SACP and COSATU. When the populations start asserting themselves as they are doing now, they quickly shift from being considered objects of development to targets of repression...they are called everything but citizens asserting legitimate political expression, simple because they are expressed in increasingly liberal forms and repressed more often now with il-liberal methods...authority slides into authoritarianism...liberal colonial occupation and massacre have never been far apart in history...violence.” According to German philosopher, Hannah Arendt, a reliance on violence, and the punitive aspects of law, as the only way in which we transform social conduct, signals a failure of the imagination, and of political thinking.”

Establishing relations with the local hosts, Norman Duncan and Garth Stevens,

educated and informed us about the new South Africa with a particular focus on violence and communities. The shared knowledge although not grounded in actual site visits, did inform us of the intersections of social change and the new problems of the new country. Talking to workers and how much they are paid, the working conditions and the poverty impacting the townships, the striking truck drivers, the striking mine workers, and the fact that this period of time in the year is 'striking season' in a new framework that brings up the contradiction of the new constitution and government of the majority rule and the government rule over the majority. Both are part of the Black Consciousness Movement, where Steve Biko came from, and continue to work in bringing about social change in the new South African reality.

In conversation with local folks and workers, they shared that wages are low, 16 Rand per hour in 8 hour shifts, first under a 1 year probationary period, and then as regular permanent employees. The workers for the most part come from Townships that are located at least one hour or more by bus from where they have to transport themselves early every day, while unemployment is very high and the affliction of HIV aids is so widespread. Jim..... from Ireland, went to visit a Township, an orphanage of children whose parents have died from HIV Aids and or violence. The young woman, psychologists, who works on violence spoke to the social and historical trauma suffered not only from apartheid, racism and poverty, but also from the lack of opportunity and the lack of services, or access to services, and developing approaches that helps the communities intervene with models of educational programs focused on mediation and conflict resolution. She spoke about her work with the government councils and other councils of public health, etc. to use the institutions and to direct the institutions to be part of the solution and not part of the problem.

“After decades of struggle, South Africa finally gained its democracy in 1994. This included the delivery of a constitution that guaranteed people a new tomorrow through a Bill of Rights. One of the most progressive of these was people’s right to ‘an environment that is not harmful to their health and well-being’. It put people and their health at the centre of protecting the environment. This was far-reaching as South Africa had emerged from centuries of colonialism and apartheid in which conservation of wildlife was put ahead of local people’s lives and wellbeing. Nearly two decades after the dawn of our democracy, are we better off? Has there been delivery of these rights?

The facts and figures tell a sad and depressing story.

- 42 per cent of Africa’s greenhouse gases are emitted by South Africa. So you would think that South Africa is a fairly developed nation with good employment rates. Not so.
- 41 per cent of South Africa’s potential workforce is employed, according to Advorp Holding’s chief executive Richard Pike.

- 16 per cent is the total amount of energy consumed by South Africa's residents.
- 44 per cent of South Africa's energy is used by 36 companies. Industry, mining, agriculture and commerce use more than 70 per cent of all energy produced.
- 11 per cent of South Africa's energy is used by one company, the Australian multinational BHP Billiton.
- 9.7 billion South African Rand was the loss that Eskom, the South African power utility, made because of the provision of cheap electricity to BHP Billiton, according to Eskom's annual report, March 2010.
- 50 per cent below cost is what BHP Billiton paid for this electricity, which is around 1.7 US cents per kWh.
- Four million homes cook without electricity, according to the Citizens United for Renewable Energies and Sustainability (CURES).
- 2.5 million homes do not have electricity.
- Ten million people experienced periodic electricity cut-offs between 1994 and 2002, according to Queens University researcher David McDonald.

This is not a story of a democratic state, but rather of a state that has failed to deliver to its people. It is a state that is managed for the benefit of multinational corporations.

Energy sovereignty

It is against this backdrop that people have to take control over their own energy provision. As in the case of the Nyeleni Declaration on food sovereignty, energy sovereignty should put those 'who produce, distribute and consume' energy at the heart of the energy systems and policies, rather than the demands of markets and corporations. Viewed in a global context, one realizes that the underdevelopment of the greater population of South Africa is not a mere hangover from apartheid. It is an active process of the development choices made by the South African government today. This development trajectory is facilitated by global finance and the ongoing development paradigm of extraction of Africa's resources for the benefit of consumption in the global North.

It is common knowledge that 80 per cent of the World Bank's oil extraction investment in Africa is for Northern consumption. In South Africa, the World Bank and the European Investment Bank's £4 billion investment in Eskom's coal-fired power stations facilitates the same process.

With the lack of energy access by the majority of people in South Africa, the battle to avoid catastrophic climate change is deeply intertwined with the battle to achieve access to clean, affordable energy. Because people do not have access to energy from Eskom, they are forced to burn coal indoors. Coupling this domestic pollution with heavy industrial pollution is a recipe for disaster.

Consider the fact that from May to August 2010, the South African ambient air pollution standards protecting health were exceeded on 570 occasions in the Highveld. People's right to an environment that is not harmful to one's health and wellbeing was therefore broken on 570 occasions. This is not a surprise in this area considering the presence of ten Eskom coal-fired power stations and Sasol's synfuel plant, which has the dubious distinction of being the highest single source greenhouse gas emitter in the world. So while all this energy production is around people, directly impacting upon their health, they get very little of the energy. Access to energy is a struggle.

It is in this context that South Africans need another energy future. An energy future that ensures decent levels of affordable basic services and infrastructure to be enjoyed by all as a basic human right – not only by 'consumers' who can afford them. An energy future where individuals and families are able to access, at minimum, the most basic necessities of human life, starting with nutritious food, clean water, safe and comfortable accommodation, and a clean healthy environment where people live and work. And these necessities must be nurtured by the very way in which people live and work, not undermined by them. To deliver the above, the people of South Africa, not multinational corporations, must be at the centre of energy delivery. People have to start taking ownership of how energy is produced – not only the physical production but the democratic decisions on how production and distribution is organized.

The South Africa leadership cannot continue to hoodwink its people and the world. Its Copenhagen offer to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a 34 per cent 'deviation' below baseline by 2020 and 42 per cent below baseline by 2025 is based upon an assumption of growth without constraint. According to the South African Long-Term Mitigation Strategy (LTMS), this will take South Africa's greenhouse gas emissions from 440 million tons in 2003 to 1,600 million tons by 2050. This is an inaccurate and politically naive claim of carbon rights it does not have. Based upon present figures, South Africa already reached 500 million tons in 2008. Its commitment to 42 per cent renewables in the future energy development mix only translates to 9 per cent renewables in 2030.

The government also throws figures around about how many millions of people have been connected to the electricity grid. It presents the installation of prepaid meters as a panacea, so that people can 'better manage' their consumption. In reality, this means that people can be the agents of their own disconnection when they do not have enough money to pay for the most expensive electricity in the country.

South Africans have to start challenging this political greenwash and start

working on systems that give them independence from big power producers such as Eskom. This would mean getting small local municipalities to start thinking of local energy development for their own needs. It would mean calling for better housing so that in winter people do not lose energy through leaking roofs and poorly constructed state homes. It would mean that individual households get access to affordable energy and don't have to pay up to seven times more for their electricity than industry does. And it would mean ensuring that industry pays the real price of energy and doesn't continue to get the cheapest electricity in the world at the expense of the people. “

[Bobby Peek is director of the South African environmental justice organization groundWork (Friends of the Earth South Africa)]

According to Michael West writing in 1998, Professor of African Studies at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, “The last ten years, have seen a growing movement across the country to strengthen U.S.-African ties in the wake of the end of the Cold War and Apartheid”.

Our visit coming in 2012, eighteen years after the defeat and fall of the South African Apartheid system reflects and update of the developments since then. Learning from the presentations done at the retreat in South Africa, Garth, Norman, Sakari and Allen focused on sharing the complexity of race, and the multi-layers of the complicated and complex problem of dismantling racism. South Africa is a classic example of racism (structural) just like Puerto Rico and Hawaii as classic colonies, like the US South is an example of race defining class and not the opposite where class supersedes race. For example, the color line demarcations or labels where South Africa has many color labels; Colored vs Black. The same race labels happens in the United States and globally, and in the US it is related to the census race labels. How do we feel about race and the labels that go with it; or are the labels real as far as cultural nationalism.

In South Africa, Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement are an example of cultural identity renaissance in South Africa, focused on new nation building. The Truth & Reconciliation reports “the commission finds that the death and detention of Mr. Stephen Bantu Biko on September 12, 1977 was a gross human rights violation. Magistrate Marthinus Prins found that the members of the SAP were not implicated in his death. The magistrate's finding contributed to the creation of a culture of impunity in the SAP.”

“In time, we shall be in a position to bestow on South Africa the greatest gift possible---a more human face.”

“It was not until a second enquiry in 1985, eight years after Biko's death, that any action was taken against them. The Truth & Reconciliation Commission announced that five former members of the South African security forces who

admitted to killing Biko were applying for amnesty.” His family had opposed their amnesty applications—a decision taken by Biko's widow, Ntsiki, his sons Nkosinathi and Samora, and his sister, Nobandile Mvovo. Their application was immediately rejected. Steve Biko's legacy lives on through the struggle he helped to ignite and through the freedoms that South Africans now possess. He is hailed as a martyr of the anti-apartheid struggle.” (from: Steve Biko Foundation; Alistair Boddy-Evans, about.com) Mamphela Ramphele said, “youth in South Africa today are faced with the challenge of “taking ownership of the gift of freedom.” The philosophy of Steve Biko's vision is as relevant to the youth today as it was 35 and more years ago. “ Born in 1946 in Tylden in the Eastern Cape on December 18th, Steve Biko excelled in school and went on to medical school where he was expelled for political activity. He was active in the Union of South Africa Students (NUSAS) and later co founded the SASO.

The present debate in South Africa concerns the upcoming Congress of the ANC (African National Congress) in December of this year 2012 . The challenges are both to South African Society as well as to the organization of the ANC. The call is for 'renewal' of the ANC and its leadership to restore the ANC in the eyes of the people. The question of implementation of the Democratic Revolution and the opening of the process both internally in the ANC and society wide to youth leadership is the present call to action. Key questions is service to the people, and leadership that is governed by the majority not government over the majority. The younger generation of militancy is calling for a leadership transitions, step up the economic transformation pace, even to the point of accelerating the land distribution and the call for nationalizing the mining industry. The leadership question challenges the powers of the presidency on appointments that circumvent the democratic process within and outside the ANC and the South Africa state. The nominations process for leadership selection has become a contentious topic, because of too many top down appointments by the office of the president. Many are criticizing President Zuma for corruption. This political struggle within the structures of the ANC are happening at the time it is celebrating its 100 year anniversary. The youth are saying, that a call for change is not a call for destabilizing the ANC. One key question of leadership is the one center of leadership that overlaps the presidency of the ANC and the state of South Africa. Some argue for a dual center of power with one person being president of ANC while another become President of South Africa.

While at the Labor University, Capetown, I visited several labor unions including the Domestic Workers Union of SA, and talked to several union leaders who were participating in the Labor University courses. The cited that “After Brazil and Guatemala, we are the most unequal society in the world. The rich are a tiny minority and are very rich.” (Michael Blake, 2005).

“The South African economy has been dominated by a handful of monopoly corporations in the mining, manufacturing, finance, (banking and insurance), agriculture, and the retail; sector. Despite the democratic changes, little has

been done to alter the patterns of wealth and privilege and poverty and deprivations in South Africa.”

The Labor University materials on globalization read, “In 1996 South Africa also adopted a neo-liberal policy, i.e., the macro-economic strategy called the 'Growth Employment and Redistribution strategy, commonly referred as GEAR. GEAR was adopted voluntarily by the ANC government and it has been therefore referred S 'homegrown' structural adjustment programme. Indeed the critics of GEAR argue that the policy has resulted in growing inequalities, poverty, unemployment and the overall decline in living standards facing many poor communities”.

- ⤴ 1998, five main conglomerate groups accounted for about 55% of the shares on the Johannesburg stock market exchange
- ⤴ 2002 the four biggest banks represented about 80% of the total banking sector (West, 2003)
- ⤴ 46% of the different sectors of the manufacturing industry, the largest four firms account for more than half of all output
- ⤴ Food and beverage sector, out of an estimated 1,800 firms, the 'top ten' companies ...are responsible for 68% of the industry's turnover
- ⤴ The three top companies own 72% of all maize silos in the country

The visit to Capetown, South Africa was organized by the William Winter Institute from the University of Mississippi. Susan Glisson and Charles Tucker represent the leadership of the WW Institute. The form part of the Apartheid Archive Project. Susan Glisson, Charles Tucker and the hosts in South Africa; Norman Duncan, Garth Stevens, and Allan Zinn.

Norman Duncan is Dean of Humanities at the University of Pretoria. The work of Norman Duncan includes 'Race, Racism Knowledge production and psychology in South Africa (Nova science publication 2001), and Developmental Psychology (Juta/UCT Press, 2009). He is co-chair of the Anti-racism network in Higher Education, and he was head of the school of Human and Community development in Witwatersrand, is lead researcher on the Apartheid Achieve Research Project, a cross-disciplinary, cross-national study of the enduring effects of apartheid- era racism on people's lives currently. He is past President of the South Africa Psychological Society. In the process of getting to know Dr. Duncan, I found out that he is and has been the major mentor to both Garth Stevens and Allan Zinn.

Garth Stevens, is an associate professor and clinical psychologist in the Department of psychology at the University of Witwatersrand. His work includes a focus on 'Race' racism and related social asymmetries; racism and knowledge production; critical psychology, ideology, power and discourse; violence and its prevention; and masculinity, gender and

violence. His publications include, 'Race against time: Psychology and challenges to deracialisation in South Africa (UNISA Press, 2006). He is currently co-lead researcher with Dr Norman Duncan in the Apartheid Archives.

Allan Zinn, who presented to our group, is a former Sanlam House detainee, and now director of the Center for the Advancement of Non-racialism and Democracy (CANRAD) at NMMU. According to the CANRAD's newsletter, it was launched in March 2010, CANRAD “seeks to harness collective institutional and community capabilities in relation to research, teaching and learning, evidence-based advocacy and intervention in advancing non-racialism and democracy. It works closely with faculties, divisions and the community”. The establishment of CANRAD is in line with the vision and mission of NMMU (Nelson Mandela University), “It responds to the concern that racism, its alternatives, and associated impact on development has not been given sufficient scholarly attention in South Africa.” NMMU has taken additional steps, as informed by the newsletter, promoting non-racial and democratic activism within communities of practice, thereby “promoting a transformative and lasting culture institutionally, regionally, nationally and internationally”.

Lawrence, Lorraine and Allan Zinn (eds) (2007) *Siyimbewu (we are imbewu). Stories of Transformation and Renewal East London*: Iqula Publishing Ltd, East London, South Africa

Allan Zinn was part of the initiators a legal action for equal education in South Africa...”The children who receive textbooks seven months into the school year, have no teacher and sit for classes under trees or in a mud school should not have to wait umpteen more years for quality education. What if it was your child, Mr President?” According to the law suit, “The Constitution makes it clear that the right to basic education is not subject to “progressive realisation”. Rights are not privileges and poor citizens are not beggars. The Bill of Rights applies to every one of us, rich and poor alike. Not being subject to progressive realisation means now, for everyone. It meant 1994, not 2012 – and not in another 20 years’ time, either.”

As we visited South Africa the Department of Education was being criticized for lack of books for public schools...”Who can dispute that the education system in this country is in dire crisis? The comprehensive reportage in last week’s Mail & Guardian on Limpopo’s textbook crisis provides an explanation of the reason for so much discontent about what is taking place in education. Despite avowed commitments by the post-apartheid government to tackle head-on the deeply unequal and unjust education system it inherited, it remains painfully divided and unequal. The Public Participation in Education Network and its supporters are preparing to litigate in the Constitutional Court on the right to quality basic education being in the national public interest.

Constructive spirit...In essence, we seek, in a constructive spirit, to bring about a better dispensation that is able to deliver more effectively and efficiently what the Bill of Rights promises: basic education for all. We see our public initiative as complementary to

other similar efforts in the courts – the simultaneous and collective mobilisation of the community for quality public education. In legal terms, we aim to gain a supervisory order from the Constitutional Court, which would commit it to play an active supervisory role to ensure accountability and quality basic education for all children. Its role would continue until the matter has been addressed at the highest levels. The matter is urgent – the lives of children are affected. The network’s members who have initiated the litigation are Neville Alexander, Ivor Baatjes, Heidi-Jane Esakov, Enver Motala, Esther Ramani, Michael Joseph, Brian Ramadiro, John Samuel, Salim Vally and Allan Zinn.

Low-quality education...The ailing education system is keeping children from poor households at the back of the job queue and locking families into poverty for another generation. Low-quality education perpetuates exclusion and marginalisation and reproduces the racist, class, geographical and other social divisions that characterised apartheid.

The new government has had almost 20 years to get its house in order, but it is still reacting to one crisis after another. These are not only about infrastructure, a lack of classrooms or textbooks, sanitation and electricity. They are about all the elements that constitute a well-planned and optimally functioning, good-quality public education system – literate parents, proper preschools and nutrition, effective curriculums, the medium of instruction, motivated and competent teachers, an efficient support system, a safe environment and an involved and caring community. We are tired of excuses and blaming. We need the support of the Constitutional Court to advance quality public education for all and hold the state accountable to fulfill its fundamental role in achieving it”. (*Jean Pease is a member of the Public Participation in Education Network*).

The work of Wilhelmina Trout is with the World March of Women, an international feminist network that works for social justice and equity for all women. She is currently ending her term as the secretariat of WMW and is mentor to the SA Domestic Workers Union which is part of the International Network of Domestic Workers.

Winter Institute...Mississippi to Belfast to Capetown...making connections in terms of racial healing and reconciliation, particularly in violent situations or moments of social transformation...with the international group made of 26 people plus or minus coming from diverse backgrounds although most are academics, met at each hub to experience and breakdown the connections between the geo-political centers.

The new narrative....another world is possible....another US is necessary.....in the US South and in South Africa is...the part of the debate and discourse that I bring to the table including the experiences in the Southwest and South of the United States, internal colonies, racially segregated, profiled and repressed.

Conclusions....not yet.

addendum:

Neville Edward Alexander

[Nicolas Magnien](#) and forms part of the [SAHO Public History Internship](#).

Neville Edward Alexander was the first of six children of Dimbiti Bisho Alexander, a primary-school teacher, and David James Alexander, a carpenter. It was in the rural [Eastern Cape](#) that he initially kept a strong anti-White sentiment, nurtured by the idea that all Whites were oppressors, an idea which he inherited from his father. Alexander was introduced to coloured militancy and progressivism at an early age. On the other hand, his mother taught him to respect everyone, in addition to introducing him to Christian values.

At an early age, Alexander learned that his grandmother was not originally from South Africa, but it was only later that he discovered how she ended up there. From [Ethiopia](#) in East Africa, former slave [Bisho Jarsa](#) (Neville's maternal grandmother) had been freed off the coasts of Yemen to be brought to South Africa as part of an operation aimed at ending the slave trade in the British Empire. Jarsa would later become a teacher at a school in [Cradock](#).

One thing which Neville Alexander remembers being amazed by, was how his grandmother often mumbled to herself in a language (Ethiopia's Oromo language) none of them understood. His mother told him Jarsa was talking to God, and surely her piety was passed on to Alexander's mother who, in turn, implanted a sense of biblical values in her son which he still upholds. Neville Alexander was profoundly influenced by his mother's religious practices and beliefs. Up until he went to university, he attended the Dominican Holy Rosary Convent in Cradock, where he was taught by German nuns. Alexander says: 'Somehow I did not see the nuns as white. They were almost saintly in the service they rendered us. They were dedicated people, becoming formative role models in my life.' Alexander learned to enjoy reading and writing, but also to question and investigate, some of the skills that would shape his life later. Precisely, he remembers Sister Veronata, who instilled in him a fondness of German through her methodology. However, one of Alexander's greatest learning experiences was also to care for the disadvantaged. He came to believe that to be Christian was to work to ensure that the poor would inherit the earth. 'Today I am an atheist, but I still believe that is what religion is all about. Its great positive contribution to society is to teach people to love and respect one another.' he said.

University and the becoming of a political activist (1953-1961)

Neville Alexander's move to [Cape Town](#) in 1953 to attend university, marked the beginning of a new phase in his life. Initially, he wanted to become a priest. Alexander was advised to register in medicine at [Fort Hare University](#) (UFH) by his school adviser in Cradock, but soon found out he could not apply as he lacked the mathematics background. Therefore, he decided to do a Bachelor of Arts at the [University of Cape Town](#) (UCT), majoring in German and History. Soon, his encounter with the secular environment of university changed his approach to religion. Within six months away from home, Alexander felt that he was a religious doubter or an agnostic. Yet, becoming a radical [socialist](#) makes sense to him today;

even though he could no longer explain the existence of God, he still firmly believed in the ethical values of the Christian faith and his new reasoning never prevented him from working with people when he got back home: 'I had always been taught to think of other people first. That is why it was so easy for me to become a socialist.'

His contact with the [Teachers' League of South Africa](#) (TLSA), an affiliate of the [Non-European Unity Movement](#) (NEUM), heavily influenced the young Alexander. Ronnie Brittan, a TLSA member and a friend of the young boy's mother, was in charge of looking after Alexander so that he did not get lost in Cape Town, and therefore became the first person Alexander met when arriving in the big city. Brittan had quite an impact on Alexander's intellectual development, as he introduced him to progressive ideas, atheism, and militant politics. Alexander drew inspiration from this man: 'To become a teacher, then, became an obvious thing for me, you see. I really admired Ronnie and he was a teacher.' However, the inspiration Brittan provided him with, was not limited to teaching, for it was in those NEUM meetings that Alexander was forced to become acquainted with the works on 'pure' socialism of [Karl Marx](#) and [Leon Trotsky](#), and lose his 'anti-whitism'. After having participated in many educational fellowships debating on national and international politics and helping found the Cape Peninsula Students' Union, which educated radical political leadership, Alexander enrolled in an Honours and Master (MA) degree at UCT studying German for two years, during which he wrote a thesis on the Silesia Baroque drama of Andreas Gryphius and Daniel Caspar von Lohenstein.

Once he completed his MA, Alexander won an Alexander Humboldt Stiftung scholarship to study at [Tübingen University](#) in (West) Germany, a time which would be crucial not only in the development of his political ideas, but also political actions. By then, he considered himself a Marxist and joined the [German Socialist Students' Union](#) (GSSU). Since his Unity Movement had asked him to remain open to new ideas while there, he met many Algerian and Cuban students who introduced him to anti-colonialism and guerrilla warfare. While in Paris, he even met Trotsky's wife shortly before she passed away, an encounter which made him more critical of the South African Communist Party and, generally, Stalinist ideas. By 1961, he completed a Ph.D. in German literature. More importantly, by the end of his studies, he made up his mind that he was not going to get married because he realised he would not be able to take care of a family since it was likely he was 'going to end up in prison'.

Return to Cape Town and 'an accident waiting to happen' (1961-1964)

After the [Sharpeville massacre](#), which Neville Alexander witnessed from Germany, he learned that although 'frustration can be self-defeating', it can also be 'at the root of constructive counter-action'. Subsequently, he began seriously considering the possibility of transposing guerrilla warfare and creating revolutionary movements once back in South Africa; however he was suspended from the NEUM when he proposed these ideas. Consequently, he started to have a more leading role in political activism as, although he never saw himself as a political leader, he has always thought that politics are a 'means to the realisation of a vision', where his vision is 'freedom'. Along with Namibian activists Kenneth and Tilly Abraham from the [South West Africa People's Organisation](#) (Swapo), he created the Yu Chi Chan Club (YCCC) to promote guerrilla warfare, and subsequently founded the [National](#)

[Liberation Front](#) (NLF) to bring together people who were committed to the ‘overthrow of the state, irrespective of their political ideology’. However, people in the NEUM and elsewhere considered these activists ‘silly young intellectuals’, for they were—and Alexander agrees with this statement—truly inexperienced and, to use his own words, ‘an accident waiting to happen’.

Meanwhile, Alexander had been teaching at [Livingstone High School](#) since 1961 and had made the school more ‘avant-garde’. By stimulating discussions on the discourse and narratives of ‘orthodox history’, by giving students the ‘freedom to explore things for themselves’, Dr. Alexander was now trying to change things from within the educational system. He believed at that point that, as much as it could be admired for its professionalism, the TLSA adopted too much of a ‘British Anglocentric view of what good education should be like’, which was demoralising and stigmatising for people who did not conform to it. In fact, through his work in the NLF, Alexander got involved in underground work and even organised some of his students, but soon he would become a victim of the apartheid judicial system.

Imprisonment on Robben Island (1964-74)

By the end of 1963, the revolutionary movements Neville Alexander was leading, were infiltrated and he and other members of the YCCC were detained, charged and convicted of conspiracy to commit sabotage. Because Dr. Alexander already had certain notoriety, his sentence provoked a number of reactions worldwide. For instance, the [Alexander Defense Committee](#) (ADC) was established by I. B. Tabata in New York City, with the aim to provide funds for the legal defence and family support of political prisoners in South Africa, and several branches were opened in Canada and across Europe.

When asked about his experience in the prison of [Robben Island](#), Neville Alexander remembers that it was ‘brutalising’, that both the physical and mental conditions he was put through were terrible. He remembers the humiliation by the prison guards, which took multiple forms: censorship of the prisoners’ denunciations of the tortures they were living; total disinformation of what happened in the world around them; fake humanity on the part of the prison authorities during journalists’ visits and so forth. In addition to this, the crucial lack of education of most of the guards and the ‘opportunism’ of certain prisoners were so many things that he now tries to forget.

This being said, if his experience on Robben Island could be distressing at times, he now believes it was also an ‘ennobling and enriching experience’, where most prisoners became ‘much better people’. According to Alexander, this period (prison term) was an example of true democracy, as he learned to disagree with people while still respecting them. Indeed, the realisation that they all needed each other in a way formed the basis of a new nation. He recalls for instance how, although [Nelson Mandela](#) was almost always the spokesperson for the prisoners to negotiate or talk with the authorities, there always was a very democratic process to come to that decision beforehand. There was also a stronger sense of civic responsibility that grew between prisoners. As intense relations and differences emerged in

prison, it was necessary for them all ‘to learn to say, “I am sorry” or to say, “I was wrong” without feeling humiliated’.

Moreover, the small scale of living in a prison provided grounds to establish a different but participatory and extremely diverse education. In that respect, the receiving of an Honours degree in History by Alexander only reflected some of the opportunities that came to be offered to—and created by—prisoners. The prison education began with informal seminars, discussions and workshops during working hours, and then, from 1966 onwards, the prisoners were ‘sort of allowed to study’. From this period it became more formal and they could register with the [University of South Africa](#) (UNISA) as well as with other correspondence colleges. On the process of educating themselves, Alexander says:

‘We taught one another what we knew, discovering each other’s resourcefulness. We also learned how people with little or no formal education could not only themselves participate in education programmes but actually teach others a range of different insights and skills. The “University of Robben Island” was one of the best universities in the country... it also showed me that you don’t need professors.’

Eventually, they created ‘The Society for the Rewriting of South African History’, and each one of them had his own expertise which he shared with the others: the former Minister of Transport, [Mac Maharaj](#) taught economics, Mandela taught law, and Alexander taught history. Progressively, they even ended up educating some warders, some of whom acknowledged they learned a lot from prisoners, with the aim of, perhaps, rehabilitating them as well.

In fact, Mandela and [African National Congress](#) (ANC) member [Walter Sisulu](#) were fascinated with Alexander’s part-Ethiopian origins, although they did not know about the story of his grandmother as a slave yet. As part of the education offered on Robben Island, Alexander and Mandela particularly encouraged their fellow prisoners to learn their own languages’ reading and writing, as many of them were illiterate at the beginning. By the end of Alexander’s ten-year conviction, illiteracy was not only wiped out in the prison, but he also restarted to speak Xhosa, which he had learned as a child but had lost in later years.

House arrest, Black Consciousness, and Sached (1974-1989)

In 1974, Alexander was released from prison, banned and placed under house arrest for five years. His experience in prison definitely had an influence on his life and his political ideas, and so from the time of his liberation on, Alexander became much more involved in his fight for socialism and active in his writing about it. His comrades and he also began looking for a new ‘political home’, which he, for a short while, tried to find in the [Black Consciousness Movement](#) (BCM).

In 1977, [Steve Biko](#) who was also banished to King William’s Town in 1973, had tried to meet Alexander in Cape Town, but under the circumstances of having been a Robben Island prisoner and being now banned, Alexander had to be quite cautious. Alexander had already requested Biko to deal with the divisions within his movement as well as some organisational issues. [Xolela Mangcu](#) gives his account on the [meeting between Alexander and Biko](#):

'At that meeting (between Biko and Fikile Bam), Biko had expressed a desire to meet with Bam's close comrade in the Unity Movement, Neville Alexander. And so when Biko and Peter Jones travelled to Cape Town in August 1977 as part of the unity talks among the liberation movements, they relied on Bam to facilitate the meeting with Alexander. However, what enraged Bam - back in 1977 and in our interview - was Alexander's refusal to see Biko on security grounds. While Alexander regards that evening as 'one of the most tragic moments in my life', the security concerns were real.'

While grappling with the implications of anti-Vietnam politics and black power on the international scene, domestically [Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement](#) was confronting the ravages of apartheid and the Soweto student revolts while trying to co-ordinate underground activity in the country.

By the end of his house arrest in 1979, Alexander had finished one of his most famous books called *One Azania, One Nation: The National Question in South Africa*, published under the false name of No Sizwe as it was banned in South Africa. In this book, Alexander attempts to 'facilitate the unification of the national liberation movement by inciting a discussion to take place on the basis of national unity in South Africa', as he felt no refutation of the National Party's conception of nationality had yet been proposed at the time.

Once his ban ended, Alexander also restarted teaching part-time at UCT in the department of Sociology at the University of Cape Town. Between 1979 and 1986, he was involved in the South African Committee on Higher Education (Sached), an important centre for alternative and anti-apartheid education in which he was later appointed Cape Town director in 1980. The key idea behind this group was 'Education for Liberation', as it questioned not only the existing hegemonies, but also looked at the alternative social forms that could be promoted. In the early eighties, he also became associated with the National Forum, which was formed to co-ordinate opposition to the introduction of the [tri-cameral](#) Constitution, which was put to a referendum in which only Whites could vote. In 1986, Alexander also became the secretary of the Health, Education and Welfare Society of South Africa, a trust whose goal was to offer funding to a whole range of community projects, always with the intention to empower the oppressed. In the same year, he also helped co-ordinate the National Languages Project in South Africa. In 1989, he attracted a bit more attention when he co-led along with the University of Cape Town's Institute for the Study of Public Policy a controversial study which concluded that South Africa would remain a multi-lingual society in spite of the emergence of English as a national means of communication in a post-apartheid society.

The 1990s (Wosa, PRAESA, LANGTAG)

In 1990, Alexander wrote a book entitled *Education and the Struggle for National Liberation in South Africa*, in which he reiterated that efforts put into education would lead to the liberation of South Africa, not the other way round. He said:

'No government on earth can control the process of schooling completely. The beginnings of

trouble in any modern society usually make themselves felt in the schools before they become evident in other institutions precisely because it is so difficult in a modern state to control this process completely.'

Much in the same way as he experienced years before as the YCCC leader and while on Robben Island, schools were the product and the property of the people. Alexander thought that it would be desirable for 'unconventional' teaching to be made 'in such a way that students know exactly what is true, what is half-true, what is simply false, what has been omitted, and why,' that they, in one word, reflect upon what is been taught to them. This thought followed him all through the last decade of the 20th century.

In April 1990, Alexander headed the [Workers' Organisation for Socialist Action](#) (Wosa) which was created to promote working-class interests. It advocated for Black working class leadership, anti-imperialism, and [anti-racism](#), and demanded fair votes in a non-racial, unitary country. His involvement in the cause came from a concern that the compromises of middle-class leadership ended up further marginalising the majority and ensured that some infrastructure still existed for them in the event of a collapse of capitalist institutions. Basically, Alexander said the programme was 'almost biblical' because of its primary interest in fulfilling the most basic needs of the most disadvantaged ones. This being said, despite his reference to Christian faith, he now considered himself overtly an atheist, 'with no need for the God hypotheses'. Alexander remained convinced that the then-present system would not be able to live up to the hopes and needs of the poorest South Africans, and believed that it should, therefore, be changed for a 'completely new order', even if by force. In the 1990s, Wosa was one of the most prominent organisations in South Africa to identify itself with Trotskyist ideas of permanent revolution, and its workers insisted that democracy would only be possible if people could conduct their daily transactions in the language they knew best.

In 1992, the [Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa](#) (PRAESA) was founded and housed in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Cape Town, and one year later Alexander was made director of this independent research development unit. In July 1994, PRAESA organised the first national conference on primary school curriculum initiatives with a series of proposals made to the government to reform the educational system (e.g. involving all actors in curriculum changes, highlighting continuity between educare and primary schooling, etc.). The so-called 'core curriculum' was to promote unity among all of the South African people, emphasising the participatory properties of all these suggestions.

With the fall of apartheid, the [Language Plan Task Group](#) (LANGTAG) was established in 1995 with the purpose of advising the new Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, [Dr. B. S. Ngubane](#) on a national language plan for South Africa. A committee, chaired by Alexander, was put up to prepare a blueprint for language planning, which was submitted to the Minister in 1996.

The twenty-first century (future of African languages, ACALAN, and prizes)

Not only has Alexander written extensively in the past couple of years for academic journals and books on issues pertaining to language and education in South Africa, but he has also written on his primary interest: socialism. In 2002, on the occasion of the translation of the Communist Manifesto in Zulu, he wrote a foreword for the document. In it, he makes the point that this is an empowering event, although a belated one, which further proves that ‘political education of the emerging leadership of the working class in colonial and postcolonial Africa took place in the languages of the colonial masters, i.e., in French and English’.

In *An Ordinary Country: Issues in the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy in South Africa*, published in 2003, Alexander makes the point that, after all, South Africa perhaps is not the ‘miracle’ that it is often thought to be. Perhaps it is in fact a ‘very ordinary country’, whose history happened the way it did because its socio-historical circumstances and leaders enabled it. Soon after, the [African Academy of Languages](#) (ACALAN) was founded to be the official language policy and planning agency of the African Union, with the permanent objective to design a counter-hegemonic strategy. When one knows about Alexander’s previous experience with, and comments about, language policy in South Africa, it makes sense that he says:

‘Laissez-faire policy notoriously reinforces the agendas of dominant groups. To continue to believe in the twenty-first century that language planning is illusory at best and tantamount to evil social engineering at worst is, ultimately, to deny the possibility of social justice.’

In 2004, he co-chaired a newly-created Steering committee for the Implementation of the Language Plan of Action for Africa (ILPAA) in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The goal of this plan was—and still is—to establish a reference frame to assess all future governmental interventions pertaining to language infrastructure.

The same year, Dr. Neville Alexander received the [Order of the Disa](#), a provincial honour [Western Cape](#) Premier [Ebrahim Rasool](#) granted to him for his long commitment to socio-political issues and education.

In 2008, he won the [Linguapax Prize](#), granted annually in Barcelona, to highlight his contributions to linguistic diversity and multilingual education during the Mother Language Day, and as part of the Intercultural Week organised by the [Ramon Llull University](#).

Dr. Neville Alexander was the director of PRAESA and was a member on the Interim Board of the ACALAN.

He passed away on 27 August 2012 in Cape Town, where he resided.

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