

Introduction

The readers of *Transformation 75* will quickly note that this is a special issue which marks our seventy-fifth number. The editors, with John Daniel, Gerry Maré and myself forming the veterans' team that organised ourselves as a sub-committee, asked a number of authors from the first half of the history of the journal to come and reflect in a few pages on their past concerns and consider what they think today. This meant selecting especially articles that were relevant to this kind of exercise as opposed, say, to the strategic political debates on specific prospects of the pre-1990 and transition years which belong to our history now. Among those who could not make it, Irina Filatova, formerly of the University of Durban-Westville, has been kind enough to give us an article for this issue. Colin Coleman, who has made the transition from underground ANC operative to becoming a major figure in the South African financial investment scene, was a welcome and valued participant in the debates but did not contribute a written paper. Deliberations were captured by audio-visual equipment and are available on our website. Herewith reproduced below a slightly edited version of our welcoming statement to the workshop which took place at the Salt Rock Hotel on the KwaZulu-Natal coast:

Dear Participants,

Welcome to Salt Rock. You are the guests of a journal which has now survived so long (25 years) that you will be part of a celebratory 75th issue.

Transformation has a history which goes back to the most intense final years of the struggle against apartheid, includes the transitional years and then continues through the creation and moulding of the New South Africa. We have had ourselves of course to change in some respects from our origins and we have become a bit more professionalised. However we continue to operate without any employed staff, without being part of any huge publishing stable making standardising demands on us and this where other journals and publishers saw fit to close shop when the political struggle seemed over. We like to think that we continue to be a very independent voice and that we reflect opinions and ideas from South Africa, and indeed from the region, which have themselves developed and changed over time.

One aspect for reflection is that this was very much a Durban journal at its foundation although it has always included authors from other centres. *Transformation* remains an important part of creative life in the port city but it is also true that Durban has less significance as a distinct political and intellectual source of thought than it used to and this reflects in part change at the university which employs most of us. On the other hand, the nature of Durban gives us an insight into the country at large that is valued. We are proud that we at the journal offer something no other city really offers but we are also aware that this is a situation which might change one day. Political economy, politics and the question of race have always been very important to us but other social and cultural issues have become more important as our editorial board has changed and the range of subject matter considered in our pages is certainly now very great. We hope we remain a respected journal of choice for those who want to make an intervention in debates in this country, however.

What transformation means also has changed for many while some issues seem relatively intractable or unsettled still. This is why we have invited you here: to reflect on material you wrote quite some time ago and consider its relevance as the years have passed. Where do you stand now? What are the tasks at hand? We have also invited half a dozen newer voices to see what they think. Do they agree with your views or is there a paradigmatic change in outlook? Is South Africa's intellectual profile due for change?

We might here remember that our founding editors were, apart from myself, Gerry Maré, who is still with the journal, and Mike Morris, who is not. Mike's high energy level powered us into early viability. Not long after, Vishnu Padayachee joined us and he was justifiably associated with its appeal and rigour for a very long time. We are pleased that Vishnu and Mike are with us at this workshop. Today, apart from Gerry and myself, the editors include Shirley Brooks, the first editor ever based in a university outside KZN, Lindy Stiebel, Monique Marks, Imraan Valodia, John Daniel and Richard Ballard, who is on a sabbatical in the USA and consequently missing this event. Lately this has really meant a chance to divide up work very equitably within a relatively large team. We want to pay tribute to Imraan and Monique who have felt with other commitments that they need to step down after this event. They will both be missed; Imraan has been with us a long time and Monique connected us to many interesting networks of thinkers in this country. I would also like to thank Kira Erwin, an about to be doctor of sociology, who has made such smooth sailing of this rather complex event with her organisational skills.

So a hearty welcome; I hope you all have a very enjoyable and stimulating weekend; thanks for your contributions in the past and keep at it.

Bill Freund