

Editorial

Transformation at 30

In 1986 the first issue of the journal appeared. The title was deliberate, indicating a commitment to the social forces calling not only for the defeat of apartheid but fundamental change towards a country that would truly be *post-apartheid*. The period, the political context, and the challenges in launching such a venture then, were well captured in the editorial that appeared in issue number 50 (2002), and will not be repeated here. However, a few references to what we wrote in 1986 may be of relevance to present contextualisation and concerns.

The first point is the repeated reference to class politics, capitalist reorganisation to ‘sustain accumulation’, and noting that a ‘striking aspect of the new terrain of mass politics is the openly expressed interest in socialist ideas and practices’. To note is that this was a few years before the collapse of the Soviet Union, four years before Nelson Mandela’s release from prison, eight years before the Reconstruction and Development Programme (the RDP) served as the ANC’s election manifesto, a decade before the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy in South Africa changed economic direction, and then without the capitulation reflected in the TINA (‘there is no alternative’) refrain during and after the transition from 1994.

Second, the context: a time of great repression, but also ‘reform’ ideas from the state as it tried to deal with increasing internal resistance to apartheid and international support for change. Mass politics and labour organisation is described in *Transformation* 1 as a ‘rush of events as the balance of forces and the nature of consciousness shifts’. The editors then committed the journal to a ‘spirit which is intended to spur debate and encourage the exposition of different considered positions but without any partisanship other than the conviction that there is no settled and established doctrine on the subject’.

The editors of *Transformation*, in this our ninetieth issue and thirtieth year, wish to restate our position, taking account of the very different society in which we find ourselves after the unlamented demise of apartheid. We are

doing so here to allow us to stimulate, solicit, generate, and select articles more clearly; to suggest direction to potential contributors; and, most importantly, to attempt to give impetus to ways of understanding and changing this, and other societies, with greater effect. We, therefore, commit ourselves to:

- publish fresh and well researched and/or argued *critical submissions*, focusing on (in the first instance) issues relevant to southern and South Africa;
- encourage submissions that deal with processes such as discrimination and exploitation, supported by data and analysis; that theorise such explorations towards analysis and understanding; and that propose ways of resisting and addressing them. Internationally comparative perspectives are appreciated;
- welcome acute observation of the wide field of social and cultural change and production, in literature and the arts generally, and ideological contestation in its multiple forms;
- provide a platform for discussion of the effects of a global environmental crisis on the sub-continent;
- support submissions that develop alternatives to discriminatory and/or exploitative policies, processes and agents;
- maintain standards through our own initial editorial assessment and peer reviewed evaluation of submissions;
- be transparent in our processes;
- develop critical and robust debate, within a supportive and collegial space;
- discover, recognise, support, and mentor (if possible) new voices to participate in the discussions on the platform we provide;
- suggest to potential contributors, through occasional editorials, areas of specific interest that we believe will give effect to the commitments stated above.

The editors