



Transition's Child: The Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF)



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For more information about SAHA's mandate, projects and programmes, please contact:

The South African History Archive
Box 31719
Braamfontein
2017

Tel: +27117171941
Fax: +27117171964
Email: info@saha.org.za
Web: www.saha.org.za

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Project concept: Dale McKinley and Catherine Kennedy
Oral history collection: Dale McKinley and Ahmed Veriava
Document collection: Dale McKinley
Report: Dale McKinley
Project management: Catherine Kennedy
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Design and layout (report): Rizelle Stander Hartmeier
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INTRODUCTION

Project background

This project follows on from a previously successful and well-received oral history project - 'Forgotten Voices in the Present: Post-1994 oral histories from three poor communities in South Africa' - with the South African History Archive (SAHA) that was conducted from 2007-2009. What that project confirmed was the need, and indeed imperative, to record and archive the post-1994 stories / histories of people and organisations from poor communities. Such 'histories from below' are important components of not only new (more recent) recorded history of the South African transition but of contesting the dominant, 'histories from above', form of transitional history recording and telling.

It is within such a context that the need for a more specific focus on organised, community-based, social movements that have arisen in the post-1994 era was identified. These social movements are a direct response to the political and socio-economic conditions within which poor communities have found themselves. Despite the fact that many such movements have been in existence for years, have produced a large amount of organisational, campaign and media material and have had a great deal of research, advocacy activity, academic and intellectual analysis, as well as journalistic writing focused on them, there exists no formal archives of such community-based social movements and their community components nor corresponding written and oral histories.

However, it was immediately recognised that it would be practically impossible to embark on a project that attempted to cover all such post-1994 social movements. Due to my own long-time involvement in, and familiarity with, the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF), as well as the fact that its dominant Gauteng provincial base makes for more manageable use of limited human and financial resources, it was decided that the APF would be the best choice for such a project.

Project purpose

There were four main practical components:

- To collect and produce a formal electronic and hard copy archive of all available material from within the APF and its community affiliates, as well as material on / about the APF from outside the movement;
- To produce a formally archived collection of oral histories (in audio and written formats) from selected APF and associated community affiliate leaders / activists / members;
- To produce a brief written history of the APF consisting of a critically informed paper based on the collected archive along with selected excerpts from the oral histories recorded;
- To identify and submit a range of PAIA ('Promotion of Access to Information Act') requests, in relation to the work of the APF and its community affiliates,

In doing so, the project attempted to present the first, comprehensive and multi-form history of one of South Africa's key post-1994 social movements. As such it has provided a formal, archival repository that is an important and positive contribution to social movement researchers, activists, community residents, academics, politicians and government officials. As was the case with the Forgotten Voices project, this goes a long way in contesting 'outsider' and purely academic / analytical 'histories' as well as organisational / struggle perspectives of the APF and its various community based affiliates.

Project scope

Besides the more 'straightforward' task of collecting and recording various materials of, and about, the APF, the approach to gathering oral histories from selected APF leaders, activists, and members was designed to explore the following areas / issues:

- general personal and APF movement / community organisational history;
- basic demands and issues engaged; movement / organisation strategy and tactics;
- responses from the state / government;
- relations with political parties and other social movements and / or community organisations;
- levels and content of political and social activism; and,
- key problems, challenges, failures and successes both organisationally and politically.

Underlying these is the larger area / issue of the ways in which the history and development of the APF and / or community affiliate has been shaped / affected by the dominant (macro) post-1994 political and socio-economic trajectory in South Africa.

In this respect, each interviewee was asked to fill out a consent form (Appendix A) and two framing questionnaires were used for all interviews involving APF leaders-activists (Appendix B); and, community affiliate leaders-activists (Appendix C) respectively. Further, a list of all APF leaders-activists interviewed is provided (Appendix D) as well as a list of all community affiliate leaders-activists interviewed (Appendix E)

For each specific component:

Material archive: All available materials and documents of the APF and its community affiliates, alongside materials produced (i.e. news / media, research and academic) on the APF and its affiliates have been collected, collated / organised and filed into a formal archive housed at SAHA. These materials / documents include: organisational / political and administrative reports, minutes of meetings, research reports, discussion documents, press statements, interviews, academic / research articles and essays, media articles, pamphlets, ephemera (e.g., t-shirts, posters), video / audio productions and raw footage.

Oral history archive: Selected APF and community affiliate leaders / members / activists were identified and interviewed. All interviews have been digitally (audio) recorded - in English and transcribed into a written format. The interviews – both in written and audio forms – have been collated / organised and placed in a formal archive housed at SAHA.

Written history: Utilising the archival materials collected, alongside excerpts from the oral histories, a brief history of the APF has been produced in this report.

PAIA requests: Selected areas / issues relevant for PAIA requests (flowing out of information and issues from both the archival material and oral history archives collected) have been identified and recorded. In conjunction with the APF and the relevant community affiliates, SAHA has begun a process of filing PAIA information requests to secure records relating to the history of the APF, or relevant to their advocacy work. This is an ongoing component of the project with released documents being made available within SAHA's archives and through the APF virtual exhibition as and when they become available.

Project methodology

Preparatory meeting with APF elected leadership

The first practical activity of the project was a meeting with the APF's elected leadership (the office bearers) to explain the content and character of the project so as to ensure that there was a full understanding of, and 'buy-in' to, the project.

Collection of materials

All documents (both original and copies) as well as various ephemera and audio-visual materials were collected over a two year period in the following ways:

- through the APF's own office / records;
- through individual leaders / activists / members both at the APF and community affiliate levels;
- through my own substantial personal archive (collected over a period of ten years as a co-founding member, activist and elected leader of the APF)

Identification of interviewees

All key APF activists and leaders (both past and present) who have held elected positions of leadership, been responsible for various sub-committees and specific projects in the APF and / or been active over a period of time in the APF and with its struggles were identified for interviews. In relation to APF community affiliates, a cross-section of affiliates (from each of the four APF regions and representing different 'types' of communities – i.e. formal township residents, shack settlements, urban flat / warehouse dwellers) were initially selected. Past and present elected leaders and key activists of these affiliates were identified for interviews. Most all such interviewees identified were actually interviewed although there were a few who had passed on or who were not physically available. In only one case did a potential interviewee indicate an unwillingness to participate.

Oral history interviews

Two general questionnaires were drawn up; one for APF activists-leaders (Appendix B) and the other for community affiliate activists-leaders (Appendix C). As the questionnaires show, each interviewee was asked general questions in respect of a number of broad categories related to personal as well as organisational and political history, practical struggles, challenges / problems and personal experiences and perspectives. Where it was possible, the questionnaires were provided to each individual interviewee before the interview took place. There was no specific time limit set for any interview with the lengths ranging from less than one hour to over four hours. Each interview was recorded on a digital (audio) recording device. Each interviewee was asked to sign a consent form (Appendix A) prior to the commencement of the interview and in this respect everyone agreed (all signed consent forms are available as part of the archive). All interviews were conducted in English and transcribed into written transcripts.

Archival repository, project 'report' and virtual exhibition

- The entirety of all materials collected (in hard copy, electronic and audio-visual forms) have been provided to the South African History Archive where they have been processed into an organised archival repository which is accessible to the academics, researchers, movements / organisations and members of the public;
- the 'project report' which consists of this project summary, a brief critical history of the APF as well as excerpts from the oral history interviews has been compiled and will be made available through SAHA's website and distributed to interviewees, selected / relevant movements and organisations, NGOs, research institutes, libraries etc.;
- An online 'virtual exhibition' consisting of selected items chosen from across the collected archive and which together provide a summarised history of the APF, has been compiled and can be viewed at <http://www.saha.org.za/apf>.

ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------|---|
| AEC | Anti-Eviction Campaign |
| AGM | Annual General Meeting |
| ANC | African National Congress |
| ATM | Automated Teller Machines |
| BOCOSFO | Bophelong Community Development Forum |
| CANSA | Cancer Association of South Africa |
| CAWP | Coalition Against Water Privatisation |
| CAX | Coalition against Xenophobia |
| CCF | Concerned Citizens' Forum |
| COJ | City of Johannesburg |
| COSATU | Congress of South Africa Trade Unions |
| EWCCC | Evaton West Community Crisis Committee |
| GEAR | Growth, Employment and Redistribution (macro-economic policy) |
| ICR | ISCOR Concerned Residents |
| ISECC | Ironside-Sebokeng-Eatonside Crisis Committee |
| KCR | Katorus Concerned Residents |
| KCR2 | Kliptown Concerned Residents |
| LPM | Landless People's Movement |
| TCF | Tsakane Community Forum |
| MDM | Mass Democratic Movement |
| NEHAWU | National Education and Allied Workers Union |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| OFWCC | Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee |
| PAC | Pan Africanist Congress of Azania |
| PCR | Phiri Concerned Residents |
| PKRC | Pimville Klipspruit Residents' Committee |
| POA | Programme of Action |
| SACP | South African Communist Party |
| SAMWU | South African Municipal Workers Union |
| SANCO | South African National Civic Organisation |
| SANDF | South African National Defence Force |
| SASCO | South African Students Congress |
| SCR | Soweto Concerned Residents |
| SECC | Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee |
| SMI | Social Movements Indaba |
| SPRA | Schubart Park Residents Association |
| TCC | Thembalihle Crisis Committee |
| TCF | Tsakane Community Forum |
| TECRA | Tembisa Concerned Residents Association |
| UDF | United Democratic Front |
| VECC | Vaal Education Crisis Committee |
| VCF | Vaal Community Forum |
| WCCC | Working Class Crisis Committee |
| WSSD | World Summit on Sustainable Development |
| WCR | Wynberg Concerned Residents |
| Wits | University of the Witwatersrand |
| YLRf | Youth Learners Representative Forum |

TRANSITION'S CHILD: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ANTI-PRIVATISATION FORUM

by Dale McKinley

Some theoretical considerations

In broad theoretical terms, the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) can be classified under the rubric of 'social movement'. The immediate 'problem' here though, is that there are such incredible variations of definitions / understandings on offer (for example: Benford and Snow 2000, Cohen, 1985, Della Porta and Diana, 1999, Escobar and Alvarez 1992, Gibson 2006, Tilley 1985) that the term risks becoming simply a catch-all phrase, much like 'civil society', denuded of any consistently and coherently applied meaning. Additionally, some of these theoretical constructs tend to relate predominantly to the history and movement experience in the Western world, thus possessing an inherent bias and limited applicability on a more universal level.

It is thus important, specifically in relation to the South African context and the APF as a post-apartheid creation, to adopt some kind of foundational, 'social movement', theoretical understanding. In this respect, Ballard et al (2004: 2) provide the most applicable definition: "Social movements are ... politically and / or socially directed collectives, often involving multiple organisations and networks, focused on changing one or more elements of the social, political and economic system within which they are located." Such a definition incorporates associated analyses focusing on the triad of political opportunities, mobilising structures and framing processes (for example: Clark 2003, Keck and Sikkink 1998, McAdam et al 1997, Melucci 1989, Tarrow 1994) that constitute the key analytical framework of contemporary social movement scholarship. It can thus be applied universally as well as in the more specific realm of investigation into social movements at the community, national and regional levels.

The APF, like most of South Africa's post-apartheid social movements, is an organisation that cuts across all three dominant models or categories used to classify social movements; namely, "old" movements which directly challenged the state seeking reform or revolution, the notion of 'new' movements based on identity-oriented concerns whose target was less the state itself but rather society, and social change, more broadly, or the 'new-new' global movements which together challenge a single understanding of, and pathway for, globalisation (Ballard et al 2004: 19). Indeed, the APF does not fit neatly into any one of either the dominant analytical schema or assigned categories that constitute the main components of social movement theory.

Similarly, the APF is a movement whose creation, subsequent development and ongoing practical engagements and struggles do not conform to any particular social movement theorisations of formation, mobilisation and / or activity. While sharing many of the macro stimuli and characteristics (for example, neo-liberal globalisation and societal shifts from the realm of production to consumption) of more recent social movements all over the globe the APF has also been fundamentally shaped by the uniquely South African challenges it faces. This includes apartheid inspired constructions of race and class, the post-apartheid political dominance of a multi-faceted liberation movement which includes 'old' social movements and the exigencies of specifically crafted neo-liberal social and economic policies in the context of extreme socio-economic inequality and the energetic pursuit of a deracialised capitalism.

As such, the APF's social movement character and 'status' has been, and continues to be, driven by a mix of structural, distributional, consumptive and identity characteristics and pressures. In this sense, the APF is neither theoretically exceptional nor common (i.e. it does not fit neatly into the 'common' explanations and theorisations of social movements) in respect of the sources and corresponding explanations of its origins, development and activities. In the words of Ashwin Desai (2006), South Africa's "movements of the poor must be celebrated for being what they are: relatively small groupings of awakening antagonism in a sea of political apathy, nationalist ignorance and informal repression."

The context

When South Africa's first ever one-person, one-vote elections in 1994 resulted in an overwhelming victory for the African National Congress (ANC), it was the South African working class that was at the forefront of celebrating the arrival of a new democracy. After all, the ANC and its liberation movement allies were now in political control of the state thanks to the votes of those – mostly to be found in the ranks of the working class - who had, throughout South Africa's modern history, been denied the right of institutionalised democratic participation simply because of their racial categorisation.

Accompanying this however, there still remained a broad based (but ultimately mistaken) expectation amongst the working class that the new ANC state would immediately begin to pursue a more socialist - or at the least, radically redistributive - political economy. The basis upon which such expectation had been built derived from the militant, mass-based political and socio-economic struggles of that working class (predominantly in the form of unions and civic / community organisations) since the mid-1980s, alongside the continued 'socialist' rhetoric of the ANC itself.

Throughout the late 1980s and first two years of the 1990s, the ANC had consistently kept to its 'line' that, once in power, it would nationalise key sectors of the economy, would set about a radical redistribution of land and wealth and would ensure that the black working class became the main 'driver' in a 'people's' state dedicated to popular, participatory democracy. The ANC's adoption, in 1994, of the fairly radical, social-democratic Reconstruction & Development Programme (as its electoral platform) only served to fuel such expectations. This was despite the fact that the South African working class was itself already weakened, differentiated and divided as a result of the combined effects of a long-running capitalist crisis / recession and the apartheid state's divide-and-rule approach to the demands of unions as well as to those of the less easily controlled community / civic organisations (Murray, 1994: 156-158).

Even if it had been long apparent to some that the ANC was not going to follow even a proto-socialist developmental path once in power (McKinley, 1997), the bubble was clearly and publicly burst with the ANC state's 1996 unveiling of the neoliberal GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) macro-economic policy. GEAR codified the new government's commitment to macro-fiscal discipline, export-oriented growth, the privatisation and corporatisation of state assets, a flexible labour market, decreased levels of corporate taxation and full-scale integration into the logic of a globalised capitalist system of production and accumulation (Habib and Padayachee 2000). Just as crucially though, GEAR served to further catalyse a fundamental change in the ANC's (and thus the newly democratic state's) relationship with 'civil society' – from one that had historically been defined by a recognition / embracing of the leading political and ideological role and place of the forces of the broad working class, to one that now prioritised institutionalised corporatist relationships involving all social forces in the project of 'nation building' through political / ideological 'consensus'.

The organisational groundwork for this rightward ideological shift of the ANC had been laid soon after the ANC's return from exile in early 1990. Instead of supporting and strengthening the plethora of community / civic organisations (along with progressive unions) that had formed the backbone of the anti-apartheid struggle in the 1980s – and which had come together in the United Democratic Front (UDF) and its successor, the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) – the ANC called on all such structures to become part of ANC branches or to join the newly launched South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO) which, it was announced, would become the 'fourth' member of the Tripartite Alliance. Simultaneously, the ANC further formalised its political / organisational alliance with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the traditional 'party of the working class', the South African Communist Party (SACP), by setting up numerous (consultative) Alliance structures and drafting key leadership figures into its electoral list for all levels of government.

Consistent with the socio-political thrust of GEAR, the ANC government also set about forming national structures and adopting legislation to give institutional and legal form to its corporatist commitments (Ballard et al 2006: 397). All of this fit comfortably within the ANC government's push "for a more formalised civil society constituency as part of a developmental model where formally organised groups participate in official structures to claim public resources" and where "the role of such organised groups is constructed along the lines of official government programmes, without space to contest the fundamentals of those programmes" (Greenberg and Ndlovu, 2004: 32-33).

Cumulatively, these developments meant that by the mid-late 1990s the vast majority of what had constituted a South African civil society rooted in broad working class politics and struggles, and which had sustained the hope of millions for an anti-capitalist transformation of South African society, had largely 'disappeared'. Whether swallowed by the ANC, absorbed into other Tripartite Alliance structures, hobbled by the co-option of key leaders into the state and associated corporatist institutions or starved of financial resources, the bottom line was that the political and organisational terrain for active and militant resistance to the ANC's creeping neo-liberalism, elite deal making and wholesale acceptance of the institutionalised framework of bourgeois democracy had been (temporarily) contained.

It might well be argued (and indeed it has been), that the presence of COSATU and the SACP, as part of both a formal alliance with the ruling ANC party as well as the 'traditional left' in South Africa, necessarily translates into a vibrant 'working class civil society' capable of, and willing to, contest fundamentally the politics, policies and overall developmental agenda of the state¹. However, the reality is that the acceptance of an unequal and essentially subservient political / organisational relationship within an ANC-dominated alliance (McKinley 2001: 183-206) - which is supposed to act as the political master of the state - as well as participation in corporatist institutionalism, has served to tie organised workers and large numbers of community activists with historic ties to the alliance, into a false sense of ideological and strategic unity with the ANC / state and, even if to a much lesser extent, with corporate capital.

The logical result of these developments was a precipitous decline in the overall living standards of the working class simultaneous to a further material and social stratification within it.² Those who lost their formal jobs (alongside their families / networks) or whose labour became even more precarious were hit hardest by the huge escalations in the costs of basic services and a concomitant increase in the use of cost-recovery mechanisms such as water and electricity cut-offs. By the turn of the century, millions had experienced cut-offs and evictions as the result of the ANC's neo-liberal orgy (McDonald and Smith 2002, Cottle 2003) and were also being devastated by an HIV-AIDS epidemic, catalysed by official denialism and the state's refusal to provide de-commodified access to anti-retrovirals. As if all of this was not enough, the ANC state's capitalist-friendly land policies, which ensured that apartheid land ownership patterns remained virtually intact, meant that South Africa's long-suffering rural population continued to taste the ever more bitter fruits of labour exploitation and landlessness.

It was the cumulative result of such political / strategic choices and socio-economic realities, combined with the failure of the main traditional, organised working class forces to lead and sustain counter mobilisations and active class resistance, that eventually saw the rise of new social movements / community organisations³, at first in the main urban centres and then also in some rural areas. One of these movements was the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF).

¹ Such arguments have been vigorously proffered by successive leaders of both COSATU and the SACP ever since the early 1990s. While references are far too numerous to list here, most of the key documents / speeches that have been made public over the last ten years or so can be found on the respective websites of the two organisations: <http://www.cosatu.org.za> and <http://www.sacp.org.za>

² There are numerous studies and reports conducted over the last several years that confirm this state of affairs. For example, see: United Nations Development Programme (2009), *Human Development Report 2009, Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan); South African Cities Network (2006), 'State of the Cities Report 2006' - <http://www.sacities.net/knowledge/research/publications/395-socr2006>; University of South Africa (2004), 'Projection of Future Economic and Sociopolitical Trends in South Africa up to 2025', Research Report No. 351 (Pretoria: Bureau of Market Research); United Nations Development Programme (2003), *South Africa Human Development Report, The Challenge of Sustainable Development in South Africa: Unlocking People's Creativity* (London: Oxford University Press); Department of Social Development (2002), 'Transforming the Present, Protecting the Future: Report of the Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive System of Social Security for South Africa' (Pretoria)

³ Some of the main / key movements and organisations borne out of this period include: The Concerned Citizens Forum in Durban (which no longer exists but which spawned numerous community organisations that remain alive and active); the Anti-Privatisation Forum in Johannesburg (which continues to expand and now has nearly 30 affiliate community organizations); the Landless People's Movement (a national movement which went through a divisive 'split' with its original NGO partner - the National Land Committee - and has since weakened but remains active in some rural and peri-urban areas); Jubilee South Africa (a national movement centred around debt, reparations and social justice struggles / issues but which also experienced a split in its ranks in 2005 / 2006 which has since resulted in the existence of both Jubilee South Africa and a new formation - Umzabalazo we Jubilee); the Anti-Eviction Campaign based in Cape Town; and Abahlali base Mjondolo (a movement of shack dwellers mainly in / around Durban but which has begun to link up to other shack dweller organisations in other parts of the country)

A new 'home of struggle'

The initial / immediate impetus for the formation of the APF in July 2000, derived from increasing opposition by students, workers and the unemployed poor to a combination of neoliberal measures implemented by the City of Johannesburg (COJ) and the University of Witwatersrand (Wits). Outsourcing of work at Wits and COJ was resulting in large-scale job losses. Tens of thousands of poor community residents were being cut-off from their electricity and water supply as a result of COJ's cost-recovery model⁴, and thousands of others were being evicted from council and bond houses because they could no longer pay the rent / bond. Many of the activists that led the push towards the formal establishment of the APF had been active within various structures of the alliance and had tried to fight the implementation of neo-liberal policies from within those structures. The shutting down of such opposition and dissent (in many cases, through expulsion) provided further impetus for the establishment of the APF, with the overall organisational thrust being to unite the various grievances / struggles and mobilise support from broader community and other 'civil society' organisations. Thus was the APF born, embedded in historic and ongoing political and ideological struggles, yet not formally aligned to any political organisation or organised ideological tendency.

At its formation, the APF consisted of various individual activists (most with substantial histories of involvement in socialist political and union struggles), alongside the Wits branch of the South African Students Council, the Johannesburg Central Branch of the SACP, the South African Municipal Workers Union (Gauteng Province), the Wits Branch of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union, the Independent Municipal & Amalgamated Trade Union, Youth for Work; the South African National Civics Organisation (Gauteng Province), the Katorus Concerned Residents, the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, the Evaton Reconstruction Forum, Jubilee South Africa and five small socialist political groupings.

In its founding statement, the APF set out the key reason for its existence. Namely, "to bring together the collective struggles of poor / working class communities against the devastating effects of capitalist neo-liberalism in South Africa ... (so as) to effect fundamental shifts in the basic service / needs policies of the state so that the majority of South Africans can enjoy the full realisation of their basic human needs and rights". The longer-term vision of the APF is, "to bring about radical changes in the character and content of democracy in South Africa so that ordinary poor and working people can have popular and effective control over their lives."

The APF's first year of existence threw up many practical challenges and revealed, at an early stage in its development, that an independent, politically radical social movement was unpalatable to most of the leadership of those 'left' forces allied to the ANC. Without any meaningful financial resources, the movement was reliant on donations from individual activists, a small number of sympathisers and in-kind support from unions like SAMWU and a few progressive NGOs. The practical impact of this was the predominance of individual activists, dedicated unionists and members of political groupings in the initial 'activist forum' structure, resulting in limited involvement of the rank-and-file members of affiliated community organisations. Coupled to this, several of the organisations that had initially helped form the APF but which were all allied to the ANC-Alliance in one way or another⁵, pulled out of the APF during its first year of existence - the main stated reason for this being that the APF had become too 'anti-ANC' and 'anti-government'.

⁴ The City of Johannesburg had, in early 1998, publicly unveiled a strategic framework for the 'reconstruction' of the city, entitled 'IGOLI2002'. This framework, much like GEAR, resided comfortably within the parameters of classic neoliberal policy design and importantly, represented the first, local-level application of the ANC state's broader neoliberal-inspired developmental agenda in the post-1994 period.

⁵ These included: SAMWU (Gauteng), SACP Johannesburg Central Branch; NEHAWU (Wits Branch); and, SASCO (Wits Branch). IMATU, even though not allied to the ANC / Alliance, also pulled out, ostensibly because the APF had become too 'militant'.

Nonetheless, the APF did manage to mobilise community opposition - in Soweto, the East Rand and to a lesser extent in the Vaal region - to continuing service cut-offs and evictions and to support boycotts of payments for basic services. Importantly, the tactical approach to these early struggles was to first approach local and provincial government officials and relevant government-initiated community structures to try and raise community grievances and engage in a serious dialogue to find solutions. Unfortunately, but predictably, these efforts were rebuffed, resulting in the adoption of a second phase of struggle which saw the APF bringing the various community organisations together to come up with a set of common demands and a Programme of Action (POA) leading to intensified direct action campaigns in the communities themselves. This resulted in several marches targeting local government / political officials, the development of more concrete demands around service delivery and a greater public profile for the APF, under its own banner.

It was to the APF's longer-term credit (and indicative of the accumulated, pre and post-1994 organisation-building and struggle experience of core activists) that, early on, it developed a core set of objectives, demands and a recurrent programme of action (POA) by which to both guide its own activities and against which to measure failure / progress. Some of the key objectives included: a halt to all privatisation of public sector entities and return of public control and ownership; the co-ordination and intensification of anti-privatisation struggles in communities in Gauteng under the overall umbrella of the APF; the development of a programme of political education beyond local-level issues; the development / building of a broader layer of movement cadres; overcoming the conceptual and practical division between community and workplace; and, the development of domestic and international links / solidarities with like-minded movements and NGOs.

Key demands formulated included: the ending of all service cut-offs and evictions; implementation by government of free basic services for all (water, electricity, health, education and housing) alongside a progressive block tariff system; the scrapping of all service-related arrears in poor communities; increased national subsidisation of local government for basic service delivery; an end to mass retrenchments of workers; and, the implementation of meaningful negotiation / consultation between government and poor communities over policy decisions affecting those communities.

Confirming the APF's historical foundations in the myriad struggle tactics of earlier, mass-based civics, the basic POA developed consisted of: various forms of mass, direct action at local, provincial and national levels; regular mass community meetings; alliance-building and solidarity activities with community organisations outside of Gauteng as well as with organised labour; door-to-door campaigning in communities; submission of memoranda of demands and policy alternatives to all levels of government; and, regular, community-based report-back meetings.

By mid-2001, the APF had almost tripled its community affiliate membership to eight community organisations (all in Gauteng Province). The spirit of resistance to and negative impact of, government's service delivery policies had intensified within poor communities, with youth and pensioners making-up a large portion of the new membership in community organisations moving toward the APF. With this growth came the dire need for meaningful financial resources and in late 2001 the APF succeeded in securing core funding from the UK-based progressive funder, War on Want, for an initial period of three years. This allowed the APF to open-up its own offices (in COSATU House) and to hire two full-time employees (an organiser and administrator).

There was much debate within the APF over receiving donor funding issue, mostly centred around the potentially negative consequences on the political and organisational character of the movement. The eventual decision to move in this direction, supported by the vast majority of the APF's membership, was informed by a commitment to remain politically and organisationally independent (it was communicated to the funder that the APF would pull out of the funding agreement if there was any move to overtly influence / dictate) and by the fact that the APF was unable to source meaningful financial resources from its own poor constituency / membership as well as the reality of a complete unwillingness on the part of South African-based funding / donor agencies to seriously consider financial support to a movement such as the APF.

Paralleling these developments were changes in the structural character of the APF from its earlier reliance on an activist forum. Formal office bearers were elected (chair, secretary and treasurer) and an APF Council was formed which would act as the highest decision-making body and have representation from all community affiliates, political groupings and in which individual activists could also participate. In addition, a smaller Executive Committee was formed to deal with ongoing practical work and a range of sub-committees - e.g., education, organising and media - were setup to carry out specific tasks of the movement. The practical result was that the APF became much more capable of identifying and implementing a range of activities (both within APF and in communities) on a larger and more intensive scale.

The intent was to place community organisations at the organisational centre of the APF where organisational autonomy and difference would be respected in combination with more formal structures to ensure collective decision-making, a leadership core, accountability mechanisms and the primacy of a democratic process. In this respect, the APF was making a concerted attempt to break from past experiences in the liberation movement and some of the 'old' social movements, of a lack of internal democracy and the resultant bureaucratisation.

However, during this early period of the APF's existence and struggle, there was insufficient attention given over to the problem of relations of power in respect of gender. Not surprisingly, this resulted in a male-dominated leadership and a lack of focused integration and discussion of such power relations and how this impacted on the political and organisational character of the APF, to the detriment of the movement. The dominant tendency within the APF, following a well-worn 'tradition' amongst most left movements / parties, was (and to a lesser degree continues) to see 'gender issues' as an ad-hoc matter, not as central and necessary to forging an equality of participation and capacitation. Resistance to openly confront male chauvinism, both at a personal and structural level, has been one of the ongoing results.

Despite the often-times unwieldy character of the APF's ideological and socio-historical heterogeneity (which can also be viewed as a strength, an inherent barrier against enforced conformity) the movement held itself together chiefly because the dominant strategic approach to struggle was informed by a willingness to engage in concrete action, on the ground. While there was an acknowledgment of the danger of bureaucratisation, the introduction of formal structures provided the necessary space for an open contestation of a diverse set of views crucial to any internal organisational democracy, without which there would have been no sustained or stable basis upon which to move further into communities and orient the APF towards struggles taking place. The new slogan of the APF - 'Working Class Struggle in Action' - captured the spirit of a strategy that sought to ensure that the character of this struggle would not be predetermined by a set political / ideological programme (as had been the experience of many APF activists in the liberation movement) but rather defined and shaped by the APF's broad, working class constituency, in struggle, where, and as, they live.

Also crucial to the APF's early (and continued) survival was the fact that the movement stood on its own - the APF was not formed through an NGO, academic or political organisation, was neither cocooned within nor umbilically tied to the institutional and personal relationships that play themselves out in such organisations. This has allowed for ideological and tactical contestation as well as practical changes in the structure of the movement to be approached and engaged on an APF-specific terrain, not through organisational or individual proxies.

However, this did not mean that the perennial problems of ego, opportunism, sectarian political vanguardism and lack of organisational accountability were not experienced within the APF. It is just that when these problems arose, as they did from early on in the APF's existence, the APF was largely able to tackle them - with varying degrees of success, independently of whatever else was going on in other organisations and personal relationships on the South African 'left' - through its organic, democratic structures involving all affiliates / members. This character strand, a clear break from the dominant organisational forms of South Africa's past liberation movement and more contemporary political parties, served the APF well.

Growth, challenges and contradictions

By the end of 2001, the APF had established itself as one of the leading post-apartheid social movements in South Africa. Besides the formation of an allied organisation in Cape Town (under the same name), the presence of other social movements like the Concerned Citizens Forum (CCF) in Durban, the Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC) in Cape Town and the Landless People's Movement (LPM) at national level lent a more collective, less isolated quality to the struggles of the APF: The presence of these other movements with similar struggles provided a practical and political space for APF solidarity and association with them. Along with these movements, the APF participated in the activities around the World Conference against Racism (WCAR in Durban) in late August 2001, where all the weaknesses as well as potential strengths of the new social movements were on display. Similarly, while the APF-hosted National Exploratory Workshop in December 2001, which brought together a wide range of anti-privatisation forces, was an exciting event its potential was largely undermined by an unwillingness to get beyond political / ideological differences and the scourge of entrenched regional, organisational parochialism (a constant affliction of many of the post-1994 social movements that has greatly hampered the possibilities of unified action and meaningful solidarity).

Throughout the year 2002, the APF continued to grow and so too did the various service-related struggles in communities increase. Scores of mass marches and direct actions were initiated and / or supported, numerous educational initiatives started and sustained and legal support provided (both inside and outside the APF) as state repression against community protest intensified. However, it was events during and after the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in August-September 2002 that represented a watershed (both positive and negative) in the development of the APF (and other social movements) on a number of fronts:

- The range of activities engaged, especially the 'big march' on 31st August to the WSSD, gave a sense of common purpose and spirit of resistance to APF community affiliates and brought in a range of new community organisations and individuals into the APF;
- The splits with other ANC-aligned 'civil society' formations catalysed a clearer political and ideological 'identity' but also marked the end of any serious potential for alliances with such forces;
- New links were made with a few progressive NGOs and international organisations as well as potential funders;
- The problem of the 'big event' psychosis amongst the movements was highlighted, and thus the need to orient even further towards organisation building and grassroots activities;
- The opening up of opportunities to forge greater solidarity with other movements through the newly formed Social Movements Indaba (SMI); and,
- The development of unrealistic expectations of the APF, by its own leaders / members, fuelled by a misplaced sense of triumphalism and illusions in what could be achieved in relation to changes in state / government policies.

One of the most immediate 'results' of the WSSD events for the APF, was an even more intensified crackdown on dissent and protest by the state's repressive apparatus, combined with open hostility and public attacks by the ANC and its Alliance partners, COSATU and the SACP. In June 2003, and at the behest of the ANC, the APF was evicted from its offices in COSATU House, with the trade union federation leadership unapologetically attempting to circumvent the legal rules binding tenancy. It was this, combined with the consistent lack of any support / solidarity from the leadership of COSATU unions for community-led anti-privatisation struggles – with the occasional exception of the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) -, that directly impacted on the APF membership's longer-term, negative view of COSATU (and by extension, the SACP).

Internally, the 'inheritance' of the events around the WSSD, proved to be a mixed bag for the APF. Early in 2003, an interim APF Constitution was adopted (as a 'memorandum of understanding'). This was important because it gave the APF a foundational structure and purpose that was collectively decided-upon (a constant reference point) and which, over time, would prove to be invaluable in dealing with threats to collective democracy, ideological and organisational divisions, general sectarianism and lack of accountability. Further, in an attempt to adapt to the changing character of South African 'left' politics and the affiliate growth of the APF (by mid-2003 there were around 12-14 functioning affiliate members), regional structures were formed with the purpose of decentralising organisation and mobilisation and providing a more local-level focus which could better relate to ongoing struggles and needs. While this move saw the beginnings of more focused activities and struggles on the ground, in communities, it simultaneously revealed many weaknesses in respect of levels of community organisation and the uneven state of development of APF cadres.

By late 2003, the more specific struggles around water were given a boost with the APF-led formation of the Coalition Against Water Privatisation (CAWP), which was an attempt to bring together community organisations, progressive NGOs, academics and unions to forge a broad united front in the struggle against water privatisation (with a specific focus on pre-paid water meters). For the next two years, it was CAWP, alongside the APF, that was at the forefront of fighting the 'water wars' that erupted in the communities of Orange Farm and Phiri through 'Operation Vulamanzi' ('Water for All') – a campaign which re-appropriated the 1980s struggle tactic of physically bypassing certain water 'control' measures, in order to freely access water and, in the process, strike a grassroots blow for the immediate 'decommodification' of water and simultaneous self-empowerment of the community.

Not surprisingly, these struggles were vigorously and violently suppressed and resulted in numerous legal cases having to be fought. Besides the more immediate financial pressures that these developments placed on the APF / CAWP as a result of endless legal battles, the sustained repression and saturation propaganda by government / Johannesburg Water, took its toll on APF / CAWP community activists / members. As a result, direct physical resistance waned and tactics shifted to a more educational / legal approach which included support for a constitutional rights legal challenge to pre-paid water meters and the limited provision – by the state - of free basic water to poor communities.

The APF held its first Annual General Meeting (AGM) in early 2004 - with a total of 19 community affiliates in attendance - where proceedings were dominated by intense discussion and debate around the approach to electoral politics (in the context of upcoming national elections) as well as whether or not the movement should formally adopt socialism as its goal. A majority decided that the APF should not enter into the electoral arena, noting that this was a tactical decision. While not, in principle, against participation in bourgeois elections, the majority felt that the time was not now and the APF's resources and energies should be dedicated to rebuilding fighting organisations on the ground and further exposing communities to the failures of ANC government policies, the nature of the ANC's politics and the sources of socio-economic problems for the poor.

While socialism was adopted as the long-term vision and goal of the APF this was not accompanied by any serious interrogation of what this might concretely mean for the APF or whether or not there was a common understanding amongst members / affiliates as to the nature / character of socialism. One of the more useful 'products' of the APF's decision on electoral politics was the development of a local government platform, the result of a lengthy series of participatory meetings and workshops involving most of its active membership. The platform was a key component of the APF's mobilisation activities leading up to the 2005 local government elections. Since that time, it has acted as the APF's Manifesto on key problems and alternatives at local government level.

Despite the growth of the APF and the range of community struggles that had taken place since the WSSD, there were, by mid-2005, clear signs of a developing political and organisational crisis in the APF. The more general crisis stemmed from the APF getting caught up in the 'moment', with too much focus and energy placed on political / ideological debate (and thus the organisational form of APF), that did not involve the majority of membership but rather mostly those from the political groupings as well as individual activists-intellectuals. Coupled to this was a widespread tendency amongst some influential APF activists, to believe that large-scale mobilisations, media coverage and attendance at international conferences or meetings were the main indicators of the APF's 'success' and growing stature and influence in broader society and amongst the South African and international 'left'.

More specifically though, the crisis centred around growing concerns of many community affiliates related to a lack of accountability and undemocratic behaviour of political groupings in the APF, with two leading members of one of these groups also being the only two full-time employees of the movement (thus having privileged access to membership and resources). The enduring political / strategic approach of these groupings – i.e., to act as the 'political vanguard' of the APF so as to transform it into a leading component of a desired new political entity – usually conceived as a Mass Workers Party – was practically translated into making use of APF resources and employed positions to push such an agenda and to elevate 'leadership' into supra-organisational positions. The unfortunate 'methodology' that accompanied this political agenda was to attack (both personally and politically) anyone who stood against such a 'line' and to attempt to organisationally and politically impose their own nascent independent political party formation to contest local government elections – the Operation Khanyisa Movement⁶ - onto the APF as a whole.

⁶ The choice of the name 'Operation Khanyisa Movement' came from the campaign of the same name (literally meaning, 'To Turn On') originally implemented by one of the APF's first community affiliates – the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC) – to reconnect the electricity supplies of community residents which had either been cut-off (as a result of non-payment) or drastically reduced due to the installation of pre-paid meters.

The combined results of this situation were first, a split within the APF's oldest and largest affiliate, the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee⁷, and subsequently an internal battle within the APF involving the political groupings and a small number of affiliates on the one 'side' and the rest of the affiliates and individual activists on the other 'side'. While this battle was fundamentally about respect for democracy and accountability within the APF, it unfortunately produced extremely negative personalisation of issues and problems as well as unnecessary labelling and divisive behaviour. All of this revealed a number of weaknesses within the APF: the 'pop star' tendencies of some of the leadership and a growing intolerance of criticism from within the movement; an all-too-readily employed tendency to use the collective resources and organisational processes of the movement for more narrow political / ideological agendas; and, the general political and ideological under-development of a second layer of activists / cadres despite the fact that the APF arguably possessed the most developed organisational structure, internal democracy and mobilisation programme of all of the post-apartheid social movements in South Africa.

The broader context of what was happening in other social movements added fuel to the fire. By the beginning of 2006, intense, internecine personal, political and organisational battles had resulted in the effective collapse of the CCF, the partial disintegration of the LPM and the AEC and the splitting of Jubilee South Africa. These developments resulted in a dominant tendency amongst leading social movement activists / intellectuals (and many sympathisers and supporters) – with the APF being no exception – to see the period as one of a 'down-turn' in struggle. While such a perspective was understandable, the fact is that the 'down-turn' was much more associated with the movements themselves, not actual struggles on the ground, which continued to take place across the country in hundreds of poor communities (with little accompanying media coverage and / or more direct involvement of the movements themselves). One of the most crucial, cumulative outcomes of this was a 'turning-inwards' of the social movement 'left', with many experienced activists simply leaving movements in frustration and / or disgust (and again, the APF was no exception).

Nonetheless, it was the existence and conscious nurturing of democratic structures and space within the APF, combined with the general willingness of the majority of membership to engage in open / honest debate and polemics that prevented the APF from disintegrating / splitting. In addition to the employment of a new organiser, an entirely new set of leaders were elected democratically and transparently (with a third of that leadership now comprising women activists) after much heated debate around the character and context of the crisis and open contestation for all office bearer positions at the 2006 AGM. The movement had stood firm and was able to emerge intact, if a bit battered and bruised.

Advances, setbacks and eventual implosion

For the remainder of 2006 and during 2007 and 2008, the APF experienced a period of political and organisational consolidation (and repair). The main practical examples of this were:

- New policies governing individual and affiliate behaviour;
- Greater accountability of APF leadership through expansion of the office bearer collective (to include regional and sub-committee coordinators);
- Completion of an affiliate audit to identify political and organisational weaknesses and strengths - and thus locate areas in need of intervention and support - as well as expose 'paper' affiliates (i.e., those without any meaningful democratic leadership, structure and process);
- Greater accountability and transparency in relation to movement expenditure and use of resources;
- A shift away from the 'big event' approach to a greater focus on systematic organising for struggle at the community level.

Time was also given over for membership to:

- Re-look at objective realities and the success / failure of adopted tactics;
 - Assess the underlying reasons for the 'down-turn' in practical struggles within APF organised communities;
 - Discuss the 'lessons' emanating from the disintegration and divisions within other movements;
 - Debate and discuss the changed balance of forces within the state, the ANC-led Alliance and broader society.
- Even though such internal reflection and consolidation took substantial time and energy, there were positive outcomes on the practical front of struggle. One of the most important shifts was to 'marry' direct action and organising /

mobilisation to the main struggle in a particular community. This allowed for a more focused approach to initiating and sustaining struggles in the context of the APF's human and resource constraints and produced a broadening out of some affiliates to encompass surrounding informal / shack settlements. As a result, the APF was able to reach out to other communities such as Queenstown (Eastern Cape), Rammolutsi (Free State) and Khutsong (North West) where there was an identified desire for linkages and practical support as well as develop and deploy organising teams (through a resuscitated Organiser's Forum) in order to focus collective energies / resources and build a social base for future direct action.

New areas of APF work-activism undertaken included;

- HIV-Aids research in targeted communities, linked to issues of service delivery and living conditions;
- Research on pre-paid water meters with links to the previously instituted legal action to test constitutional rights to water;
- Beginning to address and mobilise around, environmental degradation in communities and workplaces;
- Furthering practical solidarities with retrenched workers.

Additionally, women activists within the APF formed a 'Women's Forum', entitled Remmoho – 'All of us together'. The forum's goal was to act as a force for change in the APF and social movements – first by developing an analysis of how violence against, or attitudes towards, women is the result of the use of power dynamics between men and women, and then by taking this analysis and the parallel struggle against violence against women into the APF and other social movements. Although this was an extremely positive development in general terms, the formation of Remmoho sparked some intense debate within the APF, the dominant character of which revealed the specific extent to which many APF members-activists remained rooted in a socially conservative gender mind-set and practice.

On the more external-solidarity front, the APF continued to be the leading driver behind the SMI throughout 2007-2008. Despite its own internal challenges alongside the general weaknesses within / amongst social movements across the country, the APF actively participated in the various Social Forum meetings and processes, forming the largest contingent from South Africa to the 2007 World Social Forum held in Nairobi, Kenya and providing human and material support to the Southern African Social Forum. Various APF community activists also continued to conduct international solidarity and fund-raising trips, especially as part of the Coalition against Water Privatisation and its ongoing constitutional rights legal case, while the APF hosted several international solidarity groups and activists-researchers.

In 2008 and in response to the widespread xenophobic attacks in Gauteng (and other parts of the country), the APF - through the SMI - became the leading organisation in the Coalition against Xenophobia (CAX). Even though CAX was able to successfully organise a large march in Johannesburg and undertake a series of educational and other mobilisation events in conjunction with an impressive range of NGOs and immigrant organisations, the xenophobic attacks - and subsequent responses - exposed contradictions between the APF's macro anti-xenophobic politics and the actual attitudes and practice of some of its community members and constituent affiliate organisations. In turn this raised important but ultimately limited discussions within the APF (and left social movements more broadly) about the links between the inherently nationalist framing of much of the APF's tactical 'engagements' with, and demands of, the state around basic services and the incubation of xenophobic attitudes and practices.

Additionally, the APF also had to confront the cumulative impact of the factionalist politics within the ruling ANC which saw the demise of former ANC and South African President Mbeki and the subsequent rise to power of Jacob Zuma (with the backing of COSATU and the SACP) after the ANC's Polokwane Congress in late 2007. While the APF consciously engaged throughout 2008-2009 within its ranks in an ongoing debate centred on the ideological content and political character of the Zuma-led power-block, there was little doubt that at the community level the left-populist rhetoric of Zuma – combined with the previously intense opposition to the Mbeki regime – created both short-term confusion and a variegated 'turn' away from independent movement-community politics and struggle towards institutionalised party politics and a creeping (Zuma-inspired) social conservatism. Coupled to this was the ever-intensifying, systemic socio-economic crisis that has been at the heart of South Africa's highly unequal development programme since 1994 whose dominant character is not focused on the most basic foundation of human needs and services, thus failing to benefit the vast majority of its citizens. This maldevelopment, combined with parallel failures of the ANC-run state under the new Zuma regime to deliver on its renewed promises of basic service provision and work opportunities to the poor, forced much of the APF's constituency / membership into a narrower survivalist mode than ever before.

⁷ The split resulted in the formation of a second community organisation in Soweto – the Soweto Concerned Residents Committee (SCR). The SCR almost immediately applied for formal affiliation to the APF, but it took over a year for this to happen due to consistent, and at times virulent, opposition from the SECC as well as organisational confusion with the SCR. The SCR did finally gain affiliate status in early 2006 and since that time, both the SCR and SECC have remained within the APF fold.

It is crucial to note that the social base of movements such as the APF was always dominated by the ‘other’ working class – i.e., casualised workers, those in the ‘informal sector’, the unemployed and more particularly, unemployed women. In classical ‘left’ parlance, for movements such as the APF, an extended and flexible ‘community’ of work and life came to replace the formal ‘workplace’ as the epicentre of organising collective resistance to capitalist (neoliberal) political, productive and social relations. However, since the vast majority of those in the kind of ‘communities’ that constituted the APF represented different strata within the working class, strata whose labour / work cannot be formally ‘measured’ and thus organised on a more explicit ‘capital-labour’ relational nexus, they were often seen or treated (by the left in general) as secondary to the material and political / organisational positionality of formal, organised workers. This not only made the possibilities of enjoining practical and political working class solidarities and struggles extremely difficult for the APF at a time of intensified material deprivation and political-ideological confusion, but also engendered a politics that easily gravitated towards a mode of individualism and entrepreneurial engagement.

While these crises and failures spawned a general upsurge in community struggles around ‘service delivery’ failures and frustrations (most notably involving housing issues in informal / shack settlements) throughout the 2007-2010 period, the APF was mostly unable to link up with and help organiser support such struggles, although there were notable exceptions as noted earlier. Largely taken up with trying to support and sustain existing struggles and community affiliates, the APF faced a situation where (small but increasing?) numbers of its members came to see and treat its limited financial resources (largely the result of dwindling financial support derived from funders) and its organisational spaces / processes as a means for their personal survival or aggrandisement. This was further catalysed by the loss of experienced activists - due predominately to personal circumstances, job offers and life choices⁸- combined with the renewed impact of continued attempts by coercive forces of the state to crush and / or co-opt community dissent.

The APF suffered a huge setback in 2009, when its full-time organiser, the organiser for CAWP, as well as the APF Johannesburg regional organiser, (all male) were involved in an almost year-long internal APF disciplinary process for sexual misconduct that caused massive disruption to - and division within - the APF and its affiliates. Besides the eventual expulsion of all three men (which translated into the loss of the APF’s core organising capacity), the personal, political and organisational fall-out was a massive body blow to the movement, effectively paralysing its practical struggles and organisational coherence. At its last AGM in early 2010, which was dominated by personal attacks, bickering and bitterly contested leadership elections, two co-founders and long-standing leaders of the APF stepped down. Although a new set of office bearers was elected at the AGM, within a few months the APF was effectively bankrupt – with its fairly sizeable financial reserves and donor funds having been squandered or misused - and its democratic structures and processes lay in tatters. A little more than ten years after its formation, the APF had, for all intents and purposes, ceased to exist as a functioning social movement.

A personal reflection

If there was a consistent ‘Achilles’ Heel’ of social movements like the APF, it was the accumulation of unrealistic and misplaced expectations of singular (or dominant) leadership of socio-political struggles within poor communities and a consistent lack of appreciation of the practical means (both in relation to human and financial resources) to create and sustain such a leadership role. It was a serious weakness and one which, unfortunately, remains impregnated in the general psyche of many leading (left) movement activists and general memberships and which can only and always lead to disillusionment / disappointment and rationalisations for turning social movements into pre-figured vanguardist political entities or ready-made ‘ATM’s’⁹ to access financial resources. However, it is no good to simply pronounce on these problems without also considering what is required in the future to adequately respond to, engage with, and potentially ‘solve’, them. In other words, it is wrong to assume that movements like the APF moved in some sort of linear, constantly growing, more resourced and perennially progressive direction. A movement can be ‘in touch’ with the mood of the ‘mass’ and can be able to define the political and socio-economic conditions and subsequent impact on poor communities, but if it does not have serious and committed activists to mobilise / manage resources, to enjoin open debate and discussion, to support / sustain organisation within communities and who respect democratic structures and collective decisions, then the ability to do so is not much more than an intellectual exercise. Is this not the fundamental lesson to be learnt from the brief history of South Africa’s post-apartheid social movements, including the APF?

⁸ It is instructive to note that over the ten full years of its existence the APF produced a sizeable number of well trained and skilled cadres through its consistent programmes and workshops on political education, organising, writing, media-communication and computer skills. One ‘unfortunate’ result of this was that many of these cadres became prime targets of various NGOs, local government institutions and academic-research outfits. Not surprisingly, the APF lost most of these cadres when they got formal jobs.

⁹ ‘ATM’ stands for ‘Automated Teller Machines’

Without a sustainable core of dedicated, principled and disciplined activists there is little chance any social movement can hope to overcome either the internal or external contextual problems / challenges faced. Meeting this challenge is not solely a matter of strategic or tactical vision in relation to the ‘objective conditions’, having the ‘correct’ political programme, successful recruitment or being able to better mobilise and propagate ideas. It is the (subjective) quality and (objective) quantity of ‘human resources’ thrown up by the ongoing struggles that take place, and will continue to take place, with or without the presence of a movement like the APF was, that is central to the effective future of left social movements and accompanying community struggles. Tied to this, the base character, identity and vision of any meaningful social movement must be determined and shaped by the primacy of what its constituency / members confront and thus desire to change. Similarly, in which its theoretical and / or strategic vision remains true to those realities but also is able to move beyond them if conditions and contexts shift accordingly. Further, movements must find new and creative ways to create collective solidarities – human, organisational and political / ideological – in both their own constituencies and in respect of the broader ‘community of the oppressed. Without this, they are doomed to, at best, remain an occasionally effective ‘nuisance’; at worst, to become irrelevant to all but those who simply are seeking a means to further their own political and / or personal agendas.

In spite of the above, the impact of the APF during its existence, given the limited timeframe, the accumulated challenges of ‘liberation movement’ loyalties and the serious lack of human and material resources - was multifaceted and substantial:

- It was at the forefront of: creating a new organisational ‘voice’ for those that had been socially, economically and politically marginalised;
- It instilled a new sense of collective activism and demand for social / political redress amongst poor communities;
- It helped shift the terrain of political and social engagement and debate in South African society as a whole and in the process, expand the boundaries of democratic politics and representation beyond the status quo framework;
- It managed to effect shifts of some specific socio-economic policies in favour of the poor.

The APF’s relevance stemmed from the reality of the ANC state’s betrayal of the broad working class (i.e., inclusive of the underemployed and unemployed), both organisationally and politically. Indeed, its very existence was a direct result of this and the accompanying capitalist neo-liberalism that was subsequently pursued. Its role was to (partially) fill the organisational and political / ideological vacuum that had been created, so as to offer a new avenue for the voices and struggles of the poor and a means to impact on the most basic needs of the poor majority through mass mobilisation / action, organisational coherence, political engagement, educational initiatives and the creation of a new consciousness of the possibilities of radical change.

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EXTRACTS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH APF LEADERS AND ACTIVISTS

Personal politicisation and activism

"When I was still with TSA [Technikon South Africa], politics was, I don't know, didn't mean anything to me, you know I was joining them because I know most of the time when they wanted our votes, they would invite us and, truly speaking, others would even offer to give you money. And because you're a student and you don't even know how these things work you will accept ...one of the guys that recruited me is a member of the ANC, he stays in Pimville; he's like six houses from where I used to stay. So because we used the same train in the morning, I will go with him and he will introduce me to some people there ... so after dropping out, then I attended the first meeting with the SECC - they were talking about, they were campaigning around education. They invited us again to regular meetings of PKRC. Okay, then there was no more SECC, it was Pimville Klipspruit Residents Committee. So they say, 'You must come to PKRC, this is where you know you will talk about your problems as members of the community'. In that meeting we participated because we are asking questions, we wanted clarity and so we went again and the second meeting that is where I was elected the chairperson. For me, it was like, "Okay, I mean really..." - I felt like this is a huge task and I explained, 'Actually, I don't think I am really interested in these things and my interest is in going to school, you know I think these things are going to slow me down'. And so he [PKRC organiser Bongani Lubisi] said. 'No, just give it a month and you see how it goes'. So he would collect me, like, when there are meetings, when there are workshops and so that is how it started." **Teboho Mashota**

"I was involved with the Justice and Peace Commission for the Catholic Bishops Conference, and then the conditions we were living in the black townships, and in 1983 when there was a strike against the Tricameral Parliament elections the call that was taken by UDF against the elections of the Tricameral Parliament - black parliament, the black local authorities. I became more involved in politics and then 1984 there was an uprising in the Vaal but I was not in the leadership of the '84 [uprising] but I was part of the community by participating and giving out pamphlets and attending meetings. In 1984, after the arrest of the leaders, the Tricameral, Delmas trial, and other trials that took place, I became elected in 1985 as a chairperson of the Vaal Education Crisis Committee. Now that's how I became involved in politics." **Richard Mokolo**

"When I was still with my parents in 1976 when it began, Sebokeng, Zone 12, I was still working in Meyerton in the factory. So it is whereby I started with the ANC where we were fighting the June 16 system of Afrikaans in the schools and I was there and my younger brother unfortunately was been killed by then ... I started there and that is why when I get to Zone 3, I started the street committees. I was so impressed to go with them because I knew the struggle, where does it come from. In 1980 I joined SANCO, where we were busy with the street committees in 1984 as whereby on the 3rd of September there was this Asinamali Campaign in the Vaal whereby a lot of people have been killed in the shops when it burned down. I was part of that. That is where I decided to be a strong leader in the community." **Mammy Tladi**

"I worked for a bakery in Parktown North which was called 'Mr Crusty' for two years. Then after two years I worked as a cashier at Clicks in Commissioner Street. And I applied for admittance at Khanya College, well, that time it was still providing pre-university college. And because you know KZN, where I was studying there, education was very inferior, so it was very difficult to get like full entrance at Wits University, so Khanya College played a role of bridging the gap between university and high school. And it was quite a challenge because like the education that I got was like far different and was very low in such a way that at Khanya College I felt lost. Wits University became worse. And there was a point where I was feeling, 'Oh maybe am I supposed to be here, maybe I will make the statistics of drop-outs'. But I was very adamant and I told myself I don't want to be a drop-out. I failed my first year dismally because I could not understand what was happening, the lecturers, I didn't have a clue of what was happening around me. That is why I made the decision that I was going to be part of the student movement where maybe I will be able to get a sense of what is happening in the world. And I became part of SASCO (South African Students Congress Organisation) since 1995. Then 1997 I stood for SRC (Students Representative Council) elections, but we didn't win ... but that helped me a lot because then I actually got exposed to what was happening around me, even in the community where I lived in. At that time I was, I think around 1996-97, 98 I was married and living in Diepkloof, but Zone 2. My parent's house is in Zone 5. So I lived in Zone 2. And the education that I was getting, you know through SASCO in some conferences and in some seminars then I became conscious and always wanted to be helping around where I lived. And when there were problems in the community people will knock at my door and say 'Virginia, we have a

problem, they have cut off our electricity and, you know, the street lights are not working’. Then I got able to know where to go and who to talk to, just to be able to help people. Even with issues of kids that are being abused by their parents and sometimes partners that are being abused by their partners would always knock. I became so like a social worker of the streets and maybe more than one street as well. In 1999 we heard Eskom was switching off electricity and the first meeting I remember was at the back yard of my house that I was living in and people spoke about their problems and all that. And then I got a sense of where the community is and we started now engaging councillors and it was clear that the problem is not only for Diepkloof Zone 2 but for the whole Diepkloof. Then we formed and it was called the Diepkloof Concerned Residents and ... that is how I met Trevor and then we combined all the concerned residents because it was not only Diepkloof Concerned Residents there was also Zola Concerned Residents, Pimville Concerned Residents and we formed the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee after a series of marches, protests and, you know, talking to the media about the problem. So basically that’s how I sort of like became involved in activism.”

Virginia Setshedi

“I grew up in a family that was political. At least my father was the first General Secretary of the revived Natal Indian Congress in the 70’s in Durban. But well, just after I was born [he was] threatened with banning, then left the NIC but still maintained links. So I grew up in a family that was connected politically and who was always active. And then to my own experience as a black South African growing up under apartheid, feeling oppression in various ways and being conscientised then through that experience and the fact that these things were always being spoken about around me, things always being organised, fought against and even South African history also being taught to me by my dad and friends. My parents were at University at medical school in Natal in the 70’s. So there was also the influence of their friends who were from the BC Black Consciousness movement ... but I only really became involved in organisations at organisation level in 1989 / 1990 when the ANC was started, when I started to know the ANC was going to be unbanned, political prisoners were going to be released. I was in Standard 9 and in matric at the time and getting involved in those initial establishments of ANC branches, ANC Youth League branches, getting involved in that early period in the ‘90s and initially really throwing my weight behind the first elections, setting up our own ANC branches in Durban Western areas which was also a good learning experience to me - I was a very excited young person at the time. People in our branch, in our ANC Youth League branch, I was general Secretary and Malusi Gigaba was the chairperson at the time, and then people in the branch, like Alec Erwin, Jahendra, Jay Naidoo, small Jay, Ismael Meer, Fatima Meer, Farouk Meer. So I mean a lot of people I looked up to growing up ... but I also learnt very quickly of the dangers with being so in awe of these big names and not knowing for myself and following rather than trying to think through for myself. And at the same time going to the University Durban Westville I joined the South African National Students Congress and then when I came to Wits at that time, there was also the merger happening between NUSAS and SASCO and I became a member of SASCO.”

Prishani Naidoo

“There were certain kind of moments where, around Standard 7, Standard 8 we tried to form an AZASM branch and has a little bit of friction with people that I worked with in that school who were not keen on seeing me in AZAPO, AZASM, gain presence within Lenasia, which they hadn’t at the time. I was also kind of roped in by a guy who has passed on now, Haroon Vally, to work on the Conference for Democratic Future. I mean I really didn’t do that much, kind of helped with kind of some of the coordination for accommodation but it was an important kind of moment for me because I think it was within the Conference for a Democratic Future, and particularly in the kind of push from the side of Congress for the adoption of the, I think it was the Organisation of African Unity, which was basically the kind of document that secured the buy-in of the Congress movement into this document is what set the stage for the acceptance of the negotiated process ... anyway, that moment was an important one for me just in kind of situating myself in terms of a political trajectory that was unfolding around the negotiated, or toward a negotiated settlement. I was quite immature at the time and my kind of orientation to it kind of reflected more a family badge than actually a kind of a deep orientation to the actual questions that were being engaged with. Nevertheless I kind of had grown out of a political tradition whose one of its fundamental premises was ‘non collaboration with the oppressor and his political instruments’ which was one of those phrases which I may have gotten wrong but it was somewhere there in the Azanian People’s Manifesto. And at the very least, I mean, I sort of read the transition period through the lens of that premise. But I think there was a lot also that was happening ... you also have to remember that I belonged to a kind of weird generation and a particular class of a generation who grew up with my dad telling me shit like you know, ‘One day my son when you are old enough, you know what I mean you are going to the bush’; so you sort of have a particular idea of a kind of cathartic confrontation you know what I mean, that is now no longer and that the very injustices that were meant to be sorted out within that are going to fall by the way of compromise.”

Ahmed Veriava

“So in terms of my own kind of development ... the points or the line of influence of my kind of political development, I’d always been somewhat sceptical of the kind of left or, as it moves away from nationalism which it never really ever gets away from, the kind of left tradition that was associated with the congress movement that probably in its best expression was maybe the Communist Party at a particular point, although I’m not really sure of that. I have always been kind of critical of that narrative of the communist hypothesis, of the narrative of a communist movement so I think part of, if I am little bit kind to myself, part of what we were doing in SASCO in the kind of twin context of both a kind of pragmatism that supposedly were to define how we were to approach this period of the transition as well as the broader global context in which communist movements all over the world were somewhat on the retreat, was also to attempt to kind of re-imagine what that meant to us or being a communist now and what those kind of struggles meant for us here in South Africa. And I think also from around ‘99 you see the kind of emergence of that kind of Seattle movement, but also partly influenced by a post structuralist canon and the critique of epistemological certainties of mainstream left movements, there was at least for me at the time the kind of need to give that some kind of practical form to what we were doing on campus.”

Ahmed Veriava

“I arrived in the United States, I have to be totally honest and say I was a very un-politicised young man, I didn’t really know much about the United States at all, I didn’t know much about world politics, my only experience was growing up in Rhodesia, in Zimbabwe. It was very quick with the year that I arrived in the United States; it was the year Ronald Reagan was elected as President, so politically in the United States things started happening in terms of ideological opposition particularly the war in Central America and against Nicaragua which had overthrown a dictatorship and I quickly started - through both studying at university and including meeting a range of people - I quickly became quite aware of what was going on in terms of US imperialism and foreign policy and that is how my activism started. My very first joining of an organisation was with a Central America solidarity group that was in solidarity with the Nicaraguans, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and defending their right to make a social and political revolution and opposing American political and military involvement. And it was through that that broadened out throughout the 1980’s and a whole range of other areas including local anti-racist work against organisations like the Ku Klux Klan, with native Americans, working with native Americans and also then becoming seriously involved from the mid-1980s on in the anti-apartheid struggle and so my activism started, in some way shaped by a domestic US and sort of America’s kind of agenda and then broadened out from there to a global and international one and then made its way back to Sub-Saharan Africa eventually.”

Dale McKinley

Privatisation: meaning and context

“... for me in particular privatisation means that the control and ownership of the economy becomes sort of expanded for the capitalist group... they now have more access and more control over the economic resources of a country and that is one of the reasons why I think privatisation is a very problematic sort of issue for the working class because the state or... it wouldn’t have the necessary resources to actually transform the economy in the interest of the working class and the poor. Because now most of that wealth is now transferred to private, to the capitalists, and their main concern would be to maximize profits and profits are made at the expense of the working class and the poor and it should be opposed at all costs.”

John Appolis

“It was something that really reflected a massive attack against the working class and part of the dismantling of organisations. It went alongside, I think, the political agenda which was in a sense the weakening of mass organisations and part of the way this weakening was unfolding was through the privatisation processes. For me it became a very real thing and one could actually see it, the impact of it.”

Nina Benjamin

“There was lack of serious delivery and the development that came under the name of job creation development in the community. Through water pre-paid meters is where I have realised that the community of Orange Farm is going to suffer and then we conducted the research to see because there was SANCO then and what SANCO is doing about these pre- paid meters, SANCO was no longer representing the people but they became part of the system. And then I realised that there is no structure that is representing the people anymore and then there was a lot of electricity cut offs taking place in Orange Farm and you see SANCO members being sub-contracted or companies like Eskom cutting off electricity for the people. Now we wanted to build the organisation that will defend the poor people who cannot afford to buy pre-paid electricity card and also to maintain the access [to] water, to pre-paid meters. That is how we started realising that all this pre-paid system of electricity and water is pure privatisation of basic services. There is this thing of public sector, public assets, ‘public’, ‘public’ and then public is under the control of the state, like the public hospitals. Everything we knew was that this is ‘public’, ‘public’, ‘public’. When they introduced these pre-paid meters and it also became more clear when the water supply in Orange Farm is directed to Johannesburg Water and then Johannesburg

Water registered as a Pty Ltd realising that now Pty Ltd is a company and managed by Suez Lyonnaise, a multinational corporate from France and then we realised that no, people are making profit out of basic services.” **Richard Mokolo**

“Mine was a lot of baggage you know because I felt this was part of the ANC and the Communist Party’s move away from socialism. So this was part of a broader ... or a bigger critique of what was going on. So in a way privatisation was a specific concrete and in fact actionable, campaign-able issue. So to just give you an idea, you know when we started fighting around electricity in Soweto, this happened in an theoretical way; we used to meet in Soweto sometimes in town with this Campaign against Neo-liberalism in Southern Africa, George Dor and them, quite theoretical, you know. And after a while we were getting frustrated so we were saying, ‘What is the issue that we could take up concretely?’, so we discussed and said, ‘Electricity’. There was a broader critique so it wasn’t these days you get all these protests, you know people are fighting for electricity, water so some would call it spontaneous, but my own involvement you know was an intersection of a theoretical critique, a broader political critique with concrete issues which affected the masses. So from day one it was ideologically loaded so to speak.” **Trevor Ngwane**

“Through my involvement within SECC [Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee] you could see there was a much bigger challenge ... the question was, the promises that they made back in ’94 saying, ‘You’re going to get free housing’ and so forth and you could see the entities are privatised - it wasn’t going to be possible for our government to render the services to the people. And it became an issue to say, well, if we are just going to continue stopping Eskom from disconnecting or any other services which we are supposed to be getting for free ... it has to be a bigger role that we need to play; you know we can stop them through actions in the street and so forth, but I mean if the deals and ... the law in place to say they can go ahead and privatise then we are fighting a futile journey. We need to make sure we change all of those and it was an issue for me, to say, well not only does it disturb my personal life but it also gives the government control on how I have to live as a person, how to use your electricity, how to use your water, how to use all the other services. So it became an issue of saying well as much as we are saying we are politically free but there is a way that they can be able to control a life.” **Silumko Radebe**

“I think from around ’96 when the issue of privatisation kind of enters both the political language of the ANC, well I mean it comes before but ... some kind of functional orientation to implementing certain privatisation programmes and at the same time as it’s becoming kind of an increasingly important concept in the left, you know a kind of point of opposition, as something that represents a political wrong that we need to mobilise in order to ensure that it does not happen or if it does, to make sure that it cannot work in some sense. And I do think though that the kind of narrative of privatisation also has, and why neo liberalism, privatisation gets such symbolic importance is in terms of the lefts’ object to be fought against, also needs to be read in terms of kind of the broader transformations within the communist movement, internationally. So, neo-liberalism, it’s one of those strange concepts that both includes capitalism itself and is a kind of particularly more devastating aspect of capitalism, and I think it partly gained some of its currency in relation to the attempt of the real left, to kind of regroup after a kind of outright critique of capitalism, not outright critique, but at least in terms of the kind of failures of the Soviet block and the kind of difficulties that presented for the communist movement internationally in terms of how they made their public arguments. Now, I mean we can go back historically and see if I’m right about this, but I do think in South Africa there was quite an uneven understanding about what we mean about neo-liberalism, or what was actually meant by privatisation and so forth. I actually think that our actual learning about neo-liberalism, our actual giving flesh to those concepts of neo liberalism and privatisation actually took place in a mode in which we confronted these things at different levels and understood how they ... I think we only really understood what privatisation meant, or what gave it its particular political meaning in the ways in which we were forced to confront it in various struggles that arose. I think it was also understanding, how the form of transformation was privatisation; of South African society, post-apartheid or at least had a kind of privatising logic to it and a kind of market centric principle of development. And I mean that was something that deepened and you were able to connect it to problems around the everyday, only in relation to those kinds of struggles around cost recovery and when you see their impact and the ways in which people are resisting them ... I think for the APF generally I think it’s notion of privatisation, it’s notion of neo-liberalism that becomes the kind of object of its critique of the transition takes hold out of a kind of pedagogy of a set of struggles.” **Ahmed Veriava**

“There was a project that began as a discussion document in 1994 within the alliance and it was entitled Igoli 2002, or it eventually became Igoli2002, I actually don’t think that was the name of it then; but given that Johannesburg and this area were sort of the key industrial capital and political centre of South Africa, the adoption of that kind neo-liberal agenda and policies and cost recovery and everything else that GEAR represented was going to be applied in Joburg and this was the first example of that. And when we saw these discussion documents that indicated this is what they wanted to do in Johannesburg, there were huge, there was massive opposition from sections of COSATU and sections of the SACP and we fought those things out within Provincial Executive Councils and all of the structures of the alliance.

My experience in that context was one of, I had never before, that I had been through a huge amount of really rough kind of politics but I had never experienced a situation where I had been physically prevented from attending meetings and physically threatened because of the stance of opposition that we took. In other words the politics turned very nasty very quickly for those that had a dissenting voice to this kind of agenda and we lost that battle, as was clear a few years onwards when it was unveiled as the official policy of the ANC, became the spearhead, the wedge of the neo-liberal agenda starting in Joburg and then nationally and that was the turning point, I think, of another sort.” **Dale McKinley**

I think it [GEAR] is much more of a marker than anything else - it is a historical marker for people because there has to be something you can hang ... it’s like a peg you can hang the transition on. 1994 and the elections, you can’t do it there because that was a democratic election, it was getting rid of apartheid, it’s a very difficult thing to sort of say that was the point because everybody embraced, or more or less everybody embraced that point. So GEAR, the public unveiling of GEAR represented the symbol I think for a lot of the left, of the ANC’s coming out party so to speak, post-1994 coming out. And it was from that point on, or at least two or three years after that, that the practical impacts and consequences of the kinds of very practical struggles of what was left of the left began to engage with; and the left needed a starting point in order to be able to ground those struggles. So if you were going to oppose water cut offs and electricity cut offs and a range of other things, well then why, what was giving rise to these? – GEAR. GEAR gave rise to those things and so it became that symbolic coat hanger with which you could hang those kinds of things on and be able to explain to people why it was, politically and ideologically, that you needed to do these kinds of things because GEAR represented everything that we didn’t fight for and didn’t struggle for. I think by 1997 / 98 when the policies of the ANC began to be implemented and began to have social consequences and people began to somewhat resist around things and the space within the alliance was closing down for that kind of contestation and people were looking at other options, that it wasn’t an opportune time, it certainly wasn’t something that one could necessarily build organisation around to establish an anti-capitalist party at the time; supposedly the SACP represented that anyway, it still claimed that mandate or that thing. But for an organisation there needed to be something that spoke to people’s immediate experiences and struggles and the effects of the cut offs, the privatisation was clearly a reality in terms of the legislation and the processes and what happened but politically I think it struck a chord at that time. And when we started struggling against Igoli 2002 and things started happening in Soweto and other areas around here it was a very useful tactical manoeuvre to label those struggles, anti-privatisation struggles because it was very difficult for the ANC to defend privatisation, it was politically untenable for a lot of people to sort of be coming out and saying; in other words, to expose them. So privatisation in some ways - which the apartheid government had started - was seen I think with a large degree of scepticism and hostility not just among the new movements that were born out of those struggles but within the general sort of liberation struggle itself. So it was tactically an astute thing to do but it also spoke to a reality that was beginning to happen and it was a way of coalescing those struggles I think. But in retrospect one has to admit that it was a fairly narrow kind of way of going about fighting what in essence really; what we were fighting was a system, but what we chose to do in that sense or what a lot of people chose to do was take a particular section of the system that was having the most immediate impact and go to that one because it was the best way to mobilise and to organise.” **Dale McKinley**

Formation of the APF

“For us I think and again Daniel Hutchinson plays a very important role here, because Daniel Hutchinson and Nick Dieltiens are simultaneously sitting on the Anti-Igoli forum, the Johannesburg branch of the Communist Party attending meetings as well as part of the Wits campaign. And on campus as I think we kind of realise that it’s going to be very difficult for us to win this campaign without broadening it, then also at the same time you know the kind of momentum around SAMWU protests are also starting to begin in relation to the Igoli plan. We saw in these the hopeful possibility of potentially making more real connections with, or kind of establishing something of a broad front against, neo-liberal privatisation. It was within that context that we were able then, that we undertook to establish certain kinds of meetings with different organisations to try and kind of bring together forces that could fight, could broaden this campaign. And I think at the time the meetings that we had, the initial meetings were I think, we came to the Communist Party branch meeting ... and then of course the kind of activist forums at COSATU House where we took a decision to target the Urban Futures Conference which I might also add, that at least from our side the targeting of that conference did owe something to the inspiration of Seattle, a kind of conference bashing and I think we wanted our own mini Seattle. There were a number of prior attempts ... to bring together progressive left elements within Johannesburg and certainly a lot of people were looking to this kind of grouping around the Urban Futures conference with certain kinds of real ambitions. It was part of a long line of attempts at opening up and it was a kind of a schizophrenic thing because on the one hand they didn’t want to move too far away from COSATU and the alliance and at the same time you know, wanting to have something outside and antagonistic to that political

tradition. So it allowed for those kinds of forces who had a particular kind of hope for the left in Johannesburg, something new for them to at least be hopeful about in relation to their own politics, of course. But I think what was specific about the APF and what separated it from previous, similar kinds of discussion groups like CANSA even the Anti-Igoli Forum itself, was that this particular activist forum was orientated towards forms of direct action and building a kind of common, a kind of sense of belonging together as a political entity through actual forms of struggle and that was immediately expressed in its foundational activities.” **Ahmed Veriava**

“CANSA organised workshops typically held in COSATU House or Elijah Barayi ... about various issues, like trade, GMO’s, privatisation, big dams and the effect on the environment and they tended to be workshops that attracted the usual suspects, people who were of the associational left ... it was more for an information sort of sharing. Eventually the one workshop did realise the Anti –Igoli 2002 Committee, for instance, which did happen, which did give some [impetus to the] formation of the APF. Those SASCO members who were most concerned about doing something proactive about the retrenchments [of workers at Wits] did call ourselves the Wits Crisis Committee and we continued doing students solidarity work. [Then came] the disruption of the Urban Futures conference. The Urban Futures conference in July of 2000 was celebrating the restructuring of the university... and of Johannesburg City which was celebrated and with a couple of us students who were active in the struggle to stop the retrenchments, and with NEHAWU formally. As the Wits Crisis Committee at that time we had called an activist forum to discuss what we would do about the Urban Futures Conference ... we invited the Anti- Igoli 2002 forum, which was meeting at SAMWU. At that forum were SAMWU members, quite a few SAMWU shop stewards, maybe six, and the NEHAWU branch was there and myself as SASCO and some students and we decided at the activists forum that the conference would be disrupted, and it was on hearing that, that Patrick Bond invited you [Ahmed Veriava] and I to meet with him to see what he could do to reconcile the differences that had been created around the forum and he made an offer to us to participate, because the conference had a registration fee that none of us were really going to be paying to attend, so he made an offer of, I think it was some eighty tickets to people who want to attend. Because we were no way representing everyone we had to go back and we couldn’t accept this offer on behalf of anybody. So we took it back to our constituency this offer from Patrick Bond who turned out to be in some way an organiser of the Urban Futures Conference himself, and we decided to decline the offer and then continued with our programme to disrupt and to the publicise issues around retrenchments, using, I guess, the conference as a publicity opportunity. [Also involved were] the unions, SACP Johannesburg Central Branch, SASCO, Keep Left and Democratic Socialist Movement. For the first time the restructuring of the public institutions like Wits and the Johannesburg Municipality were coming together with a common concern that there was a restructuring of public institutions underway and Urban Futures was a serendipitous opportunity that laid the stage for us to meet on common issues. Political identity came after the growing sense that the basis had been laid for a common struggle against restructuring and the effects of privatisation that had increasingly been visited on poor communities”. **Nicolas Dieltiens**

“I became an ANC Councillor for my area in Pimville, a Ward Councillor and then halfway through my term of office there was a move towards neo-liberal policies. The Johannesburg City Council announced you know Igoli 2002. So that’s how you know my first opposition ... so I tried to oppose it as councillor within the ANC caucus, you know, also my constituency until matters came to a head and I was more or less fired by the ANC. So when that happened there was a lot of publicity because at that time the two municipal workers’ unions were opposed to privatisation so the press was kind of paying attention and then suddenly there was me, an ANC councillor, who got fired for opposing the same thing. And in fact I made common cause with SAMWU and IMATU and we formed IGOLI 2002, the committee that happened after that workshop with SAMWU under what was called CANSA, the Campaign Against ... whatever, but it played its part really, but it didn’t last long. So that is how it happened - through being a councillor and then getting expelled and then meeting up with the union.” **Trevor Ngwane**

“The way it was formed, it was formed as a unity of labour and community structures. So the APF structure should have been SAMWU, IMATWU, if there was an SECC, SANCO, SACP, can you see? But I think from day one ... it was now activist in a sense that people who were there were not necessarily representing organisations and also because it was action oriented. And in fact even those who belonged to structures found themselves maybe kicked out like SASCO comrades, SA Communist Party. So it was an activist forum in that sense and also I think it was an activist forum because COSATU and the unions were not embracing it in their usual very highly structured way. But in any case it worked well at first and I think for me what distinguished the APF in its own eyes, at least the popular talk was we are not here to debate privatisation but to fight against it. So it was a militant, you know, action and ... it could be sustained through an activist forum. But gradually ... as the unions pulled out and as the work of the APF got more known and more people were attracted it kind of became a community based structure. And people who attended were half individual activists of the APF and half from community structures and remember those structures didn’t have a name then - social movements - it was mostly maybe some civic or some group fighting around that and I remember thinking that the first organisations that attracted our leaders, those leaders were people who were not outside the ANC fold.” **Trevor Ngwane**

“Initially it was COSATU who was present, IMATU Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union, SAMWU, the Johannesburg branch of the Communist Party and NEHAWU and SASCO South African Students Congress. Then it was community organisations like SECC Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, Katorus Concerned Residents on the East Rand and the Working Class Coordinating Committee ... even the PAC Pan Africanist Congress was present. There was ... and then there were other smaller sort of groups, left groups like APDUSA and then there were activists. You know many left activists that were active in the 1980’s and early 1990’s who were part of the APF.”

John Appolis

“It was clear that the APF represented one of the most alive, one of the most significant movements and a revival ... because I have also been through the collapse of the organisations, the kind of dismantling of community organisations. I understood the significance of this revival because it was a difficult period after ’96. And suddenly... things were alive again, people were wanting to struggle or wanting to do things; it was a very significant moment I think for me personally as well because it meant people were wanting to do things again and there were places to work.” **Nina Benjamin**

“ ... all these people who would’ve thought of themselves as being very respectable, suddenly discovering that there was no space for them to be respectable in the new South Africa. Anti -evictions, water and electricity became an issue quickly. I mean I think also it was, the whole APF thing that was crucial was the first crack in the monolith, you know that actually the ANC had been or at least the Congress Movement had dominated all struggle since the early eighties at least, in my memory, my whole political development took place within a circumstance where it was a nationalist organisations dominating, nationalist or Stalinist organisations dominating so I think it was very significant that there was this beginning of something that was beginning to something outside of that and I think that’s what APF represented.” **Claire Ceruti**

“Look the APF at that time was largely led by left wing groupings and intellectuals ... it was more like the convergence of various groups and there were debates about you know the role of these groups versus you know community structures. There was a debate ... because some of these groups were calling for a party, whether you call it the Mass Workers Party or Vanguard Party or political party or whatever but they wanted a party, but I think some of these groups were much more sophisticated than that, they said ... ‘The central issue now is to organise people and then create a left wing project, I mean, build a revolutionary force from below with less of a teleological approach - which is, this thing must be like this and that thing must be like that, let the situation be more fluid and let’s see how we respond to that’. And then also there was an issue about the controlling and power of these groups ... I think the idea of giving the community structures more power was quite good because we then started formalising things. I think our approach was not so foolish in the sense that we said, ‘Look, let’s have a structure but at the same time, let us appreciate the fact that we know the conditions are fluid’. And then at that time the groups had to play a more supportive than a leading role. In terms of the executive of the committee and the coordinating committee at the annual general meeting there was a very conscious attempt at making sure that there was a representation and a voice from these grassroots structures.” **Mondli Hlatshwayo**

“The discussions were like who is supposed to be part of the APF and those people who are from the communities they felt more entitled than those who were not coming from community based organisations. And there was also ... a level of disrespect from people who were coming from the communities who felt like they actually they are entitled for this struggle and for the organisation itself as compared to people who are not from those organisations. And there was also like this debate about, ja, “the intellectuals are ruling the APF, actually it’s not run by the members of the community” and all that. And there were also sometimes ... we were trying by all means to say, “Let the community members people come and take part’. But then whenever they delegate us, they will never do the task and then [it] ends up being the so called intellectuals you are referred to. So we would end up covering, coming to the rescue and then you ask yourself if these intellectuals were not there, would the APF be able to prosper as it prospered at that time? And then another debate would be, “No, no, people don’t have resources”; but I will always make an example of myself, for me I didn’t have resources, I didn’t even know how to punch a computer but I learned in the APF office because if you want to do something and then you know you learn. And I remember I was interviewed by Sakhela Buhlungu who was doing some stuff for CCS research and then his perception was the APF was run by the intellectuals and the community people were not being given the opportunity to learn and then I said, ‘I am a community person but more of the stuff that I know how to do now is because of the APF’. And then you’re learning from those intellectuals themselves because I cannot deny the fact that I grew up in Kwa-Zulu Natal where I was not exposed to anything but also learning from these people now I am able to be who I am. So that debate or the sort of like playing victim, you know, ‘intellectuals took over our organisation’, is just normal laziness. People always wanting to pass excuses, I never took it as serious.” **Virginia Setschedi**

“When I came into the student movement there was this vision of the student movement as not being a sectoral kind of movement or sectoral organisation but one that was very much rooted in the broader struggle, in the struggle for a broader vision for transformation of South African society as a whole and seeing the transformation of a higher education as contributing towards that broader society of transformation. Over time ... well it happened pretty quickly if you look back now from 1993 / 1994 when we started to be told that you know you need to be disciplined within the student movement, you need to start thinking about how your struggle is going to, you know, focus on that, that particular sector by higher education. And we started to be pushed into a very, very sectoral struggle around that space of higher education and we also started to be seen and characterised very differently within the broader movement. And when we started to argue against GEAR, when we started to insist on also interventions from the broader liberation movement in the struggles that were happening at particular institutions like Wits we constantly started to be told that you need to fight this on your own. Over time within the Wits SASCO branch we had been side-lined as a branch initially within SASCO and in terms of the broader alliance and then slowly within the branch a group of us will be marginalised in terms of our views within the branch. So we started to become a smaller and smaller group within that movement making these calls or claiming that the programme or the historical programme of the liberation movement was being sold and that the possibilities that we had imagined were there in the early nineties around forms of governance, around ways of organising, around the kinds of economic policies that were going to be made through struggle that those slowly started to become narrow, become narrower and narrower. And by the time the APF emerged and those struggles that led to the birth of the APF emerged, I think there were quite a few of us who felt like there was no other way, this was the only way we could see and that way was actually being made at the time by us together rather than some kind of fore-thought plan that we were rolling out. I think that was what was ... inspiring is the wrong word, but that's what also kind of drove us at that time. You could also feel there were others experiencing similar problems to that in similar spaces in the alliance and I think that was what encouraged us to participate in the formation of the APF. We were coming together with people experiencing the similar things from different parts of the alliance and thinking similarly about different ways of approaching these problems.” **Prishani Naidoo**

“It is interesting because I remember very distinctly, when the first coming together of these disparate groups that were fighting around the various impacts of forms of privatisation, I never thought that this and I don't think that anybody else at this particular point thought that this, was going to turn out to be a formal organisation that would then have a particular kind of start, inception, its own history and structures - that is was something that I think was important. The initial impetus from my perspective was one that it could open doors to a different kind of politics, but not necessarily in the form of an APF, not necessarily ... a pre-cast form that one approached that from. It was in the process of these struggles and the gathering of the activist forum, the Anti-Igoli forum, and all of these other kind of things, that it became clear at least to me and I think to several others that, and as the space become even further closed down, and we must admit that the fact that this was heavily influenced by a range of different activists' own experiences [linked] to where they had been previously located in their own organisations, whether that was SASCO, whether that was the ANC, whether that was COSATU, whether that was the Communist Party. So in many, many ways what led to the formation, at least the coming together of a lot of these activists and struggles was their experiences within their relative organisations, within the broad alliance, and I think that is important to note. And then it drew in a range of others, some independent leftists, outside Trotskyists and others on the left that had, were looking for a political home. So yes it does depend on where you are coming from, because for some it was extension of the politics and struggles that had been going on for a long period of time and that it was going to take a new form; for others it represented the start of something new and the possibilities of a regeneration of a particular kind of oppositional politics that had been quite dead for some time in some cases. So I think it was only - as far as I can remember it - it was only at the point in time where the activist forum began in which real politics began to be discussed as opposed to just practical struggles and what are we going to do in a particular event or how are we going to respond to a particular kind of thing, whether that was the Urban Futures which has already been mentioned numerous times as a key element in the formation, or whether it was the cutting off of massive amounts of peoples' electricity in Soweto, or whatever that was. But the coming together of the activist's forum for me represented the politicisation of those struggles, if one can put it that way, where politics began to be discussed in the sense of okay, are we serious about starting a new organisational form that can represent and coalesce these struggles or are we simply interested in opposing what it is we think is the most immediate ... In that sense, that debate where there were many different perspectives on that debate and that was very healthy, but that debate itself was what catalysed things, with the majority of people deciding that yes, what we needed was a new organisational form to coalesce these struggles, not just the struggles but a yearning I think for a political home of sorts, an organisational form - I think that cannot be discounted. And it was through those debates and the activist forum that this then came to some kind of fruition.” There was this whole initial need both organisationally but also politically to be more open to the kind of form of coalition that allowed for varying degrees of ideological impetuses and histories to come together and it was the immediacy of the struggles that allowed, that provided the glue

for the coalition. It wasn't necessarily the politics of the coalition per say, but it was the glue so everybody could come and agree that this needed to be opposed, that these actions needed to be taken, that we needed to struggle at this level because that in some way, super-ceded the ideological and other differences that people were coming from, that they thought they were going to be doing with the APF. But that was only temporary, and it could only be so. Precisely I would argue - and this was missed by a lot of people we are a part of the APF and were there in its initial formation - which is for me, the initial impetus and the largest impetus toward the formation of a movement did not come from political groups even though they were certainly those that argued most vehemently about what they wanted and they already had a pre-cast agenda of a particular kind of party form or whatever and they did argue those things, but the weight, the biggest weight in the push of that came from the community organisations themselves. They wanted a forum, some kind of organisational forum beyond the coalition, this was clear from the very beginning and it has always been clear to me, for the majority, although there are exceptions to this. And if one tracks the actual debates in the APF from that early point and the succeeding period ... I think the voice of the individual activists is exaggerated, it's given too much input; it was actually the voice of ordinary rank and file members of community organisations, some of them leadership of course ... that was the main impetus.” **Dale McKinley**

Early relations with COSATU alliance

“The drivers of privatisation are the ANC government at different levels, you know national and local level, so the struggle against privatisation meant we had to confront the ANC government, we had to start analysing the class character of the ANC government etc., etc. and that led to a kind of polarisation between the APF and ANC government because that was really...they became the real targets of our protests and our demands and COSATU being in alliance with the ANC found that very difficult because now they had to confront all these contradictions between being in alliance with the ANC as well as being part of an organisation or a struggle that sort of focused directly on the ANC and exposing the meeting and criticising and attacking it, so COSATU started distancing itself from the APF and they took a decision in one of the executive committees where I was present not to get involved in the APF anymore, so I had to then again withdraw from the APF as the COSATU representative. But I stayed in the APF as a community activist, as an activist who wanted to continue the struggle against privatisation etc., but COSATU then... There was lots of debates in COSATU in the region because people like myself, we sort of agitated, advocated for COSATU to remain part of the Anti-Privatisation Forum because of the fact that, you know one of its own unions SAMWU was directly affected by... sorry two of these unions were directly affected by this... by the privatisation initiatives, NEHAWU National Education Health and Allied Workers Union at Wits University and SAMWU South African Municipal Workers Union at the City Council, in fact both SAMWU and NEHAWU were also initially part of the Anti-Privatisation Forum so with that decision of COSATU to distance itself from the APF when those two unions also gradually sort of withdrew from the organisation.” **John Appolis**

“I can remember now in one of its National Executive Committee's passed a resolution that no leader or union official can stand on any other platform and contradict the union policies and that... and also I can't remember there is also another part of that resolution that sort of restricted. I can't remember the exact formulation, but it restricted my ability to participate in the APF and also to appear publicly, to make pronouncements on behalf of the APF that is contrary to Union policies. You could clearly hear talking about attitude and approach to the ANC and the ANC government and the Tripartite Alliance. So they passed that resolution sort of ... kind of restricting us, our freedom of speech and our freedom of association to put it in those constitutional terms now. So that became a major sort of struggle within the union in terms of democracy and our ability to actually explore working class alliances with other formations other than the Tripartite Alliance and I mean...that was one of the sort of things that led to our... beside all the other struggles, internal struggles within the union, around the political orientation of the union, internal democracy, accountability, worker control you know. There were many struggles around those particular issues within the union. So also my links with the APF and the fact that I was at that time also the Chairperson of the APF created a lot of tension within the union. That also I think was one of the factors that led the National Executive Committee to expel me and other sort of comrades from the union.” **John Appolis**

“I suppose the thing that came in very fast was that contradiction - SAMWU ran quickly into that contradiction that they had somehow been pushed to this point of wanting to oppose the thing but was still very nervous of being seen as being outside of the alliance in doing so or breaking the alliance. So I remember that happening quite fast, that SAMWU seemed to peel away. And of course in the middle of all of this there started being the right wing in the party and in the ANC obviously hadn't given up their fight. So there was Trevor's expulsion probably within a year of that, you Dale getting expelled and that kind of attack on the Left .By that time the APF was pretty much no longer anything to do with Congress.” **Claire Ceruti**

“The APF first was borrowing the office space of AIDC. We had one meeting [and] a letter from the Cape Town office [came] that was saying that or announcing that the Johannesburg office of the AIDC would be closing. Their concerns in Cape Town being that anti ANC elements were organising from AIDC offices in Johannesburg and that the organisation would not want to be represented in that way, so they closed the office.” **Nicolas Dieltiens**

“I remember early on we were frequently trying to win the support of workers - the COSATU strike, SAMWU strike and the march and you know comrades who have been deployed to be part of the throng to hand out leaflets and SAMWU would even give a platform to someone from the mayoral committee to speak and no one from the APF, you know, there was very little comradeship coming from SAMWU. ANC, I mean we didn’t really engage in the ANC that I know of, but statements from the ANC were, had always been that we were just a rabble rousing kind of element, counter revolutionary was never used, but I mean ultra-left certainly characterised their response - that we could not be taken seriously.” **Nicolas Dieltiens**

“When the APF was formed the backbone was alliance organisations - SACP, SAMWU, in fact IMATU was following the lead of SAMWU; so obviously there was a need for a struggle within the unions and outside with the community against neo-liberalism. But then pressure from the top, from the alliance, COSATU, ANC, SACP and then SAMWU pulled out of the APF but they didn’t say goodbye, they started missing meetings so obviously it was an unprincipled pulling out. So what it means is that the alliance was able to contain the opposition so that APF found itself more or less, not isolated, but the only one in opposition to these policies when in fact COSATU, SACP ... so in a way they were scapegoated by Mbeki, close ranks against these ultra-leftists whatever, whatever. Obviously that went along with repression inside the alliance.” **Trevor Ngwane**

“In specific relation to the SACP it was very clear to me and few others at that time I think that this came out of the fact that irrespective of what the APF was doing - which the SACP could not really say it was against, it couldn’t come out publicly and say it was against anti-privatisation struggles - but what it really was against and the hardening of the attitudes was because it saw it as political competition from the left, that there was something that the left was brewing over here which was in competition with the ‘vanguard of the working class’ and there’s ‘no way we are going to let that happen, we are not going to become part of that’; and that to me became very, very clear. And the way it manifested itself over that year, that last year or so, was the increasing marginalisation of people like myself and others who were publicly involved already in those processes leading to the APF and beginning to label us - as opposed to engaging in an ideological and political debate about what the sustainability of these struggles might be within this context - it was to dismiss those struggles and try to delegitimise the APF by labelling both individuals and those involved as ‘ultra-left’, as ‘counter-revolutionary’ because you weren’t part of who they were and that is the way they tried to deal with the APF initially, in the party very clearly. And that – I think some people missed this - that then seeped into the ANC. It wasn’t Mbeki and the ANC initially, he [Mbeki] was the one that got paid attention to because he used those words publicly because he was the president of the country and the ANC but that incubated itself within the SACP and it was given political and ideological weight by the SACP.” **Dale McKinley**

Organisational structuring & character of early APF representation

“Well what happened is because of the fact that the community organisations constituted the largest base of the organisation, we had to sort of restructure it to give effect to this new development where we sort of set up what you called office bearers, elected office bearers, the chairperson, treasurer and the secretary. Those were the three sort of official leadership of the organisation and then we agreed to have an annual general meeting... sorry a coordinating committee meeting. Those were the only two structures that we used to have. The activist forum also was still in existence... you know what I mean there was that kind of form, of transition where we sort of formalised more the internal organisational setup of the organisation. So the activist forum was still in existence even though they were formalising many of the internal structures of the organisation and that led to... I think the first annual general meeting was in 2004, if I am not mistaken ... 2004 where we had our first annual general meeting where we sort of adopted ... endorsed the kind of structures that we have set up in the two years before that. You know Office Bearers, Executive and Coordinating Committee structures and ... those were sort of constitutionalised almost at the 2004 AGM. So I think that gave it some kind of... what’s it, organisational coherence and stability because now we have a kind of accountable structure and strategies that could co-ordinate and allow for democratic participation and control of the community organisations in the APF and also in terms of weighting, of voting and its more in favour of the community organisations where they have more voting power or voting delegates at the various structures of the APF.” **John Appolis**

“As much as one would want the bottom to drive, you know, if the people lead, the leaders would follow as the saying goes, but at the same time I think there was a realisation that there was a need for political education and conscientising because as much as there might be communities that were fighting for, against you know the privatisation of electricity or of education, there was a need to start galvanising those separate struggles into what was a common thread here, why are all these things happening, and there was a need to give that direction without becoming authoritative or imposing ... but to move those struggles forward and to get that unity between the different affiliates. I remember we spent a lot of time on the workshops on capacity building of different sorts, not only on substantive issues but also in terms of trying to develop the leadership. Later on I think probably around 2003 / 4 we were looking much more at how do we build women comrades and ensure that women were also respected within the APF. Because I mean we had to deal also with all that gender dynamics in a Coordinating Committee, or a Council where the majority of members were men, but yet when you went to communities and there were demonstrations or activities in communities it was women at the forefront of those marches and then the challenges that women had attending the meetings and being part of the decision making structure. Sometimes it was frustrating, I think sometimes it was to say, you know you wanted people at community level to be more, not skilled, but able to run with things much more and break that dependency maybe on some of the more seasoned activists or people who had been, you know, who were leading some of these committees and stuff. But it was required, it was necessary ... I never saw it as here we are as the APF indoctrinating people it was more how do you open windows into what people are already making links and making those, you know linking things to a bigger picture of ... why is your electricity getting cut off, you know this is about government policies ... so it was trying to make those links much more broadly.” **Florencia Belvedere**

“Where we didn’t manage to find a solution was with individuals, where do individuals come in what role do they play? Because I think there’s a strong... there’s a notion of socialism that has emerged within, kind of unfolded in the APF, is that the individual has gotten lost. To be an individual is to be individualistic and it’s to be petty bourgeois. So ... because to do that is to do something to break this homogenous notion ... I mean there’s the working class and it’s like this [points at picture on wall] ... I always look at this LRS painting of these people who were standing like this, you know a very kind of Russian or Stalinist notion of who this working class is ... they’re not people they’re just this thing. So as soon as you started looking at individuals ... you know it becomes a problem. That for me has become one of the big challenges within the APF. And I think in many ways we created that, with the left groups and what their notion of socialism is and its fixed notions and when you have fixed notions you don’t need to find anything, you don’t need to look carefully, you don’t need to listen, you definitely don’t need to listen. So, you are not going to understand that the collective thing is, in a sense, made up of a whole lot of different people with different needs. I think that the role of individuals was almost the most stark way that it manifested itself - there is no place for you as an individual and there is certainly no place for you as an individual if you are unemployed and from one of the communities. Maybe if you can come with some resources and some skills, but if you are somebody there, there is no place for you.” **Nina Benjamin**

“Well, yes of course it is an organisation, but is it like a unitary organisation where everyone has somehow to agree to be part of it, you know and where there is now a discipline of the APF over everyone, or is it still a meeting place of organisations involved in struggle where we can get together and talk about what we are doing and co-operate. And I think that’s never actually been quite resolved. That the APF kind of hovers between being like a party and not quite a party ... but in some ways like a party and in some ways still a front for struggle. When we moved towards the sort of representative structure, if you want to call it that way, but without somehow making a way for individual members to also be represented that I think there was, I mean I am speculating quite honestly about other people’s motives, because I could always still speak through Keep Left. But I think maybe there was a thing that people maybe then felt unsure about standing up and saying I am arguing my point here as one person, and that maybe drove a lot of things underground, so that was an issue.” **Claire Ceruti**

“I was also faced with my own contradiction in the APF, I mean coming from a formal intellectual background with university education that puts you in a contradictory position. You can speak the language but I mean still you do feel that you go after your meeting you go to your place and you have all this enlarged access to this and access to that, you know you are also in a contradictory education right. But I think again our role again is not to be apologetic about that it’s to note it but then try and see, I mean how do we build a layer coming from below ... a layer which can be able to articulate the position and maybe after sometime you can play a different role.” **Mondli Hlatshwayo**

“I heard some concerns about why the APF you know is structured like this and many people believed in organisations that didn’t have a structure and they felt that that was more democratic. But the experience that I had in the APF, as I said, without knowing who is supposed to do what therefore nothing would happen, do you

understand? At least we knew that those people that were given those positions were actually accountable to the people who elected them [not] like trying to run away from responsibility but giving people the relevant positions and so that they are able to account to the constituency that they represent. And it was a debate even in Cape Town, when I went to stay in Cape Town I was always criticised for coming from the APF that has a Chairperson and a Constitution and all that. But my feeling is that it actually helped the APF's growth because even though there was resistance ... things were happening. Things were happening and I actually like feel that at that time we had a more vibrant APF that was known by everyone and even not only in South Africa but all over the world because we were like shaking the powers that be and kicking ass where we were supposed to." **Virginia Setshedi**

"I still think that if we look at other new social movements and in spite of all the criticism I've raised that the form of the APF has taken in terms of its providing the space for as many people from as many affiliates to contribute to the shaping of the broad programs, that the APF stands out in terms of being able to provide that broadly democratic space. I think the problems that I raised, the criticisms that I've raised, have over time been dealt with as they've arisen and unlike other movements like the Anti-eviction Campaign, for example, like the Concerned Citizens Forum in Durban, that the fact that there's been such a broadly representative and a broader representative ability for individual members to actually raise their problems in the democratic space has been what's set it apart from other's and that allowed it to deal with these problems as they emerged." **Prishani Naidoo**

"Let's just go back a bit and talk about the kind of emergence of the kind of community within the APF. Certainly one of the first ones, the Soweto Electricity Crises Committee right; the formation of the SECC is an interesting one ... if you're looking for a simple kind of romantic idea of the spontaneous emerging of a community organisation, you are not necessarily going to find it in relation to the SECC. The SECC from my understanding and I could be wrong here, partly grows out of a research process actually, in which the Public Citizen lot you know Mai and them do a project with the AIDC and Trevor and them on electricity particularly as part of this whole issue and again this is why I am saying that the whole issue of privatisation comes to us partly out of that global watchword, you know what I mean and then we, in our own actual experience of struggle that develops and deepens and it's given its own particular inflection in our political context; unless you see it in this particular context because of the kind of external organisation part of a city based NGO doing research in a particular area where one of the activists lives, right. And here is where the particular romantic does come in; is that they discover ... Trevor tells a story of how they were asking how many people are illegally reconnected and slowly you see half the room's hands going up, or the majority of the rooms hands going up and you recognise in the kind of face of these neoliberal driven cost recovery there is resistance. And it is really the kind of ways in which this resistance, these forms of illegal reconnection that had grown somewhat spontaneously and organically out of this kind of community - in fact they had a much longer history since after all you kind of have to relate it back to kind of practices that go back to the apartheid era - the ways in which these particular acts are able to be given to a political narrative that can be taken into the public realm, right. And that's partly part of how the imagination of the SECC emerges with that kind of imagination of, around these ideas of Khanyisa, they turn us off, we reconnect you, and the kind of militancy of that kind of slogan whose trick is to take, or is to give political or to politicise these acts that are taking place in these different households and to give organisational form to forms of solidarity among these different households. And I think you know that kind of experience was something of a pedagogy for us urban activists in terms of what the effects of cost recovery were and exactly what the strategies of resistance in fighting them were to be. But nevertheless I mean I still think there was always something of a disjuncture between the forms of public representation of the organisation and even of those acts." **Ahmed Veriava**

"I think here there was a trade off in terms of the organisational form that APF eventually took and has more or less reflected since that time in various ways; which was that there was clearly an acceptance and an understanding that ... predominately because of the legacies of apartheid and also because of the fact that the ANC itself in the intervening period of the 1908s had done very little to overturn that legacy ... there was a core group of individuals which brought with them serious organisational, political, theoretical as well as literary and media skills and those activists and others had to contribute. But the way in which they needed to contribute was not to dominate the organisation politically necessarily, but that the community organisations which had the numbers, which had the political legitimacy which were the ones who were actually engaged in the battles, which were the ones who were feeling the effects of the policies needed to have their own voice. I think the organisational form tried to reflect that - a central organisation called the APF but in a forum, as we call ourselves the forum; which was that the community organisations will be central and would be autonomous, in other words we couldn't dictate to the affiliate what it is that they could do and could not do and what struggles that they could and could not take up but at the same time to join together with other community affiliates and this core of activists that was quite experienced and others to take forward the very struggles that they themselves had decided on. In other words though resources, through assistance, through the management of basic things that needed to be done. And the people themselves, not because of a lack

of trying but because of a whole history of things at that particular point realised themselves - and I don't think there is any particular patronising aspect to this at all which some people have tried to argue - it was the community organisations themselves that wanted and demanded that forum form because in some ways it tried to create the best of those worlds; to be able to allow others who weren't experiencing these cut-offs, who weren't part of the working class or the poor necessarily but who had things to offer coming in, not dominating as a result of purely centralised structures but also being able to contribute in their own way while community organisations were able to carry off the programmes and were able to continue the struggles on the ground." **Dale McKinley**

You cannot divorce your past and where you are coming from and peoples own organisational experiences. For example I think back to the time of the initial formation of the APF and the debates that took place around what eventually became the organisational form of the APF; the arguments that won out, the majoritarian arguments that won out were those that reflected predominately from those that came out from the liberation movement whether they were from civics, whether it was from the ANC whether it was COSATU. And there was a smaller minority voice which did not come out of that liberation movement experience in the sense of the alliance but from a more autonomous perspective so to speak that wanted to recreate - not recreate ... but to actually do away with or move away from those kinds of forms and create new forms of ways of organising and ways of doing politics, that lost out or at least that got submerged quite substantially because the political and social weight that they carried was much less in the constituency that the APF had gathered around itself. So in that sense it was very clear to me that there was that connection. How that manifested itself in practical terms; yes there is a long history and I think we are still with it and it's a very contradictory one, of the tension between leaders and followers or leaders and the mass in this sense. And the liberation movement despite the fact that the anti-apartheid movement itself threw up all sorts of leaders at local level and all sorts of other things, the dominant form that that politics took and reflected itself in the way organisations were run was looking up to particular kinds of individuals and leaders to carry the day, to express the hopes and otherwise. Almost a hangover I would say, a borrowing of the earlier historical period of a politics of more traditional chieftaincies and that kind of thing; and that certainly played itself out in the APF, no doubt about it. That certain type of, were, people whether they were conscious of it or not necessarily almost defaulted in most cases to the leader, to those who were the most public voices and the most well-known and those that had the most exposure. And I think in our interviews it was clear that in that early period of the APF the person who was predominately encapsulating that was Trevor Ngwane, for various reasons. So I think that sort of iconisation of a leadership borrowed itself from the liberation movement and effected and impacted on the early ways in which APF was run and which had very practical consequences for the APF, very, very practical. I won't go into whether I'm sure we will get to that whether they were negative or positive or the character of them but nevertheless I think they impacted quite tremendously on that. I think the other continuity so to speak between the liberation movement form of politics and organisational forms which eventually came into the APF was one which I think was predominantly coming from the trade union movement because the trade unions in various ways or people that came from the trade union experience were quite instrumental in the APF in the early stages and certainly in its early history. That was, that there had to be meaningful democratic discussion and meaningful democratic structure within the organisation and I think that's what saved the APF personally, from totally tearing itself apart when the shit started hitting the fan - is that the demand, the necessity irrespective of how sometimes frustrating it might be to those that didn't want to have to sit for two or three days discussing things that they already figured they knew about and had made decisions on, was to allow the democratic space for people to argue these things out and to be able to at least come to some degree of consensual conclusion, I think that was fundamentally important." **Dale McKinley**

Ideological heterogeneity of the APF: importance and impact

"I think it was and it still is a strength of the organisation. I think what sort of anchored the organisation is because probably ninety nine percent of the organisations had a common experience in terms of being at the cutting edge of the ANC's neo-liberal agenda, whether it is evictions, water cut offs, pre-paid water meters, lack of housing, lack of delivery ... all of that pointed to the ANC government and that sort of cemented the organisation despite people coming from diverse ideological and struggles backgrounds. For me it is a strength because people then bring in... you know what I mean, there different views and different perspectives on kind of contemporary issues that are facing the working class and organisation in particular. And I think that sort of led to quite I must say dynamic debates in the organisation where we could debate things from methods of struggles, internal democracy to the more bigger questions of socialism and I think that gave it a kind of dynamic that I think was not present in many of the other movements and even in the older traditional movements like COSATU that became more monolithic in terms of the ideological political outlook." **John Appolis**

“I think politically the fact that you had new movements, new activists, new militants coming through the struggles and then you had people who came from the 1980’s, 1970’s – 1980’s in terms of the struggles there. I think that brought a new dynamic into the APF. I mean... here you had militants, who were...you know at the forefront of the struggle against the ANC African National Congress Government and you had militants and activists who could provide a kind of broader context to the struggles that people were engaging with and I think the newer militants could see the connection between their issues and the broader political questions of the day. And I think that sort of allowed the militants to move beyond their immediate sort of issues and saw the need for...to build the APF as a kind of a counter political pole to the ANC government. And I mean you can see that even when some of the communities, I mean either there is a sort of a decline in the struggles or there is a retreat on the part of the ANC government in relation to some of the issues, they still see the importance of building the APF you know what I mean... so I think that brought that connection together. I mean I think that was a very important part you know to sustain the organisation and I think here it is important to compare us to the LPM Landless Peoples Movement who did not want to make those kinds of political connections between immediate struggles and the class character of the ANC Government and the ANC as the main driver of the capitalist agenda in South Africa: **John Appolis**

“It was in some ways healthy because I think it exposed other activists to different ideas. But I think it was also there were lots of problems with the way it was done because I don’t think even in Cape Town there is a healthy history of necessarily being able to have different views and work together in a constructive way and I think sometimes the level of debate sounded very aggressive...and for people coming from, coming in about basic services this was a bit much, I imagine could be quite alienating. And also when I think about it now I mean it was a very kind of patriarchal thing as well ... it was all about how making your point and not giving up as long as you can often which I don’t think always was good for how you work as comrades.” **Nina Benjamin**

“In many ways there’s – ‘this is what, how struggle is conducted and that’s what we have’. So we brought that in and made a mix but I don’t want to say that there was nothing that was different but I do think a lot of the old things came through. I just think of something like the struggle around finding what is a democratic process? I remember those discussions about representative democracy, participatory democracy and I mean that even now one struggles to think of what are the appropriate things to do. I think that sometimes maybe having too many of the people from left groups articulating the kind of thought of, what you call it, fixed things ... preventing a more experimenting because we are so busy fighting whose idea was right that I think it didn’t allow for enough experimentation on what the forms of democracy could have looked like and often we just slipped back into what we are familiar with.” **Nina Benjamin**

“Well, because it [the APF] was also much more democratic, I think there was also much more space ... I think at the beginning there it was allowing a number of people coming from very different walks of life I think, or working in very different contexts to join this organisation because they had a common goal of fighting against, you know the onslaught of neo-liberalism that was coming, you know GEAR, it was the feeling of what this is going to mean, it was kind of putting the RDP aside and there wasn’t, I think at that point there wasn’t that judging of what, you know, who are you and what do you think you can contribute to this. It was more like if you believed in the goal, if you believed in that common objective there was that was a space. And it was very tolerant of a number, I think of a number of groups, I mean whether it was organised political groupings or whether it was individuals, it allowed that space that people could contribute in different ways and again it was very participatory compared to what, you know the SACP had certainly become and I think there was a lot more space for debate, and thinking, thinking out loud, you know, where do we come from, what do we learn from organising in the ‘80s, what do we need to go back to.” **Florenca Belvedere**

“The point where the heterogeneity would I suppose have prevented the organisation from taking probably self-defeating kind of positions was particularly in respect of participation in the elections, I mean that decision came around before the 2004 elections where the heterogeneity of the organisation demanded as was decided, that we could not decide to be a part of the elections or our organisational unity would come apart. So at that level I suppose with respect to how we engage with power that we always had to remain an independent body and not commit to certain positions that might have limited our future growth, heterogeneity in those cases would have influenced and strengthened our position.” **Nicolas Dieltiens**

“For me it was good to be elected in the Anti-Privatisation Forum and then I learnt a lot, I got a lot of experience dealing with different communities who are facing different challenges and then even how people were approaching the Anti-Privatisation Forum as a resource centre for everything, financial resource, educational resource and even just for awareness, learning from the APF taking it back to the communities. And then from the

movement like the Anti-Privatisation Forum you get people from different political backgrounds because there is one thing common that brings us together, that’s privatisation, opposing privatisation, fighting for basic services in the communities.” **Richard Mokolo**

“The feeling you had there was of the Left and movements on the ground kind of finding each other, you know overcoming their differences. Not in a sense of they ever having a dispute just coming from different traditions and being able to talk and agree that we meet. So that’s the way that the APF formed and in fact I think where all of us were in high spirits you know, we were really inspired and I remember the activist forum was a beautiful thing. There was a lot of emphasis on openness, debate and the way forward wasn’t clear so there was a sense of if we hold together. So I think the first year or two was really wonderful in terms of tolerance.” **Trevor Ngwane**

“In the initial phases of the APF, the character of the ideological heterogeneity was one which was moulded by very specific experiences of where people were immediately coming from. I have gone back and looked at some of those early debates and some of those recorded things, you could see the contributions of people were coming out of their very own immediate organisational political experiences and so their ideological incarnations reflected that. That started to shift as the APF began to take on its own impetus, its own character I think, more so people moved gradually. In other words they broke those kinds of ties both personally and other wise, the moors started the shift, the ship started moving away from the dock so to speak. As that begins to happen, the ideological heterogeneity shifts, it doesn’t disappear but it shifts into a different character and the character starts becoming, is not so much about whether I come from this tradition and this particular kind of politics formed in the 80s and 90s and those kind of periods ... the main ideological debates became around organisational form as opposed to the larger question. I think there was a kind of general acceptance of the politics of the APF, I don’t think there were massive debates over the key demands of the APF and the key struggles that we should take up and the sort of tactical approach of the APF – there were some debates, some people wanted to be more militant and more direct and otherwise - but I don’t think those were necessarily central. I think the ideological debate was, ‘okay, we’ve got this APF, we’ve gotten this far, we are not going to go away anytime, we have gone past the first phase so we haven’t disappeared, so what now in terms of the politics and the ideology?’ Do we represent some kind of alternative ideological pole to the ANC and to the neo liberal agenda or do we represent an organisational form that takes up practical struggles and does not try to ideologise those struggles necessarily? And I think the ideological heterogeneity comes out there and you have very different perspectives in that regard.” **Dale McKinley**

The APF and ‘socialism’

“... there is also some problems with that experience in a sense that I think the older left activists, I don’t know if it was impatience or not understanding the different sort of phases of the development of organisations, even militants you know what I mean... you get a sense that sometimes militants of the past that want to impose certain ideological formulations or concepts onto the organisation and its militants when people have not understood those things or haven’t experienced them or haven’t seen the relevance in practice almost or the connection between them in practice. I mean I remember in the APF there was this debate about whether we adopt socialism or not, you know, but for me I was one of the people who were not supporting the adoption of socialism although I consider myself to be a socialist, a Marxist, I think that was in 2003- 2004, ja, when we had this debate whether we must adopt socialism as a kind of ideological principle of the organisation. I felt at that time the militants in the organisations, I mean they... socialism doesn’t mean much because they haven’t sort of seen it, we haven’t demonstrated it you know in terms of their struggles, their demands, their organisational practices and culture and I thought that was kind of artificial ... I won’t say imposition but artificial adoption of socialism.” **John Appolis**

“The APF stood for socialism. Socialism was the opposite of what we have. I don’t think we built our understanding of what that is ... we didn’t build our own notion. It was a sense of, in some ways, of a utopia – that we will get rid of this and then we will have that. And the thing in between - what we are doing - and even that socialism, what we build in what we doing now. I don’t think there was a lot of an appreciation. I can’t remember us thinking of being a socialist organisation in how we are organising presently, we only saw it as the goal.” **Nina Benjamin**

“The whole discussion around socialism for me is another example of this kind of closing down of the potential for the production of something new, something different. And I think there also we saw quite defensiveness in terms of different individuals or different groups defending their vision of what socialism is. And I think again ... this division ... between the more seasoned activists and the activists who had emerged from the community, different community struggles around specific issues, that there might not have been that kind of characterisation of these struggles as

socialist in the same way. I think that the possibilities for thinking about these struggles and imagining them outside of that frame of socialism as imagined by these seasoned activists ... I think that was a real divide and those voices were not really allowed to be heard partly because of the ways in which that discussion was framed. In my experience, I think that even when we had those workshops around socialism, I mean I was completely, completely upset by those workshops on socialism partly because they were led by members of particular socialist groupings within the APF and they were designed in a way to smash certain individuals and specific approaches within the APF... so there was this kind of false mobilisation of approaches and concepts in order to, I actually don't understand what it was there to do whereas if those workshops were actually started with the experience of people in communities and move from their own understanding of what they were doing in those struggles broader than just seeing them as struggles for their immediate survival we might have developed a different language around socialism or around this vision. And I mean another example there would be just how different affiliates understanding of their struggles have not, I think, been heard within the APF in terms of how these debates and discussions have been structured over time. I mean if you look at two very, very different affiliates, the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee and the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee, for example, very, very different ways of approaching organising and of understanding why they struggling in the ways that they are. And also making different choices at different times about their participation in the APF and how they were going to relate to the main structures of the APF. And I think at one point particularly around when Operation Khanyisa emerged and that whole shaping of the APF's programme around that time I would argue that Orange Farm withdrew at that point and partly because it was being forced to vocalise its struggles in a particular way and were meant to fight in a particular way within the organisation." **Prishani Naidoo**

"At the kind of broader level of abstraction, the kind of ideological orientation is certainly you know something what we call the left in the simple kind of position between left and right. Even going somewhere deeper then, even if there's not a kind of agreement on what it is that is a subject of our political affirmation there is nevertheless very clear that the APF moves from a critique and opposition to capitalist development. When I say development I just mean that capitalism is the form of societal development. So I think that the APF does move from that premise from that very kind of basic level and something of the kind of negation that binds us. But I think at another level there is as well and I think that this is quite an important affirmation of democracy; I think it's still contested as to what the character or what we understand by a democracy is, and I think that is part of what democracy is, a questioning of what democracy is. I think that there is at least a kind of, that is one kind of collective control. I think some people would then see that as socialism, but I think that's part of one of the problems in terms of the APF's socialist orientation is that I am not sure that we're all socialists of the same social whatever. I mean I don't know, I think the different groups do seem to have quite different ideas of what that term means." **Ahmed Veriava**

WCAR & WSSD: context, meaning, impact

"These two events were seen, particularly the WSSD more than WCAR, the WSSD because it was a quite a bit larger and in terms of the APF it was situated in Johannesburg and so it made a difference in terms practically of what could be mobilised and how much attention could be paid to it; it was the fact that the government - as the tension started moving towards the WSSD which I can speak much more directly than WCAR - they essentially created a situation by their protectiveness, by their sort of very narrow response - I remember the headline, Charles Nqakula at the time, the Minister of Safety and Security ... 'anybody who thinks they are going to disrupt this will be dealt with harshly' - and there was this challenge that was issued almost by government, to say this is our event, these are our issues and we are going to protect it and any of you troublemakers, organisations like the APF who think you are going to crash the party are sadly mistaken. And that became a challenge for a lot of people saying, 'screw you, we've have a right to do these thing and we are going to act and challenge you back'. So I think that upped the ante. At the beginning, if one remembers correctly, the APF was not quite sure whether or not it should be involved as part of this whole civil society aspect which was this sort of official side thing to the WSSD and rightfully so. It was in the engagement with that forum and this wider range of forces including COSATU and others that it became apparent to organisations like the APF that this was just a stage show that was sort of meant to be perfunctory civic society consultation but having no meaning and no voice really. So, that led to the second stage of the politics which was revealed by the first. Which was no, we must do this independently and we must mobilise as many forces as possible from the communities and other movements which were around and gather as much social weight as we can and convince other people who might be in the civil society forum to come join us, to have a show of force essentially. And I think that was really the driving force from that point on was to say we are here, we are here and you are not going to crush us, you are not going to prevent us from doing these things. It was a challenge and I think the politics of the event, maybe in retrospect, maybe at the time I didn't think this but I think in retrospect the politics took a back seat to the challenge itself which was about getting as many people together as possible with an oppositional message." **Dale McKinley**

"I think with the WSSD, because there was a... particularly amongst the Preparatory Committee, there was this struggle between those who were trying to make it a problem of poverty, the problem of the United Nations and what they called the International Community and those who would say no the problem lies here in South Africa, the South African Government and its agency for neo-liberalism in South Africa. So part of the focus on WSSD must also be on the policies and on the problems in South Africa and therefore the question of exposing the ANC Government as part of our struggles became a contested issue. And I think that sort of led to a parting of ways amongst people who were preparing for the WSSD and that led to the formation of the Social Movements Indaba, because people then had to then take sides whether they're going...you know with that block of forces that were trying to downplay the role of the ANC and the ANC government in the question of neo-liberalism and globalisation and those who were saying no, no ... the ANC Government is the source of our problem here besides the overall system of capitalism. So people had to take sides in that fight and I think for me WSSD then unified all those progressive forces around a particular banner under the SMI and I think the march on the... was it the 30th of August, 31st August sort of demonstrated the significance of that position that was taken then. I think 2002 was probably the combination of two years of ... two or three years of struggle and then I think when that changed, there is a difference between WSSD and the World Conference against Racism. I mean the fact that the march that was undertaken then on the 31st of August was a march that... politically it was clear in terms of the problems and the sources of these problems and also it separated from those who were supporting the ANC and Tripartite Alliance which I think in the year before that was not the case. I think that WSSD sort of cemented politically ... particularly the social movements in terms of their understanding and also their ... their sort of need for unity amongst those who are opposed to the ANC government." **John Appolis**

"We managed to ride that wave of WSSD for a long, long time as the APF precisely because we captured the momentum that was created by the WSSD. And I think maybe the other movements did not do that adequately or didn't think that that was an important task to do. Because such big mobilisations can inspire people and bring about a sense of activism and enthusiasm for struggle, for organisations. And I think we sort of decided to harness that mood, that militancy that was displayed at WSSD into a much-more stronger, solid organisational form and hence we started moving in the direction of formalising the APF. I mean I agree with you there, there was a lot of debate in the APF about what to do after the WSSD and I think there were comrades who were opposed to this kind of internal organisational consolidation and building of organisation and wanted to continue with a kind of big event sort of politics. I remember those debates where people used to argue that if you don't take to the streets, you are not struggling. You know if you don't protest, you know you are not struggling, you know there were lots of those debates within the organisation. I didn't support that kind of approach to struggle. I mean you can't be in permanent... permanent action, you know people get exhausted, you need to consolidate, you need to develop your organisation, you need to develop the perspective of the militants, you have to provide certain training and political understandings, you know for them to sustain the organisation and carry the organisation through. So I am just saying now that I am thinking about it there could have been that element that people were sort of ... not systematically unpacking what WSSD actually really meant and how that reflects the state of the movements and not taking that into consideration in their organisational and political strategies." **John Appolis**

"Let me put it this way ... you know understanding this as a moment in a long process, understanding that you can't sustain that moment. I don't think we had enough of a sense of that. So, people wanted to have the same levels of mobilisation, the same levels of enthusiasm which was not possible to do." **Nina Benjamin**

"At the time I didn't think that there was something of a national movement being possible. I thought it was pre-emptive of a lot of like groundwork in Johannesburg that was going to be necessary because on the face of it you had a couple of affiliates who were taking, or making important political actions and my sentiment at the time was that our priority really should have been to like build the struggle in the inner city for instance which was facing an offence from the municipality around the King's Buildings program because you know it was difficult as it was to organise in the city, organising now with people from Cape Town and from Durban seemed to me to be over reaching to what we could realistically achieve. And I thought at the time that, that those kind of initiatives that took form more in the Social Movements Indaba coming out in the World Summit on Sustainable Development, that they were pre-empting the kind of work that we need to be doing locally. I would never say to the exclusion of those, the possibilities, but the kind of imperative to be a nationally representative structure that was opposed to national government programs was weakening our political development at the local level." **Nicolas Dieltiens**

“When these two individual conferences came the APF was well positioned maybe in terms of its politics to respond. And at that time there was a lot of tentativeness amongst the left as to how to respond to the ANC’s rightward shift and also these international conferences were also causing confusion because they came to South Africa as a reward for South Africa being a democratic country. So people were thinking what better place to have a conference against racism than post-apartheid South Africa. So in a way these conferences were here to celebrate our democracy, what we have achieved, backed by the international community. So I am trying to explain why it would have been a bit confusing for the unions no matter how left-wing as long as they got caught up in the actual politics of NGO’s and other campaign organisations like SANCO. So I think the APF was clearer because of its battles, because it had fought the ANC on the ground. The ANC had almost declared its position; we are neo-liberal that’s it - sorry we lie about it but on the ground ... so the APF was confident and clear, its message was clear and it attracted the various people who wanted to be part.” **Trevor Ngwane**

“There was that hype to say well this is going to be something big, something major and even though we are not going to be able to go within Sandton but the feeling we are going to make a mark ... Seeing a lot of people out there in the streets and everybody joining in singing and most of the international people also being part of that I think it was electrifying at the same time exciting to say our voices are also going to be heard outside your original movements which were there. It’s a memory that someone will carry on for quite a long time and I think it brought some excitement to say hang on we are on something new here and something is going to develop. Unlike being within your affiliate where you think it’s only us and a very few people who have similar sort of outlook to things and how things should be, it is quite a well, bigger number and a bigger network that was quite exciting.” **Silumko Radebe**

Response to the APF by the state, the ANC and the alliance

“In early years, probably right up until Thabo Mbeki was ousted, I mean the ANC government had a policy of not negotiating, not meeting with the APF or its affiliates around any of the problems and memoranda that we had submitted to them over the years. And for them basically we were characterised as counter revolutionaries, ultra leftists, radicals that don’t support democracy etc., etc. I mean they were out to just vilify the organisation, discredit it even criminalise it in many respects. And I think that sort of... I don’t know confirmed in people’s minds the problems of the ANC government. It is not a caring government, it doesn’t bother about their issues, it treats them... want to make them criminals in terms of the issues. So I think to a large extent it sort of accelerated peoples understanding of the character of the ANC, its political character because of the way it sort of reacted and the ways it responded to legitimate demands and issues that people had. They almost made it easier, easy for us to politicise the issues, besides the natural linkage between the neo-liberal policies and the immediate problems. But the fact that you can have a neo-liberal Government that is accommodating that consults, that negotiates you know almost co-opts people into co-managing their own suffering and their own sort of social oppression. You can have a neo-liberal Government which is the one that Zuma administration is trying to do now, trying to co-opt communities and people and get their consent for their own social oppression and poverty. Whereas the one under Thabo Mbeki was the one that was quite sort of anti-social movements, anti all the struggles around that were taking place.” **John Appolis**

“It kind of pushed the APF further away from the alliance. Certainly it made the APF vocally opposed to the ANC government as such. So I think by doing that a problem was created where communities and organisations were being identified with an alliance in a way or easily hived off from the APF. Some of the rhetoric made it easy for someone like Mbeki to see us as ‘the enemies of the people’. Another thing is because there wasn’t much going on so it became quite prominent at least in terms of the media and also in the radar screen of the enemy, the ANC, probably bosses also. It’s just that maybe we were not paying attention, we expected it but certainly there was a concerted campaign to discredit the APF in broader society you know also particularly among the alliance and rank and file membership. I think a lot of work was done because the ANC has got good grassroots structures, good structures you know, making sure that people were educated that ‘this is the enemy and be careful of this people’. So this is what happened and as a response to that the APF also started maybe feeling alone you know although we did orient to COSATU, supporting COSATU. But I think the politics inside the APF - okay this is debateable because this was debated at the time - but I think the politics started to be, okay not inward looking but there was now less hope of ever winning the alliance rank and file. So it was almost as if now we have to build our own constituency, find the disgruntled find those who are fighting.” **Trevor Ngwane**

“After the pressure of the social movements, the Anti-Privatisation Forum, there were a lot of you know responses from the government. Like, for instance, the indigency policy where the government was trying to respond by, you know, using its divide and rule of providing services for the poor and then the poor must come up and declare themselves, to come and sign. And then there were a lot of sponsors that our government also introduced, some of the projects through public works are temporary jobs of six months, that’s how the government was trying to respond. And then trying to fight back against the social movement to divide people in the communities and then also by introducing these community workers, you know. I think those are the ways of government trying to respond by saying we are doing this we are doing that but knowing very well that this is not going to work. And then for free education saying that it is education for the poor, the free education for the poor, some of the schools, government will provide free education for certain schools, not for all schools. You know government was trying to respond to the demands of the Social Movements like the Anti-Privatisation Forum.” **Richard Mokolo**

“The response actually was very scary. I remember there was a time in Soweto where some of the ANC guys were threatening to shoot us - I remember that incident when we were doing Operation Khanyisa. But also I had my phone bugged many times you know especially during the World Summit on Sustainable Development and even the house where I lived in there will be cars just running, just to scare you late at night. And a Jacob Maroga who is now the CEO of Eskom actually like came ... and he said to me “Virginia, I am ready to talk”, you know. And I’m like, ‘No, you know me because I am part of the SECC so if you want to talk you must talk to the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee’. So it was a form of saying, ‘Listen to me...’, you know, ‘...and I will do better things for you’, you know. So that was how they responded, trying to silence the voices that were more vocal but also the arrests. And I will say there was positive and negative impact of that because when you recruit or organise people around issues that the APF was addressing they will be interested because that’s what they live you know and then they wanted also change, to see change in their life. But as soon as there is an arrest, people will back off because they don’t want to be arrested. But at the same time because there are arrests and there will be media and at that time we had lots of media coverage whether it is in Soweto or APF at large. So APF became very well-known and even if today you speak to someone in the ANC he will tell you, ‘Hey, APF was a threat for some time’.” **Virginia Setshedi**

“I do think the character of the organisation and what it was concerned about, what it was engaging with, certainly shifts in quite dramatic way. At the kind of initial phases of the organisation we did not have a kind of orientation ... to kind of secondary things like the Gatherings Act, to kind of more focused issues such as, for instance, how much water a family living in Soweto requires and also understanding how particular levels of consumption were set by municipalities and so forth. As these became the kind of practical objects of our struggle - this is precisely what I mean in terms of deepening of our kind of understanding of particular issues and as well as giving particular meaning in how we start to understand - whether it be privatisation, cost recovery whatever the case might be. But I think as those kinds of issues became what we were concerned about, many struggles coming to the organisation and begin to reflect its character onto the organisation, yes it’s a tremendous kind of shift. But it’s one again, one that’s on-going and so the organisation also is tremendously also affected by, for instance, struggles against prepaid belonged to a particular period. But I am just speaking to a logic of development, not a kind of particular moment, right. For instance when the kind of emphasis of the campaign around pre-paid water meters shifts from one tactic to another, the character of the organisation also is subtly affected by those shifts; so from ‘destroy the meter’ and the kind of overt acts of infrastructure sabotage under conditions where we are fighting lots of legal defence battles and so forth to one where we are challenging pre-paid meter in the Constitutional Court. And it also has affected the political language in which we represent our struggles; so the kinds of ways in which certain things are represented in the context of the court case and how they’re represented in terms of our defence of sabotage for instance are quite different. I think that that’s the nice thing about doing something like this – it’s precisely to understand that kind of fluidity, political identity, when an organisation is able to reflect the character of the struggles that are animating it ... and I think that it also goes to that point that it’s really been the kind of rhythm of struggle that’s defined the organisation within the context of all these different organisations coming and going rather than a specific set or a focused ideological orientation.” **Ahmed Veriava**

“Look, one of the things that characterised every battle that we fought, I mean apart from some kind of early kind of negotiations we had with Eskom and so forth, is that the state has for the most part been unwilling to treat us as a kind of authentic political force that is worth negotiating with. So what has happened often is that those victories that we have won, whether in relation to cost recovery and electricity cut-offs in Soweto or whatever, has been negotiated with SANCO, you know both lending credibility to the kind of civic movement within the alliance and at the same time distancing themselves from us. Also, part of a kind of a naming that authorises force to be used against us in certain cases, calling us ultra-left or people with agendas ... and I think that certainly has been partly also been a blessing because I mean we have not been drawn into forums that then force us in to kind of water down our politics but at the same time I think it has also not given the organisation a kind of sense of clear victories

that it's won in a lot of cases which are important for building confidence among a layer of militants. [However] the very reality of the fact is that we've completely changed the game and these kind of struggles of movements have meant that there is a kind of political limit that's established as to how far they can push the programme of privatisation; there's also a limit to how far they can push the program of cost recovery whose practical kinds of outcomes have been lifelines, social grants and so forth. And I don't just count the APF in these struggles, I count the much broader thing that collects a kind of political opposition that runs from the social movements to service delivery protests to simple ever day acts of resistance in private and certainly presented a tremendously real political challenges to how far real political programmes can be pushed. In the same way that political discourse in this current phase has shifted far more to the left than it was in the 1990's, and the very fact that the question of neo-liberalism can be debated in the public realm and a certain acknowledgement that Mbeki was pro-business, is stuff that we've created the conditions for - by making these public critiques, by transforming them from the kind of crazy voices from the dark corners of the left into real public political issues, are something of the victories of social movements. We created the epistemological conditions for government to recognise that these things don't work, that they are not working anymore in this way or the costs, the political costs that they are forcing on us are too great for us to continue along this path." **Ahmed Veriava**

"The independent left was very, very small and at that point [early time of the APF] I think quite disaffected and disillusioned in many ways. Their response I think was one of first of all curiosity – 'what's this new formation that pretends or purports to speak on behalf of poor working people and is actually doing something about it?'; but besides curiosity then fairly quickly the response was one of, 'it is competition', as opposed to let's find areas to work in solidarity with. And I think that was a direct result of what I call very vanguardist, precast notions of struggle - that you only have particular forms of struggle that fit into a schema and the APF wasn't one of those, it was something that's outside of a schema and there are all sorts of different kinds of people, people from the SACP and all these kinds of people ... 'oh my God this hybrid, that's coming out of these things, it's not revolutionary, it's not going do much', even though I think some of the independent left supported the struggles, the practical struggles because they had to. They couldn't be seen to be opposing communities there that were resisting cut-offs and evictions. I am convinced that from that point onwards, from the time the APF was formed, the majority with a few exceptions in the independent left has been incredibly opportunistic in its engagements with and response to organisations like the APF. It has at times tried to vilify them when it's convenient to do so and at other times it has piggy-backed when it's convenient to do so. So, I don't hold much of a candle to what is considered to be the independent left in this country in terms of their serious engagement with the APF in any meaningful way." **Dale McKinley**

"The APF always tried, maybe at times not as hard as it should have, but always tried even after SAMWU and NEHAWU left and even after COSATU expelled the APF from its own building - all these kinds of very clear indications that, 'we don't like you, we don't want to work with you' - the APF still has attempted on every major occasion that I know of tried to create those links. So every time COSATU went on strike or the SACCAWU strike, the Shoprite Checkers strikes, the SAMWU strikes – is to create solidarities, pickets, things like this. Our orientation - we learnt very quickly and personally in terms of the attempts - it was the leaderships most often times of the structures and the alliance that were vehemently opposed to any kind of working relationship. Often times the members appreciated the fact that the APF came out in support - even if our numbers might not have been that large - but certainly the political solidarity. And I think that the division there needs to be made between the leadership and the rank and file. So the barriers to that have predominately been three or four things; the leadership of those structure which has a preset, almost automatic - you just put it into automatic drive - nothing to do with the APF. I still remember I was flabbergasted, absolutely flabbergasted even with all my experiences in the SACP and sectarianism and right-wing politics ... when I saw the COSATU Gauteng region had issued a statement and a directive to its constituent organisations not to work with the Anti-Privatisation Forum and it was direct from the top down; some people ignored it but some people took it very seriously. So that has been a huge barrier, that leadership trying to prevent these things from happening. The other barrier has sometimes been our own members - I can understand this perspective and not necessarily agree with it - in our meetings where we have discussed this and said, 'Now we must attend this, we must support this even though we know what the SACP leadership is like we must go and engage' - a lot of people from the ground are saying, 'why should we go and engage or go and support the SACP / COSATU when they don't do anything for us?' And that has been a barrier because it's hard to argue against that, it's hard to tell people well, maybe you should look beyond this and look at the strategic sense of building bridges and maybe something in the future that comes of this. But in the immediate sense people get out in the streets, they burn tyres, they barricade roads, they get put in jail, they do things and they don't see any support and solidarity from these organisations whatsoever so their attitude is, 'Why should we do the same thing?' Now that is a little bit short-sighted in a particular sense but I can understand it." **Dale McKinley**

APF fund-raising and finances: impact and consequences

"Well that allowed the APF first of all organisationally to consolidate itself in terms of setting up organisational infrastructure in terms of office, staff, employment you know all of that. That allowed us to really setup an organisational infrastructure. It also allowed us to have ... to consolidate our organisation in terms of setting up structures, accountable structures, office bearers, coordinating committees, you know. And we actually had the resources to allow communities to actually participate and be active within the organisation. It also allowed us to undertake a number of important campaigns and workshops so to consolidate. It really sort of assisted in that process of both political and organisational consolidation particularly after the WSSD. But also it brought in another element... you know what I mean, because the funds, I think the way we raise funds. Funds are raised both in the APF as an organisation but also for its affiliates and I think because affiliates have their own rhythms, they have their own sort of initiatives in terms of struggles around their specific issues, that created a lot of pressure and tensions in the organisation on how to allocate and distribute the funds. Ever since that time, you know what I mean... up to the present the APF... there is always tensions around the allocation of the funds where communities would want to access the funds in terms of their needs, their requirements ... the APF you know could sort of look at the overall picture in terms of the needs of the organisation and in terms of the needs of many of its other affiliates and try to find ways of balancing all these pressing requirements on the question of the funds and sometimes...I mean not sometimes... on many occasions it creates tensions, pressures within the organisation. Also I think our social base is largely unemployed. So I mean even there in the context of neo liberalism where not many resources are available within the townships in terms of... because in the 1980's churches and schools would readily make available their institutional resources to organisations and to activists , even libraries would allow you to make photocopies and access certain things in the past. Under neo liberalism everyone ... is cutting on costs and looking at their budgets and applying austerity measures in their organisations and that created a lot of... sort of pressures on the APF as a resource of finances." **John Appolis**

"It was challenging because all of a sudden here you've got this kind of nascent movement that was trying to find its feet and trying to figure out the best way to kind of structure ourselves, you know, what is our plan of action, what is it that we want to do, what are our strategies and on top of that now, we had to try to put that into some form to get funds. Writing a proposal where you want to say - give me money for toyi-toying and you know what I mean, for demonstrations to have a presence and so forth. These are funders and you are working with a capitalist system and you've got to work within some of the parameters, what do you need to say in a proposal and how do you word the struggles and the anger, you know the passion in it, all of that with making it sound attractive to funders and not threatening that this is a rogue organisation that just wants to go and you know, I don't know, you know storm buildings and break windows, those kinds of things. So it was challenging to put together a proposal, you know what I mean, saying this is what, but it was more rooted in again, something that was very basic and was the basis of the struggle and which is human dignity, respectful human rights around the South African Constitution, things that were in the RDP, right to life, you know basic dignity, talking about basics, access to basic services and how to engage, how to make, give meaning to what democracy is about, get people, how do we get communities to participate in their own development and to be active and to be vocal in their own development, I mean how do we work to develop that so that they can influence, you know policies make their leaders accountable, you know make their government leaders accountable and so forth." **Florenca Belvedere**

"The other fight that came with that, I think that was also for me, regardless of whether you are a movement or whether you are a government institution or an NGO, you've got to have accountability, right, there always has to be accountability and not just about funds, because that was one of the things, that people, someone must be accountable and realise there are limits to what we can do, you know. But there was that argument from Trevor saying 'we don't need to be accountable, you know, we are a movement' and you know I was saying ja, you know just because you are a movement, you also need to be accountable. So some of those things were hard, because there were also, a lot of times I think I was seen as oh, you know 'here comes Florenca to tell us what you can, what you can't do, you can't limit the struggle by the funds you have' and yes, I know in the ideal world we could, you know we would want to do lots of things but reality struck, you know and that was the hard part about being in the APF at times, because I felt like I had to be the wicked witch of the west, you know I always had to say, 'Guys, this is what is going on, we overspend here, we're doing this' and, you know sometimes I think the association is, 'Oh, you are a white madam telling us what to do' which I didn't appreciate because it wasn't, you know it is not me saying it, this is the reality, as an organisation this is what we have and I am just being a reminder here, because I am dealing with this stuff on a regular basis. So, like I said, I think community members tended to understand

more, tended to understand I think a bit more than some of our Executive members and that was a frustrating thing. At times it felt there was a ... also sometimes a level of entitlement. I think we started getting that with people saying, 'No we, we must get money now', You know as a community - if one community got and they didn't, then there was a sense of you know, we should be getting money, and sometimes you were not really sure whether was it for a really fruitful thing that this was going to happen. So there was that issue of not allowing again, not saying that we are going to do this for the sake of we've got the funds, let's just do it but being driven by your, you know, your politics and your strategies and your goals." **Florenca Belvedere**

"Those resources allowed us to bring people in from different communities, which was ... one sees it as very basic, but when you've got to pay ... I remember dishing out the transport money for people to come to meetings and that was fundamentally important to allow people to attend. You know if we hadn't had those resources then it would have become a top down thing where only the people living in Joburg would be the only ones attending meetings. So, in terms of that it facilitated something as basic as getting into a taxi ... for five rand or ten rand to get there. And then in terms of the structure, what we did as well is that we you know it allowed us also to decentralise, we started to have regional structures of the APF and to push toward that so that not everything had to happen in Joburg, you know, or in Braamfontein that then some of the activities could start happening within different regions, whether it was in the Vaal, whether it was in the East rand or whether it was in Soweto and so forth. So that you had more localised activities that could take place, more resources could go into organising more localised meetings or door to door activities and really bring the struggle down to the base as opposed to some general demos that we would all go to." **Florenca Belvedere**

"I think the fact that the APF was serious in terms of what it was doing and was trying to be accountable and we, I think also we were very careful because we knew that one of the things that any of our opponents, whether it was the ANC or any of the other organisations might latch onto, you know mismanagement of funds to make headlines. So I think for me, particularly, I was very conscious of that, to say we need to have a clean bill of health so that, that doesn't become something that they can use, you know against us in that sense. So, it wasn't about selling your principles and what you were about, it was about how you package that to make it sound good and something that funders could swallow. The form that it actually takes on the ground could be different or things like you know having to take funds to pay bail bonds for people who got arrested, you know what I mean, you are not going to talk about that, you are not going to put that in a proposal but you can still do that with funds and be true to what it is that you are trying to do. I think the danger becomes when, if you don't know where you are going, ja then chances are that you will get swallowed by the money and forget where you are going. But if you have a vision and you know where you are headed then you will use those funds to make those things happen. So that was always my argument, it wasn't because you are getting money, you are now capitalist like the people you are trying to fight, you know, we live in a capitalist society and you've got to engage with that reality and you've got to make use of those resources to follow your principles and your objectives. So, I think again, I think affiliates, affiliates could see that I think it was more debates that were coming from some of the leaders of the organisation, more than anything else, you know, stirring the pot and yet those very same leaders were on the side were trying to get funds for their own organisations and not for the APF as a whole, so that was the irony of it." **Florenca Belvedere**

"The previous financial administrator of the APF Florenca Belvedere resigned and she had been in that position for the previous 3-4 years as the APF treasurer and she had overseen access to certain funder resources and that kind of thing. So the skills levels to manage that relationship were already in place. The person who was elected as the successor treasurer I think initially tried to continue that and to be up to the task of what was required with regards to the treasurer position but within about a 6 - 8 month period after that person - Mmiselo Bayi in this case - took the reins of the treasuryship. I don't think it was personally his fault necessarily but as a result of lax controls and not really paying attention to where money was being expended and the role of the organiser and the administrator - in this case which we have previously referred to as being part of a political organisation - in diverting certain resources for things, the APF became effectively bankrupt within eight months. It had expended all of its resources; it had no more resources to even continue to run the office or to pay its organiser and administrator. At that point I was called in ... at that point Mmiselo left, he resigned and left I think half way into his term. So the organisation was in a massive bind. Not only was it technically bankrupt in terms of its financial resources but it had no effective treasurer in that position and nobody seemed to be willing at that point to step forward so I volunteered. I was asked essentially to do so first not as an elected treasurer but just to do the actual work that was required to get back a sense of financial or fiscal kind of sanity to the organisation as well as to repair the relationships with the funders because clearly there was massive damage that had been caused. I accepted that challenge and I did so and at the AGM that followed that temporary period, I was elected as the treasurer." **Dale McKinley**

"I think there has been quite dramatic shift in people's ability to survive. I think what then happened is ... the thing of the little resources that the APF did have - I don't know how to put it - it created this layer of young men, the mobile, the transport. You know it starts off with I come to a meeting and I also come to do something else when I come, and then it comes, you know I take the train, because... because you know I am constantly looking at forms of survival. So in a funny way people started having a sense of how they could use this little bit that was there. Then in some ways it became I think coinciding with this discussion about us and them, you know, them being the people who work, the people who... it became a little bit of an entitlement around the money. I think coinciding with another discussion which was about who are the funders, the role of funders. I think we never... not never, but I think what was introduced to the APF by the left groups was, you know that the funders are these people who you must, in sense is the enemy, they owe you something. You know the fact that these people are collecting money from somewhere or from the Government. I mean, I remember, there was an attempt to explain, you know that the people we are getting money from ... this is who they are, this is what they are trying to do, this is very often about solidarity more than just getting money in. But because there was another kind of thing being introduced there which was that these people owe us this, there was an entitlement and I think not enough of an appreciation of what it means to, through the funding, build forums of solidarity." **Nina Benjamin**

"There's a thing of a jealousy, like you pull the other person down. And I am not talking of the APF now only, this you will find in any other contexts. I've never understood how we really got here; there obviously must be lots of explanations for this. So there is that thing that, there is a sense that we must all be equally with nothing, if we have nothing then no one must have anything. Maybe things came too easy, that is the flip side of the resources thing. You know we started having the meetings and then when you had a council and had a meeting, education meeting, you gave everybody transport money and you gave everybody food to come. So when someone starts having an activity, before they had an activity calling people together, suddenly now that activity in the community needs to look like the thing they experienced here. So they must have the food and the transport and all the other dynamics start setting in. I think there was from within the APF we created a model that people then thought that is what you need to do, and you need it and you can't do it unless you have all those resources. Just at the practical level, there's the thing of handling money because more and more people had to handle money and had to report on that handling. I don't think people would start up-front to be dishonest ... but those practical things of not having money and then having access, sometimes thousands of rands. As a result in some ways the APF became a little bit of a space for the income generating processes, at an individual level. I don't know what the answer is to that one, but I think this thing of a lot of unemployed people ... maybe this could've all been fine if you didn't have what was happening nationally ... if it wasn't for the national thing, it wouldn't, people wouldn't have felt it okay, it would worry them, it would drive them crazy that they are doing the thing. I mean also to be honest I think the other thing has been that we have to look at who has been the Treasurers ... people want people they can trust as a Treasurer. So that must be someone who is working, who has got their own income but at the same time it's almost like you're like a father. Because if we can get away with something then we will do it because it is not like that connection in the same way ... maybe that has also played a role and one ends up then taking on what can feel like a parenting role. I think what happened at another level, maybe at an office level or so, it was all tied in with ... , 'Ah, now this is the funders' money now and we can share it, to hell with them and we can do what we like'. So I think this attitude to where the money came from is another important component of this thing ... because this is their money, the white people's money, why must we worry? I mean why do people have *stokvels* and other things and they don't kill each other and they share the things with each other? So I mean it's not like they were born with it, I mean there are example' s where it isn't like that, so I think that ... this coincided with this thing of where the money comes from." **Nina Benjamin**

"The funding was supposed to be good, to boost the struggles of the APF because it becomes easier now to struggle, to wage battles like taking for instance the battle for water in court, it needed resources you can't do it without resources. But resources on their own they became a hindrance to those who are in ... who do not know where the struggle is going and the resources themselves became the struggle and that is the negative impact of resources because people think that they are struggling because resources are there. They became committed to the resources rather than the struggle itself so that's a bit negative but resources on their own they need quality management. Without people who can manage resources there can be damage in the organisation." **Phineas Malapela – APF projects coordinator - WCCC**

"Maybe we didn't think that having affiliates coming in to transport people maybe in the long run was going to be a problem. And also I think even though we say APF is a home of the working class but I think at some point I think we are supposed to limit the number of affiliates really ... not to shut them outside to say "no, no we have twenty now the door is closed' but to say we can only have this number of affiliates you know, I mean really. We're not

a union and they are not even contributing. So having twenty five affiliates and depending on one funder or two funders ... and people dying every day, having to pay bail monies and the like. I think maybe we were supposed to say we limit the number or have some sort of a contribution from the affiliates. Let me make an example with COSATU ... when [workers] pay their dues to COSATU and in a way they feel there's a responsibility but with our affiliates it's like APF is expected to give us the money, it's our money you know what I mean." **Teboho Mashota**

"The challenge that was serious in the APF was on the leadership skills from communities because some people were relying on APF to ... sustain their affiliates you know, for the APF ... to take care of the affiliates. The leadership in the affiliates groups, they were not organised in a sense of organising for their own structures ... to also acquire the local resources because from the struggle that we take, we need also to develop an alternative resources, not only just focusing on the funders but the local resources; what can we do with the local resources, how can we bring other people on board? Even some people they are not taking part in protests, toyi-toying, but there is another way of the very same people supporting your struggle. You know an example, the local people say we need paint for graffiti writing you know the mural art, whatever we don't need always to go to APF because that message, we are not writing that message for their structure in Johannesburg, we are writing this message for community and how the community participates in that message. Now we have the hardware's operating in the community that we can form the campaign and they can donate the spray paints you know ... some people are saying every time APF must do this and that and that and that." **Richard Mokolo**

"I love the fact that I find this challenging because having to deal with finances and you know, balancing books and what have you, because that was new to me because I only dealt with petty cash which in my previous instances really didn't go beyond three hundred rand per week. So now having to deal with large sums of money, it was something really difficult and new but somehow the fact the organisation is a non-profit organisation that is really dependent on donor funds and we really have to be careful with our resources. It's also taught me how to be careful with how I spend my personal resources, you know really sitting down and budgeting, I didn't really stick to a budget then but now I know there is going to be a budget and line items which I apply in my everyday life really. So I have not only grown in terms of my professional life because of the experience here, but I suppose in my personal life as well." **Sehlahphi Sibanda**

"I think the problem in the APF is that because when communities who are economically depressed ... so you had now a membership, and a leadership which was unemployed whatever, whatever. So the affiliates of the APF were not self-sustaining excepting for a few and even those who at first had been self-sustaining maybe at a very low level started increasing their resources they need higher than what they had so a bit of dependency developed. Okay but this is something debated at the time. This is not a straightforward issue at all you know in a sense that you can't organise the poor and expect that we have millions to fund a campaign, so you must have a way of getting money but whatever money you get there's the politics of money ... so maybe APF didn't handle some of that politics quite well I think. So dependency developed and then also you get a bit of not corruption but false generation and false reporting now because the money is handed out because you have to give now to the few things that happen. But I think also politically there was a bit of damage on the ground because when people are poor and there is an organisation with some resources it becomes a power base - so maybe people would want positions. It's hard to separate economic and political interests at personal and organisational level but I think that on a personal level one can say maybe sometimes people were also getting something because of the money or getting confused ... the other negative thing our enemy started attacking us, 'you're getting imperialist money'. Also overtime it became important to keep on having the same level of more money. So in a way just as our affiliates became more dependent on the APF, the APF's structure itself became more dependent on the donors although the donors didn't really you know set conditionalities but obviously there was a dynamic." **Trevor Ngwane**

"We don't need money to struggle ... but the reality is we couldn't or wouldn't have been able to do those activities if we didn't have financial resources. So it will all boil down to the issues of saying ja comrades we do support your struggle, here's our statement but now in terms of making sure that that activity happens, it wouldn't have been quite possible. I mean a simple thing of making sure of the closing maybe of the Golden Highway, the blockage of the highway but people say you don't need resources to do that but I think as we have seen in the past the campaigns that we have kept supporting in solidarity with other movements and other networks is that there are things which need to be done physically or you know practically. And those boil down to finances and I think in a way some movements started coming to the APF because now the APF has finances and they say 'come support us, we are doing this activity and can you please try and support us financially to making sure the activity does happen or does take place'. There was a lot of people who sort of jumped to the APF hoping that all the time they will be getting that financial backing and when I think the APF at many a times was quite wise to say well we

can see those sort of elements creeping up within those communities but quite importantly I think we supported anyhow the struggles that were taking place within those communities, it was quite necessary to do that. I think it made quite a positive and a negative sort of connotation to the whole thing because people will say 'ja, you don't need money to struggle' but the reality is many of the movements that came forward to the APF for solidarity were also in there because now the APF also had resources that they could utilise ...it all boiled down to the issues of resources in a negative way that dependency was going to be there within affiliates to say 'well, we don't have to find our own resources as an affiliate, the APF has resources'. And I think people maybe at times didn't have that outlook of saying there is a need for us to go and look for resources and support the APF, but rather than the APF supporting them as affiliates." **Silumko Radebe**

"The issue of the resources is good and bad. Because it depends on how people come to organisations. And it also goes down to the fact that people are unemployed and you cannot be part of an institution where you see money being exchanged and at the end of the day you don't have money to go buy bread, which to some extent I understand; the fact that resources then become an issue that actually breaks the organisations and most people then want to also survive. You see it even today where organisations are powerful as soon as resources come in, now there are fights. You know "now who's supposed to be the treasurer...who's supposed to be the treasurer"? Who is supposed to get this money, who is not supposed to get"? And then there is this tendency of people having this mentality of entitlement, 'this money is being given in our name, the poor'. But then it is not given for you as an individual as the poor, it's has been given to a group of people that are poor so they can be able to make campaigns. I think that this is also connected to the fact that the amount or the extent of political knowledge is very low. So then people tend not to actually understand why they are part of the APF or whatever organisations but see it as an opportunity for them." **Virginia Setshedi**

"It is also a kind of important dimension, because the one thing that I didn't say is that I think although the character of the organisation has in the main been shaped by the struggles and I think that I didn't really put emphasis on the main; one of the other kind of aspects that has shaped it has been in the kind of ways in which it has been both to officially structure itself vis-à-vis how it gets money and how its manages that money. And two, both in relation to the very contest over common resources that took place within the organisation. Maybe the other is not as potent in relation to the formal structure of the organisation but it is at least important in understanding the kinds of divisive character of some of the relations that began to exist within the organisation. So in relation to the one, that is in relation to the ways in which funders fund things and so forth and how that actually structures organisation ... for example, you know the Education Sub Committee, when a lot of money was ... going to the Education Sub Committee because this is what the funders were willing to fund, which meant that you also had a very strong Education Sub Committee, but also directed towards certain kinds of things, not necessarily a kind of mobilising-centric form of organisational usage, but rather a pedagogy that ... although important, I don't know sometimes I got a sense you know, somehow things were ... some of the things that the Education Sub Committee did were very important for us for developing a perspective on certain questions, but some of them ... it pushed the organisation into that kind of realm of workshops and bred an institutional and political culture that was focused around those as the centre of the organisation. The street and the march was now in competition or more acutely in competition with the coordinating committees and the workshops as the life of the organisation and what it meant to be part of the organisation. Funding also shapes an organisational kind of ... especially like with our funder, there was some sort of demands of how that money needs to structure the organisation or needs to be administered within the organisation which then impacts on organisational structure. Now I think in broad terms, these have not been ones that have kind of been systems that have gone in the direction of reducing accountability, but rather they served to ensure accountability. But at the same time, they professionalise certain functions in the organisation; there does become a tension between the kind of rigours of accounting practices and democratic management of common resources. Even though that issue has historically been mobilised somewhat disingenuously, but is nevertheless a tension..." It's one of the challenges when there is collective resources, but also one where some people are seeing collective resources or rush to ensure your share of collective resources, which I think is also part of maybe what we all need to learn. You know for the middle class folk whose interest was in the voice, there was the rush to claim the voice of the APF, because that also maybe is what has been kind of particularly valorised, and then for some people there were a rush to claim the resources of the organisation. And in both instances there was a kind of need for learning to be in common, to be collectively. That is something we still have to learn, communism, one of the good things about this new movement is that we recognise that we had to learn to become communists in how we're fighting for communism." **Ahmed Veriava**

"I think there is an effect [of funding] but I have never been convinced - from being at the sort of coalface of this - that it is as much as some people make it out to be. Precisely because the way it actually worked is this: the APF

comes up with its own programme and says this is what we want to do; but it's not a case of - it does [involve] the treasurer and the finance group and eventually the office bearers and other structures of the APF [that] discuss this at some point or another – but it's not as if the funders priorities have no impact at all. You look at those and say - for example, War on Want which had been the core funder of the APF for most part - War on Want was a fairly flexible funder but it did have very specific things around education initiatives, what they called thematic workshops and education initiatives, that we have to do but what they did not do is that they did not dictate the content of them. They didn't say you have to do them on 1, 2, 3 and 4 – that was up to the organisation. So, the challenge became in the APF, to say first of all do we accept the fact that these kinds of activities, that we want to do them and do we want to do them on this kind of scale? Once that was decided by the majority of the membership, and it wasn't decided by some individual or one or two people, then the challenge became how does that fit into the struggles, how do you create educational opportunities in workshops and these kinds of things that strengthen the base struggles of the organisation? And I'm not sure that has always been done in the best way and so one can't confuse the two things. The one thing is that yes it does impact; so you could say we might have done more of these things or if we hadn't signed that funding relationship then we wouldn't have had as many workshops - but that really doesn't get you very far. The question therefore is would you have done other workshops, what is the content of those workshops, what is the content of the educational initiatives? I have always believed that the APF has always held the upper hand in its relationship with the funders and not the other way round. And we have, on numerous occasions when I've been treasurer, when we have gotten into negotiations for particular kinds of funding and there have been certain demands placed on the organisation, we have rejected those where we have thought - and I say 'we' in the collective sense of the organisation - where the majority has thought those would fundamentally impinge upon the character of the APF. I think where the trickiest terrain is in this regard is on the legal terrain and I don't think it's because of the funding per se, I think it's the way things are followed after that more so ...” **Dale McKinley**

Character of the APF membership: positives and negatives

“I think the base being unemployed and the activists being largely middle class, unemployed or students created tensions. The activists were quite sort of strong and emphatic on accountability and proper use of resources and you know what I mean? And the base would see that as these comrades not wanting us to access the resources and therefore they ... I don't know, raising all these issues or they want to place obstacles in their path to access the resources. That created that kind of tension between...within the organisation now. The base would argue or some comrades would argue that these are comrades who've got money, you know what I mean but they don't want us to have access to the money, which was not the case. It was more a question of accountability, proper use of the funds and also the question of ensuring the sustainability of the organisation. I think for me that sort of is part of the tensions that were sort of introduced by the funds within the organisation. I think other comrades wanted to use that tension as a way of criticising it and creating a sort of false tension between what they call intellectuals and the base which I thought was politically incorrect and opportunistic to create that.” **John Appolis**

“Look I think that the APF all the time ... there was a real struggle to be representative of the working class I mean that was a key aim all the time. I think what came out was if you think of the so called middle class elements or people who came from the university there became less and less space ... you became a resource ... this was not your struggle this was something that you gave for which I think was a big problem. I mean, I think that you needed to recognise that you are not doing this for someone else and it then becomes easy to leave because when it becomes too much and there's too many meetings, it becomes and you've got your work and you seem to be able to put your commitments somewhere else ... people somewhat drifted off. So I don't think we found ... and also there was a lot of, there was maybe a very crude notion of what working class representation was going to be. So in a sense people were also isolated, pushed out you know and I think one of the notions of the APF, one of the big features of the APF from my recollection of previous struggles and movements of organisations I was in ... I was never in an organisation where they only had unemployed people. I think that the APF that phenomenon was very unique because of the period that we were in and I don't think that we spent enough working out what that really meant. Because I mean just the rhythms of the APF prevented someone who was working to actually participate and in the townships, for example, as soon as you worked you were out, you could only really operate in the APF if you were unemployed. That also created a separation between people who worked and had some level of resources even some levels of skills. So I think that it was too divided, it wasn't saying look we were part of this broader ... I think it was the fear we didn't want to be the broad church that the ANC was and I don't think we've managed to figure out how to do that.” **Nina Benjamin**

“I think there was a very conscious and vicious attempt to try and demonise the middle class people who may have had the arguments and disagreements with the SECC and SG and that I think that didn't assist to build solidarity. But I also see that the thing that I also raised was as middle classes we also have to recognise that we are ... our role can be seen to be a transition because we must assist there you know so that people can be able to speak for themselves. But at the same time we may have to play a different role. Look, for instance if there are fifty thousand people nationally who can articulate on their conditions in the township, myself as Mondli maybe I have to say maybe I must take a back seat here and work in a different area because I was struggling, so big and broad. So that is also another issue ... besides all this things I mean class, there is just a very common human element that people would appreciate that look you know so and so is a nice person. I may not like what he said on that day, but you know this is life and you know, he has been there, he has assisted us, yes maybe he is abrupt but he gets our struggle moving, he assists us. So people could see another thing, I mean people are not fools, they know their leaders.” **Mondli Hlatshwayo**

“I also did not understand the need to stick to a budget, have line items against a budget. Because you know people are not dealing with money, we sort of lack education when it comes to that. We would want to see a thousand rand and say “oh I've got money, so I can use it for whatever I want” but can you really afford to use that one thousand rand for whatever you want? No at times you do not, you might have that one thousand rand and you want to do something else, B, but you cannot because that one thousand rand is for A, you need to take care of A. So this is what I have seen at the APF because most of our people that we deal with don't exactly understand how this money thing works. Now they will hear of funders having provided us with something, they will not even bother to check how much it is, the fact that there's been communication that funders have made funds available people will think “okay, now we're the richest organisation around, we can do whatever we want”. And I understand, I really, really understand that there is a lot of work that our people are doing on the ground and we need money to carry out those activities but we cannot be living beyond our means even in terms of our activities. We want to grow, we want to be effective, very effective in terms of what we do, but we also have these limitations and these are practical limitations that we have to deal with but unfortunately many people do not understand this, there is this sense of entitlement, ‘the money is ours, because it is in our account now, it is ours we can use it however we see fit’. But really it does not work like that, in the real world it does not work like that, there are budgets that have to be followed, there are processes that have to be followed. Because I really found people take offence when I ask them to account, they really take offence, they don't see it as necessary that they should ... they really feel so insulted when that happens, they really can't see any reason in that. That's not just how money works especially at a non-profit organisation that has very, very limited funds and especially in this context, you know the global economic crises, we can't be in a free-for-all situation, we have to account.” **Sehlahphi Sibanda**

“I'll say there's been people especially when we say the skilled when we introduce these people that were here coming from a skilled background they aren't exactly well accepted because communities will feel they don't exactly identify with these people, they feel these people are at another platform when communities aren't exactly there. So it could be a matter of how these people actually introduce themselves to the communities, how they go to communities how someone actually interacts with communities, also shapes the manner in which a particular community is going to accept that person, is going to deal with that person. So it could be that and then there are individuals also as well, there is what I will say is tension within communities like individuals within communities who some communities feel aren't exactly on the same page with them. You might find that this individual probably sort of stands out, with this individual there is one person who is attending most workshops and what have you and then the community will feel this individual is actually doing things, like leaving them out, they are sort of personalising, not exactly personalising actually but turning the struggle if I may use that word into their personal project.” **Sehlahphi Sibanda**

“Look in that particular sub-committee [research] we fought a lot ... there weren't ugly fights but I think they were necessary fights to be able to confront those taken for granted positions that people would hold coming into the subcommittee. Just to make it more complete; for example professors or you know appointed academics coming into that space with a certain amount of knowledge and with the thinking that they would be contributing in a particular way from a certain position of power that they would imagine themselves to hold and be openly questioned, those taken for granted positions being openly questioned by members who might only have a Standard 5 or 6 and not see the same relationship to knowledge production as that person coming in. Or students coming in with a certain arrogance about themselves or seeing themselves as only contributing to the analysis and writing up of field work that was going to be done by others from communities. Or international students coming in with similar kinds of ideas and needing to negotiate those in a common space where different roles are spoken about, where there's also effort made to try and equalise. I'm not saying that we did always, because we also can't

in such a short space of time and with limited resources and very, very definite aims in terms of putting out research for court cases, campaigns and things, be able to confront those properly. But I think there was an attempt to try to do things differently by confronting those different positions of power, and different hierarchies and I mean it was a painful process at any time. I mean also because of the workshops that you had to go through to get people to the same level in terms of understanding issues you were going to start research. The simple task of putting out a questionnaire in which everyone has contributed to, you know the structure, the questions that are involved, understanding what each question means making sure that they going to be translated in the same way all of that took a lot of time and commitment from individual members. And I mean even within that subcommittee there were quite a large number of people who stayed from beginning to end, but there were also a very large number of people who left.” **Prishani Naidoo**

“I think there were tensions there from the beginning and somewhat understandably so. I mean despite the best intentions that the so called middle-class intellectual activists might have there can be no pretence to equivalency with regards to experience. I think where the trip up came and there is always going to be that tension in trying to forge a movement that tries to include both and which tries to do so in a way that is democratic, in which one does not dominate just because one has skills and resources and access to them. I think it’s a healthy tension at a certain level but what that turned into in the APF was an opportunistic means of trying to delegitimise the contributions and the intentions of individual intellectuals and activists and trying to caricature them as being inherently oppressive or inherently controlling or inherently outside of certain experiences and thus you cannot relate. And that took certain racial overtones at times though not always overtly but certainly underneath and that I think are quite destructive. I do not think I still do not think and I have never believed and will never believe that, in the history of the APF that this was the majoritarian view of the rank-and-file members. I think it was the preserve of a smaller group of individuals, some coming from the communities who saw in these intellectuals and activists a barrier to their own fairly centralised and undemocratic control of the movement. In relation to this tension ... I think it got out of hand not because of the involvement of certain intellectuals or middle class activists or people that came from middle class backgrounds in doing certain tasks for the APF but in the manipulation of the tension itself - and I say sometimes it’s a healthy tension – the manipulation of that tension for personal and political ends within the APF. In other words instead of saying comrades we dedicate everything towards creating that second and third layer of cadre ship that then takes the reins and moves with it we are going to try and delegitimise those that are trying to do these kinds of things and therefore what happens when you delegitimise and push those people out then those individuals who’ve done so have control and they have it solely and they haven’t built anything but they then have the voice. **Dale McKinley**

Political groups approach: tensions and leadership

“I think the broader lesson that we learnt from that is that... and I think sometimes when you work for a mass organisation you must make a distinction between your political ideology and approach and the requirements of the organisation as a whole. And I think particularly the organiser didn’t make a distinction between those two and conflated it and I think that created a lot of tensions.” **John Appolis**

“I also think that it was a difficult phase just generally after 2005. This issue of heterogeneity of the APF; in the early phases that wasn’t such an issue and it in fact was a part of the strength of the organisation but later as certain forces increasingly attempted to solicit hegemony and raise one position as that of a hegemonic one, I think the kinds of differences within the organisation started to play themselves out and it’s around that period I think a lot of the kind of tensions that played themselves out over the coming years started to take root. I think that another important dynamic is precisely at the point at which, I think it might have, and I may be a little bit simplistic, but it might have been before then, there wasn’t that much to fight over, but there around 2005, the APF is not simply the loony left, I mean we are a veritable political force, I mean even though we are quite small still our voice carries some amount of symbolic capital and it then is something that people want to control, want to direct, to ensure a correct line. I mean people may think that sounds a little bit simplistic, but at that level, during that period is where the kind of leadership contests start to take divisive turns within the organisation, not that there weren’t shitty things said to people before then, there weren’t fights before then but it’s around then that it starts to, the stakes are pushed up to a level where nobody is simply willing to leave the issue. I do think the kind of solicitation, the actual hegemony of the Socialist Group over the office basically meant that the organisation was being directed by a particular group within the organisation. I don’t want to make it seem like it is just a kind of natural outcome, it was a political problem that meant that the organisation was held hostage to the organisational structure as it was then; Trevor and them had an enormous amount of power in terms of directing who came to meetings who didn’t, what communities were serviced in terms of organising and so forth just by their complete control of the office at the time.” **Ahmed Veriava**

The APF and the Social Movements Indaba (SMI): solidarity and support

“The APF played a role in terms of driving the SMI during that period, which I think was quite important to keep the unity and to keep some kind of continuity between 2002 and the following subsequent years in terms of the struggles around it.” **John Appolis**

“The notion of the SMI, the attempt, I mean that is an important thing, because I think we were trying for the different movements to learn from each other to strengthen as a block. The WSSD was an expression of that but I think the SMI that followed then, you know providing solidarity to Zimbabwe. I think the unfortunate part was that the SMI also came when I think things were not at their best, at their strongest and obviously, the challenges, the weaknesses internally will be magnified ... but I think the idea of that, even for the short time try and made it work was a very significant development on what does it mean to build solidarity. International solidarity, I mean there were people we got who went visiting. I remember to water coalition meetings elsewhere, to the World Social Forum meetings and that’s always important I think in the exposure, the experience that people had. I think that just having that sense that you are connecting to a bigger struggle. I always still wondered how much we understood. I don’t know, maybe when I sometimes go to an international meeting, I come back and I listen to the other South African delegates and wonder if we were in the same meeting because often all we can think about is what the other people didn’t know or didn’t say. Even when in some cases now when they are way ahead of us in strategies and things ... and I also I think that with this international engagement, how much we understood we had to learn and not be so sure sometimes that there was a strong sense that we are going to tell them what we are doing, which was important to do. But how much we took back ... there is still the hangover of how important we think we are from the anti-apartheid struggles. But that was important, I think it gave us a sense of the world out there and it was an important time too. No matter what happens now, you have people who have gone through that or have that experience, who will engage with that and who will sit with that and carry that and whatever comes up, that will be there ...” **Nina Benjamin**

“I am sometimes mystified by how things foundered [with the SMI], you know why those things fell apart and those links fell apart ... but I suppose it might be from very much an outsider’s perspective. But I imagine it might have been some sort of bigger version of what happened sometimes happened within the APF is that quite a lot of things get diverted, politics get diverted into petty squabbling and squabbles over resources because of again the nature of our constituencies” **Claire Ceruti**

“Look after WSSD which was a honeymoon, I think we then realised that we needed to seize the moment from the ground and try and build from the ground, but with a national perspective. There was a debate whether the SMI must be permanent in its structure, I think the APF was wary of that, you know we had a lot of discussions and we said, ‘Look let’s have a very loose coalition and we look at this as more about the sharing of experiences and supporting struggles on the ground’. But also even in terms of new perspectives and approach and I think the APF also played an important role, I think that was also recognised even by the other formations, that you know it was the APF. And I think we are able to play that role carefully because I mean at that time we did have a bit of resources and we didn’t use that in a big brother approach ... because resources was also not just about money, we were like providing the SMI with bodies which was resources and the time. There was more solidarity with the Palestinians opposing war in Afghanistan, war in Iraq, but also beginning to look at Zimbabwe. I think comrades did a lot of solidarity work sending the comrades to Zimbabwe and we must remember at that time the LPM was pro Mugabe and through the work we were able to undermine Mugabe’s support and expose him. But then also I think we were also able to learn more about human rights and environmental issues ... we were able to develop a progressive approach. We learnt also that there were other people who were also struggling who are like us, not only internationally but also locally ... no one can accuse us of not trying. So we did a lot of the things ... it was a learning experience which I think was also generalised, it was not only just about these intellectuals who are learning but it was also other comrades also, of course maybe we could have done more than that but I think something was done there.” **Mondli Hlatshwayo**

“There were movements like the Landless Peoples Movement ... whereby the APF could not only provide just financial assistance to these movements which are there but also try and share some of the organising skills within communities. You know because movements like the LPM were quite dysfunctional at times and they needed human resource to actually help them and also give some political direction, taking some issues within the communities. So the APF supported Protea South for example in organising meetings and organising their

campaigns in and around issues of evictions and we supported that struggle for quite a long time whether there it be marches and also the court case that they were taking forward. We supported other communities like Merafong, those struggles that were taking place in Merafong and the APF was [for] a year or two supporting the struggle of Khutsong, whether it be educational workshops with the leadership but also organising within the community was also quite key and important. And I think locally, organisations that were not affiliated to the APF, the APF would go out and do leadership workshops and I think some of them then end up affiliated to the APF but quite importantly was taking forward those community campaigns. And in the Free State as well APF supported the issue or the idea of comrades within the Free State having their own sort of movement that will unite or take forward struggles within the Free State, APF played a role making sure that some of those meetings do take place and provide some leadership skills to different communities that were organising the Free State. In the Eastern Cape as well where we went down to support struggles in Queenstown and East London and all those areas I think it was sort of the APF having that outlook orientation to other struggles that were taking place not just within Gauteng but other Provinces as well - in Limpopo the APF was also supportive in those areas. We supported quite a lot of initiatives that have taken place especially within the region - Zimbabwe, Swaziland there will be actions that are organised by some comrades who are in South Africa and who are from Swaziland, who are from Zimbabwe who say can you support us we are from Lesotho can you support us marching to our Embassies and this is our campaign? And the APF was also quite key in supporting those networks as well.” **Silumko Radebe**

Character of APF communities: strengths and weaknesses

“I think one of the key sources of energy and regeneration within the APF is the affiliate’s own struggles. And I think during that period different areas occupied the forefront of the struggle at different times. Sometimes you will have the communities in Johannesburg being in the forefront, they recede and then ones in the Vaal ... they recede and others in the East Rand. So that dynamic kept the vibrancy of the organisation intact. Also APF would organise APF marches and actions, either in a particular region or as the APF as a whole to play that kind of unifying and coordinating role in the organisation. But also to a large extent also have quite a number of workshops looking at specific sort of policies like housing, the question of water, you know those kinds of sort of things that also allowed us to reflect on the ANC Government and also on its policies but also to reflect on our own struggles and our own activities. So I think that has been the kind of dynamic of the APF.” **John Appolis**

“...the APF had to take certain decisions not to over stretch itself in terms of expansion. I mean there were demands from organisations in North West, Free State and even in Mpumalanga for the APF to establish branches or allow those organisations to affiliate with the APF. We have always been sort of cautious about that precisely because of the kind of growth within Gauteng where communities in Gauteng became sort of affiliated to the APF. That in itself... because of the fact that one has to take into account the unevenness within communities, within the APF affiliates... Out of that we have to create a pool of activists that not only consolidate and sustain their own organisation but also the broader APF. I think that created its own sort of internal requirements and for the APF to take on responsibilities of organising other provinces, you know I mean our approach was always one of encouraging those organisations and those provinces to form a similar structure to the APF and then we can have fraternal solidarity links between them. But we were cautious about allowing them or making them affiliates of the organisation or branches of the organisation because we felt we were not in a position both politically and organisationally to sustain such a large organisation. But also financially it would not have been viable because already because the funds that we raised were sufficient almost just for what our internal requirements were.” **John Appolis**

“I think first of all it’s the political and that’s fundamental to me. I mean that provided the anchor, the vision and the clarity for the militants. Secondly I think it is the internal organisational culture of the APF. I mean the APF is probably one of the most democratic organisations around. Where I think everyone...I don’t think anyone can say that they have either been suppressed ...or they were not allowed to express their views, or they were expelled or suspended for having different views or they were ostracised for having a different view. I think that is another... for me political as I say is the key, but I think our internal organisational culture. Sometimes it is very difficult, it is unwieldy sometimes because of all the views and people, I don’t know sometimes the organisational structures are bypassed and people do certain things, but at the end of the day it always comes down to the organisational infrastructure and organisational protocols and all of that. For me I think those are probably the two, I would sort of say are the strengths of the APF. I hope that it continues in that fashion for the next period to come you know. Because I mean from my experience with other mass organisations or trade unions, you know where the political becomes compromised, people who have different views on it become

side-lined, vilified and also because of self-interest on the part of the leadership, the organisation becomes bureaucratic, repressive even, you know what I mean? People leave or some organisations die and if there is not political clarity, confusion and disorientation sort of sets in; that is what happened to many of the other organisations.” **John Appolis**

“There has always in my experience been an attempt to get as representative an opinion on something as possible and sometimes almost to a fault in a sense. But there might have been many questions you know but I can’t remember any example of something where that didn’t happen, where there weren’t many meetings called, many people consulted. So the one thing that I think for me which has been an important thing that has come out of the APF is that reconnection. I think anyone who has participated in it knows that you do always need to try to find ways to get as representative an opinion on something as possible.” **Nina Benjamin**

“I think the electricity, the water were really significant campaigns. Because not only would people often find very creative ways to challenge privatisation because in those campaigns there was a very important mix of defending my basic rights and at a more ideological, conceptual level saying what this is saying about the state and what the state is doing not just to me but to us. And because there was that, it inspired other communities. It inspired other communities to think about their own basic services, to react to it, to take action to it, to engage in running battles that people did.” **Nina Benjamin**

“I think that the main strengths of the APF, was the fact that it managed to rebuild community, a sense of what community organisation can be. It revitalised community struggles at a time when that was, when that had been in many ways squashed through how the ANC had worked over that period. Its strength also is that it attempted to create a democratic structure with the working class, constituency with the working class, with the working class face, with the working class character. It’s a strength which also became one of the big challenges - it tried to take up every possible struggle or sign of exploitation. It tried to support struggles all over and I think it also inspired... it spread, because it was other communities took inspiration, learnt from each other, tried out similar things where they were. It created a core of activists who can say they are socialists, who can go to activities and speak about struggle, a layer that won’t just disappear. And like I said earlier on, it experimented with very creative things, you know the prepaid water meters, the electricity things, it did research, you know we tried to speak about, you know we experimented with ... tried to play a significant role in the SMI, so the thing of building the others, the coalition, Water Coalition, different forms ... REMMOHO, the student Issue, the cultural thing.” **Nina Benjamin**

“Just the kind of learning process that has gone on for a layer of activists of being through this experience of being in the APF, of trying to make sense of what the ANC is doing. You know for all my criticisms of some of the problems that have happened within, that going through that learning experience, I think that was invaluable. And it’s very different to what you will learn from as a period in history unfolds, what you learn from sitting at home, being an individualised victim compared to what you have learned from being part of an organisation that tried to influence events is vastly different and you know I think that those things remain a foundation for the future. I think the fact that we kick-started getting that [anti-xenophobia] march going for all that it was largely, you know the kind of class composition wasn’t what we would have wanted it to have been, but the fact that it happened was crucial and apparently it was also like no other organisation thought it was important to do that, so that really made sense. Of course the World Conferences against Racism and probably the WSSD, you know those were again absolutely crucial for all the problems that it created for us later, the fact that it happened at all was really important internationally not just for us. And I think the fact that we just temporarily existed, that did matter as well. Again it has kind of pushed things a little bit faster than they might have gone otherwise, you know that some people got together and said, ‘You know we just don’t lie down and accept neo liberalism, or sit back and keep quiet about it.’” **Claire Ceruti**

“I think the biggest strength would be the willingness to be open about what the possible strategies are; the understanding that we have amongst us a commonly defined problem or enemy or need to change and that amongst the majority of us we don’t really have the answer and that, that answer is made by us coming together in struggle and thinking through these things together. And for me I think that was probably more characteristic of it in its early days. I think its biggest weakness has been the very opposite of that; that some constituent members in the forms of particular groupings have felt that they have had the answer and tried to impose that on the general membership of the APF without respecting that openness and that commitment to needing to struggle for the answer in common.” **Prishani Naidoo**

“It is a bit frustrating as to how the media lapses and builds and lapses all the time constant cycles of frustrations and relief ... we would train, do training among these comrades who would come through and they would be active for a while and that activism would then lapse and new people coming ... afterwards you are left with

familiar demands around the need for training and workshops and media production and at that level it doesn't advance, it just keeps in a sort of a stasis." **Nicolas Dieltiens**

"I wrote a letter to AIDC and said because I have a family, I can live with my family, - if they can just give me a thousand rand I want to do a series of workshops in Kwa-Zulu Natal, Durban. They gave me the one thousand rand then I went to Durban. I did a workshop in Kwa-Mashu, in Chatsworth; you know using like one hundred and fifty, two hundred rand just for snacks in Umlazi and Chesterville. And those workshops actually contributed in the formation of the Durban Concerned Citizens Forum because after I gave them the workshops, they were like, "So where do we find such an organisation, where you come from"? Then I referred them to Fatima who was having the Chatsworth Concerned Group. So that's how I was able to work with Fatima in actually putting together the Durban Concerned Citizens Forum. And also with the research we were doing on the water with the Municipalities Project ...we went to Hammersdale, we went to people like Umhlaba you know and we will address meetings and stuff. That's also how we were able to influence the APF struggle into other areas outside Johannesburg. As I would be going overseas during the Municipal Services Project I would find an opportunity of talking about the APF, the electricity crises and talk about the general problem of services but then talk about what's happening in the township. And then also sort of like people got very exposed to what was happening in the APF and some people started to come and if they come we take them to communities and they will do research and write about the APF." **Virginia Setshedi**

"It was the first attempt and successfully so it's very first coming out was the WSSD which impressed a lot of people not just outside the country and the fact that there were 25-30 000 people on the street but I think gave a real energy boost to a lot of the members of the constituent organisations that came around the SMI. And the good thing about the SMI that gave it that impetus was that it was a combination of mass movements, small in relative terms but quite mass based movements, and progressive NGOs and other individuals and academics. So it was a good mixture of all those different things and who all more or less agreed on the need to bring these struggles together. So from the beginning of the SMI, those first two or three years, there were never any major contestations within the SMI over control and ownership and naming and all these other kinds of things at a macro level. There were some things going on at the lower levels, I think predominately with the LPM, the Landless People's Movement, that was a little bit problematic and contentious; but overall I think everybody more or less agreed for the need for a space to be created and to have some kind of organisational form to take hold, to take organisational struggles together and link things. And that's why it existed because the people who were actually struggling felt the need for this and they embraced this and participated quite vigorously and energetically in its activities, whether those were national meetings ... there were several SMI, not purely SMI, marches and activities. Also at the same time there was a fairly energetic Anti-War movement that came about as a result of a range of things going on internationally and it hooked up with that too and that gave it even more impetus. And that included other groups even outside the SMI. It was a particular time which lent itself to a decent coming together, networking and solidarity. When the more immediate struggles sort of waned a bit – the Anti-War movement being one of them, some of the struggles against evictions, water and cut-offs and everything else - I think the SMI begun to sort of look around for things that were not there. The debate became a false one, I would argue which was - okay, now we've done this so we need to take this onto the next level which is we need to formalise it and we need to have a supra-national organisation. And that tension then brought out a whole range of arguments and divisions in particular movements as well as between particular movements about control and ownership ... and that has virtually destroyed the coalition." **Dale McKinley**

"The main aim [of the Coalition against Water Privatisation] was to sort of like take the issue of water as a universal issue outside the ideology of the APF and try and draw all the people who sort of believed that water is a human right. And then we tried to draw people from different organisations, even NEHAWU even also SAMWU and the coalition was formed precisely because we wanted to accommodate all those people who didn't communicate what the APF stood for. But still, we talk about water; we talk about something that we cannot take out of the real politics because water has become this big commodity that relates to all the issues that people are affected by. But then we continued with the coalition after even [some] left ... and what happened was that we drew a strategy of mobilising, mobilising communities around the issue but also decided to take the issue to court and fighting it in both ways which was very strategic but which was not easy. Because then there was also issues of resources, issues of either members of the APF criticising the strategy of going to court - 'the court will never help, the courts are still part of the state apparatus' - all those kind of things but I mean you learn through these things and you take feedback to the community, positive feedback and you learn." **Virginia Setshedi**

Paramount for me was the solidarity to and among the poor communities, that experience of getting KCR support for an inner city action that was looking miserable otherwise was great, I certainly appreciated that. So the solidarity you get from between poor communities is probably the most important like the achievement of the APF. I mean the failure of for there to be an organisational form cohering around the service delivery protests and the "Rashes of riots that happened is an indication that there is that solidarity being communicated only subliminally, I mean I don't know, I don't think there is a third force at work at all. I do think that a third force is something that is there and that is poverty that the ability the APF to articulate a voice around resistance to poverty has been important. I don't think without the APF there would have been as coherent a challenge to the privatisation of water as there has been, similarly with the struggle for electricity in Soweto more particularly also representations of a post-apartheid struggle that the APF has taken to the World Social Forum I think has been an important achievement, this idea of being post-apartheid as being a political situation that is rife with conflict and with resistance I think has been a significant achievement." **Nicolas Dieltiens**

"There were discussions on the economy like globalisation, neo liberalism here, you know RDP, ASGISA you know all the macro economic issues, those broader political issues. But then even beyond that we had discussions on socialism you know the various issues around bourgeois democracy it's limitations, but then there will be very specific and very concrete issues like electricity, water around these people of our struggle. So there was the combination of that broader political economy there and the immediate issues but then there would be an attempt at creating an interface between the two and there were also practical skills like media skills and writing. The issue of grassroots solidarity, I think that is the strength and creating a community of anti-capitalists, you know who were left wing activists ... yes we are not big in numbers, but I think that we managed to achieve that; and then two - we were able to produce a layer of activists from grassroots; three I think we played an important role in terms of public education about issues of privatisation, GEAR and all those things". **Mondli Hlatshwayo**

"There's the thing of relying on a few people ... people can talk and talk and talk and talk but when you give them the actual task to do you have to push people to do the work. So I think there even people have been given media training, they have been given leadership training and people will stand up there and say I have not been trained you know? I don't know ... is it because people don't want to learn? I think sometimes they pretend ... you know what, for me when I was administrator it was easy for me to point fingers but I think maybe it was a good thing that I stopped ... I didn't leave the APF, I stopped being the administrator then because then you are able to see things from you know a different point of view if I can say that. Because I know even I was one of those people who will say "okay they are intellectuals, they are doing this they are doing that". But if you say to someone, okay you train them and you say "no do this" they won't do it, they will still want the same intellectuals to come and do it for them. I don't know if I should say it's that dependence or we are just used to this tendency of blaming of saying "no you didn't do this or you didn't do that" and all those kind of things." **Teboho Mashota**

"In the APF I learned a lot, you know. I remember my first interview, I was so shy, I was trembling and I was doing it in the media room but I had people who believed in me: "No, you can do it." You know, you can talk and there is that in the APF. I remember I was telling one of my comrades in Remmoho that, "You know the struggle has an opportunity for people to learn". You know some say it's an industry; it's not an industry but there is space for learning. If you want to learn you can learn... and APF has opened the doors to people to learn and I know in some meetings at Remmoho people will say, "No, it's the background, it's people not being confident, it's the male comrades". I don't think it's that really, we cannot blame anyone." **Teboho Mashota**

"I have seen that happening [processes for accountability], I have seen that happening but it's dealt with, I don't know whether I just happen to be a strict disciplinarian, but I think it was dealt with kid gloves. I think maybe it's also to do with comradeship that there is that word comradeship though to me, I mean I really don't see that happening on the ground. People would rather respect that word just the word and not the person, they would rather harp on using the word comrade instead of applying it in their day to day relations. So when these democratic processes are settled and there are disciplinary processes there's always you know; 'No, no we cannot be too harsh with our comrade', 'we cannot do this to our comrade'. **Sehlahphi Sibanda**

"Most of the communities, they used to hide the information because they are afraid of being killed; they said, 'If you can say a councillor did this to me, then you will go to jail, they will send the police to them, they will harass you and do all those things'. But since APF has been there to the organisations, it has been the mother body to the organisations, they are there in the communities, everyone is free to break the silence of whatever is happening ...because he or she knows exactly that the organisation is there and if there is any problem our organisational leaders will take the problem to APF and AFP is going to deal with the problem and the problem will continue until the end." **Mammy Tladi**

“You see some people believe that communities, the working class struggles spontaneously, organically and then we intellectuals we have to intersect you know with that at some place. But when we intersect with it we must respect it and not impose our ideas. Put that way everyone would agree but there is a different view that in fact when communities try to, there is no such thing as the spontaneity. This is not to say the term itself is not applicable maybe there are degrees. So there is that position which says politics is there from day one [but] politics is not automatic it’s built; so I think in the early days the APF built its politics systematically. I can assure you that there was a time when the APF you know during the debates even the hostility, there was this thing now that political groups are not good but to someone like me it was just a joke because I remember when five political groups used to meet regularly discussing how to strengthen the APF do you know what I mean? In a way it was, it was like okay here is something you can build comrades but I think within that it was also we don’t want to take our fights into the APF ... and the contribution of those political groups; obviously some would come with wrong ideas, but the contribution was to build a political foundation. So there was real debate in the APF which laid quite a clear foundation for APF politics and even if one could say no, no, no the foundation was provided by the struggling masses on the ground but the APF related, so there was a theory of relating to those struggles.” **Trevor Ngwane**

“The APF fought against neo liberalism or capitalism at a time when no one was prepared to fight, but I don’t mean there were no fights, but I mean what was happening was that the fights were very low key, isolated, fragmented there was no real program, no visibility and they could be easily undermined, isolated and contained. But APF came on the scene and challenged ANC clearly openly on problematic policy, ideological grounds. So it contributed to certain political alignments the political sphere, the culture. It also defined what a new social movement is because without the APF maybe the only definition has been the TAC which is almost like an in-house critique based on accesses, on morality. And that’s not because the TAC is stupid or they chose to underplay class questions in favour of savings lives - that’s noble - but the APF was able to put the issue. Even when now later Blade Nzimande talks of the 1996 class project whatever, whatever some of the thunder he got from the critique of the APF which was quite open and outright. I would also say the APF made protests respectable again because I am doing my research so I have periodised protests say around 1994 ... and when protests was happening it was called popcorn, it was insulted. And then the one day strikes by COSATU, general strikes, Mbeki started being nasty calling them working with the enemy, counter revolutionaries, ultra Left and that pulled them into line actually. COSATU was repeating what Mbeki was saying when there is protests they are anti-alliance. I remember that clearly. So the masses despite their militancy felt struggling or action was something wrong and I am sure if people had insisted to struggle or be militant, under those situations maybe repression would have been sharper and people would say ja they deserve it ‘why are they questioning our own Government’. I think also the APF helped South Africa, the movement in South Africa, the broader movement including even the ANC, alliance people to relate to the International Anti-Globalisation Movement because the ideology and inspiration in struggles came through the APF actually although there are other organisations, NGO’s. And then also maybe the last thing APF did I think that although this must be qualified a thousand times, but I think that the present protests are another wave. So if APF guys are struggling there are new social movement, ways where the APF was quite important and then there were these protests we see and then even elections last year, the same protests but now in stronger ways you know what I mean. So in a way we can say the APF continued the tradition of militant struggle and protest and in fact they took the baton when the race was going. I can say that one would not be over critical of the APF if we see it in perspective, in context as one organisation which came into being when there was a need and did its best and history is moving on and it has to find its place ... so one can view things in that kind of broad historical ... and I think the judgement on the APF will be sympathetic”. **Trevor Ngwane**

“I learnt [about] how decisions are taken in the organisation whereby through the different structural meetings which are there and you have things being discussed maybe in the office bearers meeting and having to recommend either to the coordinating committee and whereby the majority of the affiliates will be attending that meeting and making sure this is how a decision is taken. And I think that in itself was quite healthy even to say there was lots of disagreement within an organisation like the APF the positive things that at the end of the day, the majority decision has got to be implemented. And one thing positive is whether you are not in agreement with the decision but once the majority decide on it I think the other affiliates even though they are quite autonomous they also support the decision taking place. So it is not only the elected office bearers that will take a decision but it will be discussed within the movement and there are two or three positions that are coming forward or suggestions that are coming forward at the end of the day a decision that I think will be beneficial to the entire organisation gets to be decided by the majority and that in itself I think it was quite a healthy thing. Because if you attend some of the APF meetings you will think that people will generally hate each other and there won’t be any agreement taking place but there was unity [once] that decision has been taken and I think it was quite key to say even after that people are still comrades and they are moving forward within the organisation. So individuals were not bigger than

the organisation itself ... that was the most important thing, it’s quite healthy. Also for other movements as well I think to learn from that process to say well as much as you give your leadership the honours to take things forward but how or who do you maybe account to is more important, issues of accountability on taking that decision and the APF has been an organisation that can be able to say we give you the leadership, these issues need to move forward and you need to account to the organisation and that happened.” **Silumko Radebe**

“It was a challenge where APF was having these wonderful workshops and seminars in very important issues, but you will find people going there for an outing. Even when I was working for the AIDC I had the responsibility of holding a leadership training course, talking with workshop people on political economy issues of capitalism and all that and you’ll find same people attending the same leadership every year. And when you ask “comrades don’t you graduate?” because if you have gone through the introduction of political economy, how can you come again and be introduced to political economy. It was a huge issue ... you’ll find that it was not becoming a space for them to learn and move up. It was just a space to go on an outing.” **Virginia Setshedi**

“The coordination of the Research Sub Committee was probably the biggest formal role I played in the organisation. And that was also a learning experience for me and I mean I wish we could’ve done more with that but I think we confront problems as they arise and the way it unfolded didn’t allow for it to play out in a way I had imagined it. But I think for a time, at least three years, we were able to bring together members of the APF in a collective research project that produced reports that could stand up against the research that was being produced by Joburg Water and that contributed to the Phiri court case, you know that allowed for certain demands to be made in a substantiated way in different campaigns and that allowed individual members I think also to imagine themselves differently within the organisation. And I mean I think if we had to write that history up, a very short history, it would also be a contribution to thinking through alternative ways of doing research and writing and ways of thinking about participatory research in which these divisions that usually exist between academics, students and ordinary community members are openly confronted rather than wished away and kinda just replicate those divisions.” **Prishani Naidoo**

“A key challenge of the APF was its own growth. From probably 18 months-2years into the formation of the APF ... for the next 3-4 years after its formation the APF grew quite extensively in relative terms. And the challenge in that regard organisationally but it was also an ideological challenge, was not only to welcome all these forces and community organisations that wanted to join but be true to its own claims; which were, we are capable of being of assistance, we are capable of being an alternative home - so the organisational capacity to actually carry out struggles, the actual expectation that came with that of certain resource allocations to community, of financial assistance to community organisations and struggles – so, fulfilling those kinds of expectations and demands that came with the growth of the organisation was a huge challenge for the APF, a massive challenge I must say. And it only met those things very partially. Because the irony was that at the same time that the APF was actually growing in numbers what I call the core cadreship activists of the APF the activist base was getting thinner for various reasons. So the organisational capacity issues to sustain the kinds of intense struggles that had characterised the first 2-3 years of the APF - large scale mobilisations, a whole range of other things - became very, very difficult for the APF in many kinds of ways. That was a key challenge. The second challenge was predominately overtly an ideological and political challenge; which was to maintain a particular interest in its own tactical and strategic vision by its own constituency. In other words, to say – ‘we have mobilised cut offs, we’ve joined communities together to mobilise against this but now what?’ Moving beyond the more immediate response, the more defensive nature of trying to confront something; that was the ideological challenge that I would argue the APF still confronts in varying different kind of ways but certainly came about from those early years. To me it was fairly meaningless even though I understood the debate at the time ideologically to adopt socialism as the sort of flag of the APF so to speak. In other words, the content of what that meant on the ground, in the struggles became a huge ideological challenge because then you could be accused and rightfully so, of being no better than just throwing ... these things out there without having the political will or the capacity or the intent of actually trying to see that through beyond an immediate response to something on the ground. The third area which was key and always has been, but began to crystallise during that particular time, those early to mid-years, was the issue of leadership, leadership from the base. In other words, creating what we called at the time the second and third layers of cadreship within the APF. The APF had engaged huge amounts of energy in those first 3-4 years in a whole range of workshops and education, political education to try and politicise struggles and create cadres beyond just saying let’s cut that thing, let’s reconnect electricity. To sustain that and to continue to have groups of leaders come out of or being thrown up out of the community organisations and struggles that could then move into the APF and take those positions of leadership and run with them became a huge, huge challenge.” **Dale McKinley**

Strategy & tactics of the APF: engaging the state

“I think there is a conflation between a political class characterisation of the State / Government and the tactics or strategies you use in terms of challenging that Government. The fact that we so correctly sort of characterise the ANC as a Capitalist Government, a neo-liberal Government that acts in interest of big capital, doesn't mean that if the ANC Government would say ‘look, let's talk about issues and listen let's negotiate or create a space where movements can participate in terms of shaping some of the things’, that the APF would not have tactically utilised those spaces. I think the fact that the APF... I mean the ANC Government's response was to shut the door and I mean we reacted to that and in our tactics we adopted appropriate tactics in relation to their response. But also there were other instances where the APF and affiliates would participate, for example, make submissions to parliament on various issues. Some of the communities would engage with mayors and participate in some of the things etc. so there were a variety of those kinds of tactical utilisation of spaces and institutions within the organisation. I don't know if people have a detailed sense of the diversity of tactics within the APF.” **John Appolis**

“The understanding of the ANC is quite deep rooted within the APF militants. I think that question of the ANC was settled in 2004 when one of the political groups proposed that we vote for the ANC in 2004. That issue went for a vote almost ninety percent of the APF voted no in that position. The ANC in terms of where the ANC's at, because the understanding ANC amongst our militants, that question was settled a long time in 2004. I think these... as I can see from the way the militants are relating and responding to the other struggles and their preparedness to actually link up and build solidarity and integrate them under the banner of the APF or under the broader kind of social movement banner with a clear understanding of the ANC shows that it has been consolidated and strengthened.” **John Appolis**

“I think we have lacked an understanding of how... why people might still be tied to the ANC, for example. You know so we tended to see things in very black and white terms, you are or you aren't, you are with them or you with us and not really understood that there are also certain things that might keep people tied into the ANC and the alliance and so on. They don't make them counter revolutionary actually, you know that would just make them a bit confused or not even necessarily confused but it seems that power lies there, there's a possibility for real change and understanding how do people start to ... how do those ideas start to break down or get challenged and what role we could have played in helping that along or linking up with people.” **Claire Ceruti**

“We don't claim and own our successes. Take for instance in the Vaal. I was part of the first people taken to court because we failed to pay the rentals and they took a sample of us, we were 18, we filled up the necessary court papers answering whatever. When the day of the court came I was the only one who was allowed to make representation to the court and they announced that Mandela was scrapping the existing debt ...but when you look at what they say people are owing its R30 000. I had to ask them this guy were explaining where does this debt come from and break it down because we have got Mandela as paper here which says debts are scrapped and the courts had to put it to council and council was unable to answer. As a result the cases were thrown out and they even told them that they had to pay costs to us. So such things we were unable, maybe we didn't have the capacity to claim that victory then we did not claim them. People in Soweto they fought heavily until some arrears were scrapped, but when arrears were scrapped the government still claims victory that we fought for you and we are scrapping that and the people who were fighting that were unable to claim that victory. I think to an extent we did not actually own our own victories, if we had owned our own victories and emphasised and everybody know that these people did not change, these things were not brought to them on the platter they were fought for by us then we might have made a mileage out of that but our victory became nothing because we did not claim it.” **Phineas Malapela**

“I think overall as an APF challenge, it was to make sure it was to sustain ourselves or our existence as the APF within those communities whereby now the government has changed its own orientation or look to the issues of service delivery as much as they are in disagreement with what the APF stands for, what the APF has been fighting for. I think they won't even admit it as the government that it was correct for movements like the APF to take up issues of service delivery within the communities and they will come in as the people who are championing that struggle of making sure that people have access to issues of basic services and to say ‘well, we have removed, you know Thabo Mbeki as one person who didn't have an outlook to issues of service delivery, we are putting in somebody who will be able to fast track service delivery within the communities, we will put forward Zuma who is willing to put up a chat line where people can phone him in terms of problems that they have within their communities ,now we will have a government that listens to the needs or the demands of the people. But at the end of the day I think it all boils down to the implementation of it whether people are accessing it and so forth and in all that I think the APF has managed to take forward the issues of service delivery and put it on a sort of top list of things that's needed, priorities that government need to look at and so forth. That in itself has some implications, it has some aspects for

the movement, like the APF need to look at its tactics and strategy to say, ‘How do we move forward in the era, whereby the government looks like it's attending to issues of basic services?’ But I think communities or affiliates have seen or are quite aware of how the government tries to delay issues of service delivery through the process of privatisation and I think that has been one of the challenges that the APF has been quite keen in taking forward as a movement.” **Silumko Radebe**

“If we are talking about the demands, the kinds of changes that the organisation wanted or was fighting for, I don't think those necessarily changed but I think the ways of approaching how the changes would be fought for, have changed. I think we've, I mean in the early days it was really driven by protest actions that emerged in the immediate context. Over time there would be a lot more thought given to campaigns that would be broader then just single issues or in a single community or a combination of a single issue and broader campaigns that brought together a few struggles. And then I think most, well for me the biggest change would be the adoption of the legal strategy, what changed in the understanding of the use of the law and in particular the Phiri court case would come in here. I think that, I mean things similarly emerged through the struggle that was being taken up for immediate change in the lives of people who were being directly affected by a particular problem but through engagement around that, the building of links with other individuals and groups beyond the immediate group in Phiri and beyond the APF through the Coalition – and also the Coalition itself is a different tactic - and then the evolution of legal strategy that wasn't responding to just arrests and people being denied the ability of doing certain things, but the undertaking of a court case that became a Constitutional court case that drew in legal experts. I think for me that was probably one of the biggest changes in terms of how the struggle was undertaken in the APF and I think today struggles are imagined in a much broader sense of what the possible ways of undertaking these things up and that's been through learning and experience and building of alliances.” **Prishani Naidoo**

“The fact of ... the kind of experience of the alliance and the silencing of the alliance never ended when we joined the APF and we were no longer in the alliance. It was an on-going kind of contest over the representation on a broader level of the voice of the left in South Africa and I think within that context we unfortunately ... not unfortunately, I mean to some extent these things are true, but at another level we've also very much been responsive to nationalist discourse, to a degree that has been I think a limitation in our development. I do think that the APF has in large part been shaped by its antagonistic kind of language towards the ANC and I think this in large part ... comes about around a set of contextual events and forces as well as a certain kind of political inclination ... and so for instance you have a situation in which the APF is being vilified in a particular way ... by the kind of ANC and alliance forces, and so you take a kind of somewhat polar position in relation to that political set of formations. And at another kind of level, very much we were caught up in a narrative where we were the guardians of the true - it is one of the tricks in South African politics, where you become, in order to make a political claim, it needs to be on the basis that you are guardians of the authentic aspirations of the liberation movement - that what we represented is what these people have sold out. And I think in relation to our character at least for a while is very much determined by that polarity, or that kind of relationship to the ANC , whereas I think that's changing for a whole number of reasons, partly also to do with our own kind of successes. And also I think we won certain things that have translated into the character of what the ANC is today and what kind of contestations are happening on that side. All I am saying is that the simple answer to the question is that ... the APF has not remained the same and its particular shape, form and character, has been determined in relation to both a long term kind of development of certain organisational procedures and processes as well as a very specific political context and sets of struggles.” **Ahmed Veriava**

“Its primary weakness perhaps is its unresolved connection to nationalism and the ways in which as a political formation it still takes as its primary kind of life world, the nation state.” **Ahmed Veriava**

“The APF has more or less strategically remained fairly consistent ...the strategic vision and approach of the APF has remained there. I think almost by necessity, by circumstance, the APF very early on was forced to become a predominately tactical organisation if that makes sense. In other words it's good to speak of the strategic vision to have the strategy and to keep to that because it's about principles, it's about vision and if you lose that then it doesn't matter what kind of tactics you adopt. And I think that in a sense that's what has kept the APF going because throughout all the potential problems and arguments and other kinds of things what has held is the strategic centre in the APF ... What has changed dramatically is the tactical nature of the APF, I would argue. How has that changed and what has led to those changes? Let's start with one which would probably give a window into that, which is repression. The initial militancy ... the things that drew a lot of people to the APF was its militancy and new forms of things and that didn't remain static; the state responded in very specific kind of ways to that and in many cases did succeed in smashing certain resistances and having very physical and material impacts on people who were engaging in that as being part of the APF; Phiri being

one classic example of a hugely militant struggle that could not simply be sustained on a material and physical level. It wasn't about the intent, it wasn't about the politics of it as far as I'm concerned, it was about the fact that if you organise people and you want to, for example, sabotage pipes as a means of preventing the rolling out of these things and the reconstructions, you have to have a continuous recreation of that capacity to do so. And as a result of repression that capacity waned as a result of personal reasons at times and also some organisational resource reasons as well. And what it did, it forced the APF to shift tactically from a much more direct, militant confrontation to more of what I call sideways confrontation. In other words the legal component comes in. I don't think before that real repression that happened in Phiri the legal component was seriously considered as a serious central tactical option at the time; it wasn't, we were going to go in there and are going to stop this thing and we did, comrades tried. Other exigencies, the full weight of the state is brought to bear and it shifts those things; and that in turn - one can follow the logic of this - has particular impacts on the way that people organise and how they struggle. So the tactical character of the APF shifts to try to access the institutional means of redress as opposed to the extra-institutional means of redress in some ways. It shifts into a combination but maybe increasingly into a more intra-institutional means of doing so because that institutional means does not attract such repression and such cost to people. And that is not simply the result of a few intellectuals writing about these things and strategising about them and saying this is what we should do - that did happen - but also people on the ground themselves acting in a particular kind of way and also pushing that themselves and saying ... I remember going into Thembalihle after the battle of Thembalihle, that victory of preventing the mass evictions of Thembalihle was seen at least as a real tactical victory for the APF in combination with the community, of confronting the state and defeating its coercive capacity to do certain things. But what happened in Thembalihle after that? What happened is not simply that the APF abandoned Thembalihle and said. 'okay, well that's it, the struggle has been won ...'; the people themselves and those that made up the struggles in the communities, their intensities and their struggles waned and they moved in different kinds of tactical directions themselves and started engaging because they had won a particular space. And that inevitably shifts a tactical framework, whether it's at the local level or APF level, repression being one of those things. The other thing is what has happened inside the ANC. Clearly, over the last ... years that has had an impact on the APF and the way it tactically shifts. I don't say easy, but it was much more direct to have a President like Mbeki and a particular policy, GEAR ... it is clear, that's the ANC, that's what it is doing, there's Mbeki he's the bad guy. Once that starts shifting and breaking up and Zuma comes in making claims and the SACP gets involved, COSATU starts ... it shifts people's ideas about what is possible, who's going to do what, maybe there are spaces here; that therefore tactically has impact on the ground in terms of how people engage that state, they maybe give it some more space, maybe we'll engage and go to the council meetings now when three years previously we didn't, we wanted to march on the council meeting, maybe now we go because we have got space or allies in there." **Dale McKinley**

The downturn: internal struggles within the APF

"I think one of the contributing factors to that is the fact that in an organisation, particularly a mass organisation, does reach a stage where the militants and the struggle reach a point of exhaustion and for me that what has happened with the APF. Militants become exhausted and then that is what happened to the middle class activists in our organisation ... after being involved for seven years they decided to explore other interests ...and also the militants from the communities similarly there, they explore other things, they start to do other things within organisation. Also you must remember that even under the Thabo Mbeki regime they would sort of retreat on some of the issues, like on the water cut offs, electricity cut offs also what some of the struggles would recede for that particular reason. Yes there was a... I think the Zuma victory at Polokwane did have an impact on our mass constituency and I don't think we can sort of ignore that fact that our own constituency, or certain sections of our constituency were sort of influenced by Zuma and that was one of the factors. I took into consideration when we were debated in 2009 about the national elections, that some of our constituencies, particularly the members the general membership were gravitating towards ... not in terms of becoming members of the ANC, but seeing Zuma providing some kind of relief for the problems they are experiencing." **John Appolis**

"Over the past two, three years I think our international workers or links have not been that extensive, those have declined as the movements internationally also declined, you know the decline in the anti-globalisation movements, also our international work, our international struggles and participation also sort of declined despite us being part of some of these forums. The fact that the World Social Forum is taking on a particular character now, it's lost its initial militant open, radical sort of flavour, I think also contributed to the fact that the APF international work and solidarity also declined over the past three years." **John Appolis**

"Initially and if you are taking specifically about service delivery protests, when those arose with these kind of actions that seemed to be spontaneous, I mean I don't believe that they are spontaneous, I mean you don't put

two thousand people out on the street spontaneously, but what were called spontaneous protests seemingly emerged without any kind of direct relationship to any political formation. I think, you know in certain areas there wasn't a distinction between, I do I think the APF did try to orient to those struggles ... but I mean there was the orientation to these kinds of mobilisations but I do think that the APF had already kind of submerged in a particular set of struggles and a particular set of ways of doing things and the very nature of those kind of uprisings as well; I don't think there was a simple formula of every service delivery protest is the preface to the formation of a crisis committee which is one day going to be the affiliate of the APF and I think to treat them in that way would've been a gross mistake. I think what was important would've been, had certain things like the self defence fund kind of worked or some of the ideas around those kinds of practical ways to give solidarity to communities in struggle - I think if we had a better framework for doing so we might have been better able to respond to some of those struggles that we didn't actually get to, but it doesn't mean that we didn't get to any." **Ahmed Veriava**

"I think it was also the fact of this long slog ... the patience, the being there, the slowness of the process, maybe it just wasn't exciting, that's the sense I have. It was just too much and people couldn't define a part-time role for themselves. It was very difficult in the APF to define a part time role for yourself - you were either in ... or you out. Because they couldn't define a part time role, they also became less what is there to write about when you are going from the one meeting to the other meeting. So it wasn't as interesting for many of the academics ... not interesting enough to keep the movement building process, which is not just that momentary thing ... couldn't keep the middle classes going, keep them there and at the same time I don't think in the APF we were able to also say that ... what do we do, how do we do?" **Nina Benjamin**

"I think very seasoned and skilled activists who had been in the struggle for quite some time and who had been part of the initial impetus of the APF, doing a lot of work and everything; and quite a number of them started to pull as well. I think predominately - and I have thought about this for a long time - that was a result of two things: 1 it was pure burn out; on a personal level, demands and although this might seem strange in an organisation as small as the APF but nevertheless because there was a great deal of expectation from people to do large amounts of things all the time and it was pure voluntary, that people just got very tired. The second and more important one ... was that people's politics and ideology changed. They come to a particular point in their lives just like a lot of people in the ANC earlier had and still do, they figured that politics is not about struggling so much but is about making yourself comfortable and living a life that you had always wanted to live outside all of these demands of struggle and now it's time, we've done our bit and now it's time to concentrate on me. In some ways I can understand that much more so if that is a non-accumulative intent but there were components of that I think that made a huge impact." **Dale McKinley**

"At certain levels the APF has been very successful in producing, over quite a long period of time, different kinds of cadres that have been able to engage politics, whether that's at the local, national or international level in a quite varied kind of way, in a knowledgeable and skilled way. And again in a sense, it is a victim of its own success. Social movements by their very nature, because they do not offer any career paths or any kind of permanent situation where people who are previously generally quite materially desperate and unemployed, is that once that cadreship reaches a particular level it often times moves into other arenas. And that's happened in the APF over the years, where you build a particular cadre and that cadre disappears from the APF because they have moved on to get a job which they are now capable of getting as a result of what the APF has given them or what they have learned and gathered within the APF. The challenge for the APF and its failure at a certain level has been to sustain the levels of consciousness, to keep those within the organisation. So it's not that it hasn't created and the levels of consciousness have not risen in a large number of cadres over a number of years or that that has not improved; but that has been temporal, it's moved and therefore the organisation loses that cadre. It's almost like when one looks at student politics, it's always temporal; as a student learns gains knowledge and engages, that student becomes much more capable of engaging their own politics and what they do and yet it usually shifts quite quickly at the point when they get to the apex of that. I'm not sure whether it's something as the APF we could have necessarily prevented because it involves personal choices and other kinds of things. I'm pretty convinced that it is somewhat in the organisational nature of a movement like the APF that that becomes a constant challenge and it's a battle that is never won per se, it's always going to be there." **Dale McKinley**

"I look at Julius Malema getting to be the guy who says, you know yesterday that the problem in society is the owners of property', and I want to scream because it should be us getting that limelight quite honestly, you know. And we could have been getting it if we had been less arrogant about who we were and who we could talk to. We never broke free of a kind of parochialism of thinking we've got these issues that we are struggling over and we want to go and ask other organisations to support us, which yes we did, we did make demands I think at some point, for example, SAMWU to support us, but there was never an equivalent notion of saying if anybody else is fighting, we

are not, we going to go and support it regardless of whether or not they are supporting us or not. I really do think we missed a giant opportunity to break out of our sort of existing narrow groove that we have gotten ourselves into and to really spread out to a much wider layer of society and started getting influence there you know. And I think that's really... I think that shows in the fact that suddenly people like Zuma and Malema have seized the limelight of that so called opposition to Mbeki and it's all of that you know it is just when people think about what brought down Mbeki, we don't feature, you know as the APF and that's... you know and yes we actually didn't bring down Mbeki, we have got to be honest about that, but also if we hadn't existed, I think things might have taken a lot longer to get to this point and all of those kinds of things, so I think we were selling ourselves short." **Claire Ceruti**

"I think most of the APF comrades most of the people who are working now in other institutions had stints in the APF. As a result everyone now seems to be using these struggles as a transition, you do the struggles and then you move to positions ... as a ruling party they realise that most of the people who were active in the communities are the ones who are from our affiliates, they pick them up and take them up. So that's one of the things in general which make the struggle go down and the ANC programme now is go to the people, talk to them, get whoever is possible to get into the band wagon because their cadres are corrupt so they want to replace them with people who are active in the community." **Phineas Malapela**

"It seems as if the Treasurer [after AGM election in 2010] wanted to take over doing everything, but what annoyed me most is that he was not concentrating on his job, because I think he was the main problem in the Office Bearers. He wanted to control everything maybe because he had powers to sign for the money or whatever, I don't know. And the treatment ... they feel that they are male comrades they can do everything that they want. The comrades from the affiliates, they have this tendency to support somebody who is stealing from the organisation or who is corrupt. They do have that tendency and its worrying me a lot because I believe that if the comrades are doing that, they do not care about the communities and I do have a strong belief that people who have suffering communities won't do that because they will definitely know that they need money because most of the comrades are unemployed, they will need money and support from the APF so they won't sabotage the APF." **Kgothatso Mola – former APF Secretary and ICR**

"The issue of unemployment doesn't give comrades any right to do such things because really we've got many things that we can do with our lives than coming here and lie to get money and things like that. So I think some comrades are being just selfish. They want to earn from the APF every time they will say because comrades are not working what does the APF expect?" **Kgothatso Mola**

"There is a sense in which the ascendancy of Zuma has stolen some of the thunder of the left alternative that had been going for the last ten years. I mean the ascendancy of Zuma has seemed to capture the notion of the alternative still being possible in the current structures of government within the ANC. Now I said that despite the fact that Siyathemba, the one community that mobilised and were protesting against the government. So the APF itself has not envisaged support or sympathy for Zuma that I know of or that I have heard. I do think that Zuma has been able to restore some faith in the ANC, so that, to deliver on its promises. It hasn't made the APF irrelevant and I think the continued protests in poor communities in the country at the moment is testimony to the limitations of the Zuma alternative, but our separation kind of from those discussions, I mean maybe there is a need for the APF to consider how it is we should engage poor communities that are either nonetheless disinfected by ANC elements. I mean that seems to be in cases around the country where disaffected ANC elements used, I advisedly use the word used, the latent concerns around service delivery or whatever local democracy compromises and to use those opportunities to develop a struggle that also pulls the alternative that the APF envisages." **Nicolas Dieltiens**

"Look I think the first ideological and strategic challenge was a question of resources in a context of a generalised environment of poverty and unemployment. Some comrades I mean although they came to the struggle because of the problems in their communities, I think they began to see money as something which they must also benefit from individually. So look they are unemployed but at the same time there is a principle here which is anti-corruption, accountability and I think that was one of the biggest issues. I also think there was like this so called reactive approach ... I think that had to do with loving the politics from the SECC which I think it's important to react, but it is not a sufficient condition for building a movement. I think there was not enough attempt at just making sure that you sustain a cadre, you know through reading, through training. I think you also have to look at how do you sustain you know a comrade. Of course you can plan a campaign, but if it doesn't have a resonance among the people affected it won't work, so there was not you know like a strategy of like saying okay, I mean comrades in this community there are no struggles, so maybe lets form a club, maybe a reading group, maybe a debating forum which may also attract the students in that community. So I think we were not being creative

enough ... you need to preserve your cadre and there are many ways of doing that and I mean we didn't do that. As a result of that I think we also lost a lot of good people who could've stayed." **Mondli Hlatshwayo**

"I realised that the focus of the affiliates of the Anti-Privatisation Forum is not on building the struggles but it was only for personally building individuals. There is a lot of individualism in the APF whereby people are attending each and every meeting at the APF without having a constituency from where they come from because even when we were trying to do auditing with comrade Silumko visiting some communities, you will find there are no structures, there is only their names. I think that is the weakness of people sitting there knowing APF or becoming more active in the APF with the name of communities that they are no longer representing. And then people were focusing on the budget of the Anti-Privatisation Forum to say "ja there is money in the APF". And then I was spending a lot of time trying to support these communities to change their focus on looking at the APF budgets, because when we attend the CC [Coordinating Committee] most of the time the discussions were around money, money transport money, people were putting the requisition for money for the projects that were not existing. Now I decided not to disturb or not to force people to change. Let me direct my energy to the community and then because Anti-privatisationForum is in my blood I can work or I can do Anti-privatisationwork in the community and then start building pilot projects that Anti Privatisation communities who want to come and learn or who want to utilise the services of Orange Farm, we are prepared to go anywhere to share with any community. That's how I decided to leave my position as a Chairperson of the Anti-Privatisation Forum. Even when I was the Chairperson we did a lot of campaigns without asking money from the APF, because the struggle is not money from the Anti-Privatisation Forum. It's a struggle, it's led by the people if it is a burning issue from the community, the community will organise themselves. We can lead them but you don't need, every time when there is action, to ask for money." **Richard Mokolo**

"The problem, especially in the APF we are facing that problem too much to our affiliates, to all our regions, that problem is happening with the leaders of the communities; that sometimes we will tell you that this organisation is existing in the community [but] all of a sudden when we are going to find out we find there is the organisation of two or three people, that there are no communities that are following to that organisation. But when coming to the resources, pro-formas are coming every week for some events that are taking place in that area, but when you go to the area you find one person and ask him about the event that have taken place in the area he will be surprised and say no, I didn't know about that. But you see as leaders we did have some leadership skills workshop in the APF, but it doesn't benefit the others, because it seems to me the others have taken it with the left hand saying being a leader you are having more information than the community and this is a chance for you to make money for yourself and then let that community down. So now if you are doing that as a social movement, I think we are getting in the shoes of the political parties, abusing the communities itself, looking for our self to benefit but the community on the ground is benefiting nothing." **Mammy Tladi**

"If I was running away from fights in the APF, I went to the SECC and found a different type of fight, but still fights because the situation is so fluid because these are movements. So they can just decide today we will start attending ANC branch meetings, I am not saying that is going to happen but this is the situation on the ground. Or now we are going to pay our organiser ten thousand rand or we are closing down the offices now because we don't have money. So I was challenged to engage in debates so the line is needed there even more than the APF actually and I understood now why people at the APF level would be a bit disoriented because the challenges on the ground are different; on the ground people want their electricity connected. There are ANC members so people will say they are only using us can you see? So let's say, for example. we say, 'Let's only connect for those with a card'. I can just imagine this happening in other affiliates ... what I saw in SECC, its base gets smaller and smaller because it starts being corporatist. So in a way I understood why the APF had such a hard time." Trevor Ngwane "I think one of the weaknesses that has actually been there is ... the leadership that is always changing. I think it is quite important that we have to recognise that the leaders do come and go but I think the movement is much bigger than that and we need to make sure that the objectives of the APF rise above the composition of the leadership ... the focus of the leadership can also at times harm the movement whereby we are looking at our own internal battles rather than the larger picture at making sure that service delivery does happen and the movement is able to fight issues of privatisation. Sometimes it is unavoidable but I think it is something that the APF needs to learn within that we have to rise above the individuals and the leadership of the movement. The movement in itself I think has not been able to take key decisions when they are necessary ... that in itself weakens the movement and needs to be addressed; also quite importantly is that our organisational history in taking decisions - that needs to be shared as the leadership and making sure that people can have that reference point to always go back and refer to how things can resolve and move forward the organisation." **Silumko Radebe**

“There’s also these tendencies [towards] bad conduct, I don’t know but there is one thing that worries me in the APF that will always worry me when it comes to elections; who is supposed to be the Chairperson, the Treasurer? People just change it’s like we are in a different world. I don’t know why, even myself I was like are these the same comrades that I see and talk about the plight on the working class you know sort of like seeing themselves? Now they become like vultures when it comes to elections. And I think that’s also one of the things the people felt like this is not my world; I am not going to be part of the struggling for positions when we are supposed to be more vocal in the APF more than any other. Because I also felt like ‘okay I am from the communities but what’s happening here and ... it kills you someone who is not used to [that] will be like ‘where am I, I thought this is where my home is supposed to be, my home is where I can feel safe?’ People just change when there is elections.” **Virginia Setshedi**

“I have families in Kwa-Zulu Natal ... you go to these places and there you see these things and then you ask people “oh why you allow this, we don’t allow this in Joburg?” And people actually learn from what they hear of the APF and then they decide to stand up on issues. I think to some extent the existence of the APF has actually made people to feel that “you know if they can do it in Joburg why can’t we do it ourselves”? Even though they may not have the APF’s name but the fact that people understand that these things are happening in other parts of the country so they also feel that they can also do the same and stand up for their rights. I mean I remember in Vryheid they don’t have access to water and I said, “Oh maybe I should come and spend a month here” and they said, “Oh come, come” and I just recently heard that one of the ladies said “Virginia doesn’t come, let us go to the councillor or to the headman and say we want water at this time ...”. So, those things are happening not in an organised way but by the word of mouth; people would like listen to issues and what is happening and also watching television and reading about what is happening in the other parts of the country. And the APF has always been there ... and then people were like “oh ja these are the people with the red t-shirts so you are fighting?” Those issues, I think it’s not a contradiction, I think even though the APF might not be active as it was but it has sort of like planted a seed.” **Virginia Setshedi**

“The use of leadership positions and the influence that it brought and the accolades that it brought had two particular impacts organisationally on the APF. One was that it took away, I believe, to a large degree the possibility of organisations giving solidarity to actual struggles, to people. In other words solidarity not to conferences, invitations and these kinds of things but material and real political solidarity at the grass root level. I think it sucked a lot of that out and took away what could have been a much more beneficial and productive kind of solidarity not just internationally but also domestically between organisations. Secondly it created degrees of competitions of egos between those that wanted those positions, it was almost like jealousies of various sorts and competitions between leaders within the APF, leaders within the LPM and Jubilee and so forth. This has never been really discussed because it has never been unravelled properly but a lot of the subsequent disintegration within movements like the LPM and Jubilee and splits and so forth I think is as a result of this kind of politics and this kind of approach. Thirdly and probably most importantly in terms of the tension, it created internal mobilisations within the APF around a particular pre-cast non democratically discussed agenda of where the APF should be going and how its resources should be used and who speaks on behalf of the APF. The tension was really an attempt to try to colonise the rank and file voices of the APF into a particularly pre-cast, pre-figured organisational form as well as a trajectory. In the APF’s case it revolved predominately around - the cover that was used I don’t think it was genuine in any real way - the cover that was used was that the APF has now gotten to this stage, we’ve done all these things and we need to move to form a mass workers’ party, we need to adopt socialism as the agenda and we need to orient towards the organised working class and that’s our natural ally. And so the community struggles themselves really start becoming manipulated to achieve this and resources get directed towards this way and done so not within the open contestation forms of the APF but within the back corridors and cliques that began to form around this.” **Dale McKinley**

The APF and xenophobia

“I think that this problem of xenophobia happened at a time when the movements in particular the APF were not at their strongest. I think the fact that, here again even though the APF adopted formally correct positions in relation to this problem of xenophobia and particular the 2008 May violence in many of the communities. But I think the fact that movements were weak, they could not provide an alternative explanation, alternative pole in terms of how to relate to immigrants coming into the townships, coming into their lives to put it that way. And I think that in itself you know what I mean also contributed and created a space for other forces to actually mobilise on the basis of xenophobic sort of sentiments in the various townships. Because you can see where movements were strong or where movements had a presence there were no sort of outbreaks or if there were they were short lived because of the intervention and the activities of movements around that particular issue. And I think as I said, I mean the fact that by

2008 the anti-globalisation movement was also in a lull, in a state of decline, so the international connections and links were also missing in terms of people’s understanding and also in terms of their struggles. For me that is reflected in terms of some affiliates expressing xenophobic sentiments you know in relation to their issues, their demands and what they demand from the Government in terms of the immigrants. I think that is maybe going to be one of the key challenges, not only for the APF, but I think for the social movement, working class for a very long time to come. Because the only real sort of resistance to xenophobia is organisation and movements themselves without that xenophobia is going to reign supreme in our country and that is going to lead to destruction of any kind of resistance and progressive politics and progressive organisation within South Africa if we are not able to build a necessary mass force that can provide a powerful deterrent to elements who want to exploit the kind of poverty of people for their own sort of interest.” **John Appolis**

“When xenophobia did become pronounced when it took a violent form in 2008, I did become, I mean I had been prior to that aware of a sense that there was xenophobia amongst comrades in the organisation, by comments said by the by, about coming to town, ‘they were Nigerians’ ... but 2008 did bring to the fore quite a disturbing level of xenophobia among, articulated by members of the APF. I mean it would be said like xenophobia workshops in the APF were running as a result of concerns around what our position was with respect to what had happened, people would say they are not xenophobic, but that foreigners must just go. There was a sense that, that to be xenophobic you had to be violent. It is not as though APF members had been violent, they had not been - if there had been xenophobia among comrades it seemed to be clear and that was kind of disturbing because there is a sense in the APF that the notion of citizenship is tied to struggle. There seems to be a sense that if you struggle to defend your right to water, for instance, that is circumscribed by the fact that you are South African and that those rights are due to you, you know, why else be petitioning your city to be fighting those services, so you can, like, take direct action and break the law, but only ever to reaffirm your rights to the fruits of citizenship. There is moral sense of what citizenship entitles you to and that does not preclude that immigrants have not been part of the APF - they have been mostly here in the inner city and Soweto a little bit as well, that I know, particularly Zimbabweans - but there is a sense in which petitioning the state to provide services has a circumscribed the position that the organisation can take to an exclusive and nationally circumscribed level.” **Nicolas Dieltiens**

“I found the reception here was quite warm, but there were a few elements that I sort of found were a bit not so welcoming towards me. But those really were a few, less than one percent of the organisation ... I think leadership really addressed that issue quite effectively, they got the message across that there was no space for xenophobic attitudes and personally really I would say the reception is still quite okay. No one is forever reminding me that I am Zimbabwean and you know that I don’t belong here. I came here at a time when there were just being the xenophobic violence of 2008 and I was also a bit, was kind of scared really now that I was moving from what had been a comfort zone. But the APF is diverse, everyone almost everyone here is South African but you know diverse in terms of the languages that they speak and what have you. So I found that coming here as a Zimbabwean and maybe not even being able to speak the language, I am comfortable in Zulu, I would say my Zulu is okay, but South Africa is actually a diverse nation with so many languages and our people here they speak different languages so I really felt, I was a bit worried as to how I was going to fit in; the impact that it was going to have on my job and carrying out my duties and even dealing with people because that is what the job entails on a daily basis you know dealing with different kind of people. But you know what I have actually realised that language hasn’t been a barrier at all. I speak in my corrupt version of Sotho and people are actually, they understand they accommodate me, they realise that I cannot speak as a great Sotho or whatever languages as they are, but there is that effort from my part and there is that effort from their part, so we get on really quite well in terms of communication, well in fact language hasn’t been a barrier at all.” **Sehlahi Sibanda**

“It’s part of a much longer kind of or much deeper set of problems; I think there is an inability of the kind of left to which we belong for responding to the issue of xenophobia more adequately. Because its political discourse over the last ten years has been effectively based on, or pre supposes in its kind of discursive arguments in the political realm and so forth, have kind of moved from an authentic national subject who is a subject of betrayal by the ANC government and whose kind of legacy that its being robbed of as part of a kind of an injustice that stretches to the history of colonisation and apartheid - is in its dispossession and so forth, is our reason for struggling. And it has meant that and it’s based still and this again is how the kind of mythology of national oppression that ... the thing about nationalism, any form of nationalism is that it ... has imagined the nation from the beginning of time and existing as kind of authentic unity to which we properly belong and ...this is what’s presupposed in the national oppression thesis. But I mean the reality of capitalist development and the development of South Africa’s economy and so forth, is far more common.” **Ahmed Veriava**

The APF rape case: social and gender issues

“I think that is one of the major challenges for the APF is what you term the social aspect. I think it is because the nature of our issues and nature of the struggles and we have not to a large extent really thoroughly and comprehensively engaged with those issues. I mean for me it is reflected through this issue of the rape case within the organisation. Yes I think the organisation took a very progressive position in terms of its understanding in defence of the victim as against the perpetrators who were militant activists of the APF, key leaders within the APF. I think the APF adopted the correct and appropriate sort of view in terms of the rape case and analysing that rape case and taking the appropriate action to suspend and charge and expel those comrades who were involved in that case. But I think we have not politically sort of used that case to unpack all the kind of gender questions and social questions that incident threw up. I think that is why there is always this internal almost instability on this question, where other comrades are mobilising for the reinstatement of one of the perpetrators, where some of them were mobilising supporting the perpetrator at the court case whereas the APF is mobilising to support the victim to ensure that justice is done in terms of the issue of the victim. We haven't been able to create a kind of a solid unity of perspectives and understanding and values within the organisation, particularly around gender as well as the social relations, the social issues within the organisation, whereas compared to the political, we are clear, everyone is clear about that, but this question, these issues. I am not sure; maybe it is largely because we have not been able to really engage with our constituency at the level of the communities because largely the APF's relationship with the mass constituency is through the affiliates and through the leadership of the affiliates. If an affiliate leadership have a different perspective or understanding or view on gender or social questions, you know what I mean the view of the APF I don't think filters through. I think for me that is probably part of the reason why we didn't have that kind of a similar development as in the case of the political. The political it's easier because peoples immediate problems relate with the ANC, you know what I mean, the target, the enemies are the same in the organisation. But gender and social issues are much more personal to put it that way you know there's a more personal element to it. There is a more personal element to it and I think that requires much more closure and deeper interaction with the constituency, with the base and I don't think we had that opportunity you know on this particular issue. It is also reflected in terms of how people approach the issue of money and finance, accountability around it.” **John Appolis**

“With REMMOHO, I think we envisaged that we, with REMMOHO will be able to develop a strong sort of gender component or organisation and also accelerate the development of women leadership within the movement and within the APF as a whole. I think that has not happened, for various reasons I think we must as an organisation the movement we must still unpack this experience. Clearly we saw REMMOHO as not only being just an APF formation, but something that can become a movement of all movements in terms of gender and in terms of women questions and women leadership, So I mean for that is something that, taking into account that the large majority of our constituency are women, you know and their being in the forefront of the battles at community level, at local level, I think that's one sort of aspect that we need to explore more.” **John Appolis**

“I think it's made the participation of women very difficult. I think you know if you just think of the normal...what responsibilities the women have and on top of that all these many, many meetings. It's impossible for women... for a woman to ... you find younger women trying to come but for older women it is very difficult because just of the levels of responsibility. That and I think that there was then also as I was saying, the difficulty of engaging with the discussion because it often... I think many women didn't feel a space for them. It was like a kind of chicken and egg thing because if you don't have them there [structures, meetings] then you can't do that then if you can't do that it is because you don't have them there.” **Nina Benjamin**

“I mean for me coming to work with unions and other organisations, it is shocking but it is not something unheard of [the rape case]. And I think in some ways it is one area in the APF that we have not managed to make any inroads on unfortunately. And when I look back from where I'm sitting now, I know there has been on that level of inequality on the power relations that were there and that these mobile young men also become ... the APF have also given them a certain power which has made it worse, which has made their ability to exploit the people around them worse, because they are the leaders, they get to move around. I mean this group wouldn't have the kind of opportunities that I think they were having. I think one of the things is that we never challenged that, we never found a way to address that. I don't know what people would have learnt from the whole process of the rape case and the disciplinary process...but in a strange way, the fact that it actually happened eventually and was concluded is sometimes more than you can say, for example, in some other organisations, in some of the unions. So with all the problems that were there an actual process happened there was external mediators that came in, the people were actually disciplined, they were removed from the thing ... which means that there was an organisation

with an organisational process, a messy one, a difficult one, maybe not even messy, not messy in a sense that wrong things happened, I am just saying it had its own internal problems and all that, but it went through a formal set of steps and came at the end and said, 'This is it'.” **Nina Benjamin**

“So a basic thing like that [rape case] again a sort of bureaucratic kind of approach kind of filled in for a more political approach of using a terrible thing as an opportunity to try and you know think through for ourselves what exactly, what constitutes rape. In real life we know that things are not always so clear cut for a person who hasn't thought through the things carefully. And I think for women and men that would've been enormously useful to approach it like that. I think there was also, you know things like, with the formation of REMMOHO which I think was extremely positive as a way of getting women to start talking, you know but I think again the sort of thing where things that slipped up was how does that then feed back into an organisation where actually we are going to have to rely, not just on women, to stand up to sexism. You know you can say 'okay obviously we don't want a thing where men take themselves again as the champions for women and I am going to protect your interest', but you know we want actually like a to build a layer of men who are aware of sexism and try not to do it, you know and are aware that when there is an issue, that seems to be a women's issue maybe it is not even a women's issue, it is a peoples issue.” **Claire Ceruti**

“That rape case of Patra and other comrades I had a serious concern especially with female comrades because there were some female comrades who supported the rapists and unfortunately I didn't - that's why I didn't attend REMMOHO and I'm not interested to attend REMMOHO because they have this thing of groups and this is not going to work at a female organisation because they were supposed to support the victim as they knew that the person was raped and that was not false accusations.” **Kgothatso Mola**

“When we talk about gender we go “no let's just be gender sensitive” but in terms of getting serious about talking about the issues of gender, I don't think we've done that as an organisation. An example is when there comes to elections, it's like we forget that we have females in the organisation. And also a mistake which I think organisations like Remmoho are making because the purpose of forming Remmoho was to introduce that to the APF. But I think, you see when it was formed, people spoke about which I think it's a mistake which even today we're making; we talk about male comrades as the enemy “its men that, it's men this, its men that”. But we are not talking about gender reconciliation you know? So I think this is also why it's going to weaken our politics ... I remember initially when we started this is what we had in mind to say “we need to have meetings with both genders and discuss about these issues and debate”. We only had one meeting where we did that and debate about these issues and at the end of the day find a common ground. Yes we will differ but find a common ground you know? But now it's like “no we need to be alone”. If we want to talk about domestic violence we cannot talk about it as women alone because yes we are affected and it includes both genders. So I think that this is the mistake that we are doing as an organisation.” **Teboho Mashota**

“What I have experienced was that a lot of men undermine me just because I'm who I am. And some others, they say women can't be the leader because women are weak in minds and women are used to everything that is happening, to personalise everything in the organisation, so the organisation can't grow if a woman is the leader of the organisation. Now I am ... a woman leader and I am leading the community that I know what the problem is in their houses, even outside of their houses, I am leading with experience of note, because those things have been happening in the house. And to me I took them to come and tell me about their problems because they are the very same problems that they are facing in the house. You can't find a child going to the father and saying 'I am starving', always mom, I am starving, even a man himself will come to you and say I am starving, what is the plan of food in the house? Even in my church, because in church there is always some Xhosa men, they used to say a woman can't be a leader because we won't listen to a woman reading the scripture to us, what are you going to say to us. I used to tell them as a woman, I have given birth to you as men, you have to respect me, without me you would not have been here, you wouldn't have been leaders because you've been brought up by women who was looking after you, not men who was looking after you, but here I am today, you will respect me, like it or not.” [And] this incident of the rape in the organisation, the situation has been worse for me, because most of the comrades, they felt that if the chairperson was a man he would never arrange women to go and support the victim. Just because the chairperson is now a woman, that is why this is happening, that is why other affiliates felt that they will vote for the suspects.” **Mammy Tladi**

“I was critical of the APF's efforts in a sense that where we had women's meetings and women's discussions, but I didn't agree with the approach that they wanted to hide off women that sort of thing almost falling into identity politics, and the same politics which characterises the new social movements where every struggle is equal, let the women fight their own battle... because my view is the problem is capital and women are oppressed because

of capital so we have to fight their battle as if we have to get rid of capital. And I think what later happened with scandals, I think although maybe it's unfair, I think it has to do with that politics where women have their own separate meetings. Now how are you going to educate the men about gender issues but I don't know maybe that's unfair but certainly I mean the APF could have done more I imagine." **Trevor Ngwane**

'When I was living in Diepkloof I was married and my husband beat me up, he was very close to Trevor and myself. When I told Trevor and he said 'but he is doing it for the first time'. So that sort of like opened a whole different world for me like, "okay this person calls himself a socialist, so is it clear that socialism and women's rights are far different issues'. And then if the political party starts up where will women's rights be, women's role in the whole thing?" **Virginia Setshedi**

"With Norwegian Peoples Aid there was a Women Can do it Workshop last week and I was looking at the women ... they were coming from the APF, the few of them that had been like vocal and understood what the training is. I think at this juncture in this country we need women leadership and given other issues around women and gender issues we need women leadership that understands what it is like to be a woman within an organisation - let alone in the country - but in the organisation and now we are going to be able to say "wrong is wrong, right is right". You know because if it continues like this with Zuma and his polygamist tendencies and traditionalism and all that we will end up having a country where women are not seen at all. So I think the APF with other organisations will play a big role in the nature of a particular group of women, build a cadre specifically of women who are going to be able to sort of like continue in making sure that women issues are always on the agenda." **Virginia Setshedi**

"Something else that has always worried me and I think that none of us have confronted properly even though we have tried to in the APF is the gender question and the problems that I think both men and women have faced in these struggles and in organisations. And I think that has partly got to do with our own historical inability to think through this gender question properly. I think it's been very easy for all of us to argue for a women's forum or a separate space for women to meet. I mean I've argued that historically as well, but I've learnt that over the years that even though those spaces are necessary, it's probably more important to find ways of bringing men and women together to confront the problems that, you know re-emerge even though those separate spaces are there. And I think in the APF we've seen and in other spaces, we've seen separate women's spaces also sometimes becoming the domain of particular women and you know particular women being able to become powerful in their own ways through the resources that are made available there or you know the affirmation that they gain through being active there. And I mean what has been very sad for me in the APF particularly amongst the younger members we've attracted is that you always get a sense that there was something else happening you know, within the organisation in terms of gender but we would never, we were just unable to not even able to speak about it properly ... we weren't able to make it possible for those problems to be brought to the fore. I mean the whole Zuma thing has taken a completely different picture now, but I can remember a time, well around the rape case and I think we were having research subcommittee meetings and you know male members of the subcommittee being really harsh about any problematisation of Zuma and us just not being able to get beyond kind of shouting at each other to have a proper discussion about what was going on in that rape case. I mean in other simpler things that we just haven't found ways of making part of our everyday conversations in the APF. And I think that's a problem that goes throughout social movements; you know it's probably something that we've inherited from wherever we've come." **Prishani Naidoo**

Relationships with other NGOs and international organisations

"Up until the APF was formed, internationally the vast majority of progressive forces and anti-apartheid forces that had been part of the movement and everything else were still very, very much uninformed and sometimes not as a result of their own faults but there wasn't anything to counter that information - that the ANC and the government were doing a wonderful job and that things were progressing quite nicely in South Africa and there wasn't a great deal of opposition to these policies. And the APF, for some, shattered that and that was positive. In other words, it contributed – you can't say it caused it because the APF wasn't big enough to cause it - but the APF's activities and profile and recognition of its struggles at an international level amongst some very influential progressive activists in Europe, in the United States some in Asia and Latin America combined with their own struggles, I think shattered a lot of the illusions that a lot of international activists and progressives had in the ANC and what was going on because they could not ignore the practical struggles that organisations like the APF engaged in. And I think when

they began to reflect back on the commonalities of the anti-neo liberal kind of thrust that the APF represented - and began to locate within their own struggles - that made sense to them. The fact that yeah, 'this stuff is going on in South Africa, it is real, there is a lot of discontent, these things are happening' and I think that contributed a great deal at an important level to degrees certainly not what we might have desired but to degrees of solidarity and understanding of the situation of South Africa's own transitional political economy so to speak." **Dale McKinley**

"There was an anti-intellectual current, right and that current within the APF saw institutions like you know, I mean Khanya which helped people from the other currents as you know competitors, so it became more like a turf war. Now that I think, undermined you know the struggle but at the same time I mean being at Khanya, I mean puts you in a very powerful position because you are employed and then the organisation has got the resources and now a building so I mean that gives you power. And I think we had a discussion at Khanya about that, there was a discussion about whether can Khanya intervene in the APF and take us as a sign of a particular faction, we said no, in fact we even said, 'Look you can't even meet at Khanya with your faction because that would compromise the organisation'. I think maybe the way Khanya carried itself deepened those issues. There was a perception that Khanya was acting as the big brother if it intervenes in an imperialistic fashion, so look I mean imperialism and equality, they don't go together." **Mondli Hlatshwayo**

"I think the APF has grown, it has grown too far because I can say the whole world, all the countries, they know about the APF. I saw this when I was in the World Social Forum in Nairobi also, there were people from different countries and when we were wearing our APF t-shirts they would say 'this organisation, we have heard about it, this organisation', comrades from even in Kenya. Comrades of APF, they started to show Kenyans for instance, we are not caring about the police if they are not doing their own job, we just want what we need, because we go there to the event and we see the mayor was having a big tent selling food, we took those poor people in the tent and said to them, 'Give them food, they haven't got money.'. They nearly want to take us to jail and said, 'We will catch you and go and put you in jail'. We said. 'We don't mind because we are the socialists' ... we said. 'This is not the right way for the people to live and why are we doing this?', because we have learned this from the APF. If there was no APF we would not have been so strong to stand everywhere and to talk about the APF." **Mammy Tladi**

"I became quite involved in the South African Social Forum on the hosting or maybe making sure that SASF takes place and that required attending those regional meetings and I think it was quite a task of not saying it's only me. The APF as a movement you have to represent from South Africa you know other movements which are there ... but mainly I think representing what the APF has been doing within South African and how we see things as the APF was actually quite important and attending those meetings. And other than that it was also to the World Social Forum International Committee and as part of SASF, as part of also the Social Movements Indaba. We were a member of the International Committee so you had to attend some of the meetings that are taking place and put forward our position as the Social Movement Indaba as the APF and how do we see struggles taking place not only within the region but Africa as a whole and internationally. It was quite a learning experience for myself as well as being part of the whole structure of the WSF, SASF and the ASF the Africa Social Forum and I think it is quite important for movements like the SMI and the APF to have its voice being heard within those spaces and quite importantly I think as I have said or indicated make sure that people are aware of the struggles that we are attacking in South Africa or the organisation was actually doing as in to have solidarity from those movements and also understanding how issues were developing within South Africa post '94. Representing the APF internationally people will always say 'oh but where's Trevor' and so forth, Trevor Ngwane the ex-organiser before I came in. So you know all these meetings, they would sort of think well the struggle is on and taking place in Soweto and how are things happening in Soweto. And I think my challenge was to make sure that people get to hear of these other struggles that are taking place within other communities or other affiliates within the APF and have a broader picture." **Silumko Radebe**

"On the international front I remember specifically around individual campaigns, initially getting support from movements and individual activists who were involved in similar struggles in other parts of the world. And I think just from my own individual experience the formation that I was most involved in at the time following the formation of the APF in the media, Independent Media Centre which allowed for quite a big network globally to contribute to particular struggles and campaigns and specifically around the World Conference Against Racism and around the World Conference on Sustainable Development; draw in a number of individual activists and organisations and movements into actual struggles. So not just contributing in terms of resources or you know, solidarity statements and so on, but coming here and becoming active in struggles of the different affiliates not just with the APF but also the other new social movements. And I think the role that within the media, particularly from 2001 to I would say about 2004 / 2005 was quite important in cementing that, those global networks in terms initially of participation in struggles

around the WCAR and the WSSD but then also in allowing individual activists to come and work in the APF from other parts of the world and then initiating that internship campaign which might not be imagined as happening through in the media, but I think that the initial groups of that come from the media. And so people from specifically Canada or Montreal coming and working in the APF communities sharing skills in terms of media production but also learning in terms of activism here and many of those interns having also worked in different movements and campaigns, they're being able to share and build a network in that way. So I think it is important to understand that global network, not just in terms of you know the ordinary ways of solidarity statements and giving of money and other kinds of material resources but facilitating of a real network in terms of people participating in struggles here and also members of the APF being able to go to other parts of the world and work in movements there." **Prishani Naidoo**

Debates around the elections, and APF becoming a political party

"I think even there it doesn't mean we are going to give people jobs you know or we are going to give them houses and sometimes you may think sometimes that ja maybe this is a chance that we need to take as an organisation but doing that because of the challenge that we have of poverty, then its raising false hope to our members. Because then taking that route and people supporting because they think they are going to get jobs, then it's like misleading them in a way because even if the APF changes its face, its direction, it doesn't mean we are going to satisfy everyone. And I think sometimes in fact it might mean an end to the APF." **Teboho Mashota**

"... there were some people who were thinking that way, the first position. Why should we go into elections, we are not about elections, we are about the campaign against privatisation and within that remember specific communities were fighting specific aspects of privatisation; now we are just fighting the electricity, no, no we are fighting eviction. And also remember that although problems were the same, but each community will experience problems differently, like KwaMasiza hostel, it's a hostel but they can even argue that our problem is unique "know you guy's you have your 4-roomed houses"; it's the same with the shack dwelling people you get that argument with Abahlali "you know we are shack dwellers, we are not the same as so and so'. So they will say "ah don't go into elections". The second position was "oh no we can go to elections but, maybe time is not right" or even if we do it has to be highly circumscribed we have to take into account funding, those politics. The third group wanted the APF to contest elections although with the debate I think people will end up talking at cross purposes but I think the kind of way I've laid it out, those who said, 'Let's go for elections', would be accused of wanting to change the APF into a party, where actually those who wanted a party to be formed which is not APF, do you know what I mean? But anyway in politics is not always fair so the argument was collapsed. Just as the argument of those who Said, "We must go into elections, but the time is not right", or has to be highly circumscribed started to sound the same as the anarchists who just don't want elections, just in principle. So ... what I am trying to say is that when there is a debate, there are always two positions but in an organisation you will find three positions actually and that's almost natural, it's left politics." **Trevor Ngwane**

"I remember actually you know some statement that I will never forget ... by Trevor; was that when he introduced us to the Socialist Group - this was at the house that I used to live in, in Diepkloof - he said, "My dream is to have my own political party". So when I heard all those things I was like oh this is you know the means to make sure that the political party begins but then the sad thing is that it's been done, it's been done through the APF and the APF funding. And remember as I mentioned, one of the reasons why the APF funds were received is because of the obvious role that I played and it was like saddening to hear that you play this role and making sure that the APF gets its funding to cover a broader constituency and then there is someone who wants to use it for his own purposes, for developing a political party." **Virginia Setshedi**

"With the SECC the issue of elections also came up and there was like disagreements all over; "no who is going to be elected? Because there's an issue of money as well despite the politics there's issues of money that if this person gets elected this person is going to be earning salary and who shouldn't earn a salary and who should earn a salary? And then the manner in which the SECC was looking at now the salary was going to come to the organisation and that person will get a certain percentage. But then that strategy also was proven wrong by the first councillor that they elected because then she wanted the money and she wanted to complain and all that. And my concern with that strategy with issue of elections is that I think it disempowers the cause of what the people in Soweto and in South Africa should actually take up because they decided that they are just going to take someone who is not very active in the organisation but this person is also expected to be at the council meetings and pushing for some issues. How is a person who is in-active exactly knows how to push for issues? That has always been my question. And what I am saying is proven right since

they had a councillor in the council chambers because you have to know the issues, you have to be able to know strategies and how to push for issues and you also have to be knowledgeable on certain things, because issues don't just emanate from space, they are committed to certain issues. So I think that that whole thing is actually whether or not the APF is part of it or not part of it, it has actually crippled the APF from the council, from the mayor because that person is seen as the APF member within the chambers and then even if you as a member of the community, you try to challenge your councillor and then the councillor will say "ja but why didn't you ask your APF member in the council chambers to push for that?" So it is sad and if we can have political parties and change the APF into political parties my concern is that the voice of the poor and the marginalised will then therefore be gone. As soon as a political party become a political party and is known then it has its own interest, the protocols and the line that it's pushing." **Virginia Setshedi**

"The first discussions, whenever there were discussions about a political party or changing the organisation into a political party surfaced, I think the ways in which we approached that discussion and debate closed down any possibilities for thinking about alternative ways of doing politics because different groups were very defensive of their need to either make us a political party or not; so you know, in putting forward just set pet arguments, for or against a political party. I don't think we allowed for proper engagement amongst ourselves about a real political alternative, not just in terms of the APF as an organisation but I think at a national level, thinking through different ways of governing and emerging, thinking through alternatives to current state forms. I think every time that party discussion surfaced it kind of ... I mean the potential for anything to be produced anything mutually produced just kind of shut down. There were moments when I think that could've happened and some of us did come with views towards having that discussion. But particular groups and I think yeah, the Socialist Group, DSM and those kinds of formations in claiming to know what this alternative is, prevented us from actually having a proper discussion." **Prishani Naidoo**

"I also think it [the elections debate] was somewhat partly a response to a crisis particularly within the organisation when we saw that it was no longer growing, there were a kind of necessity for something else or something to reinvigorate it; and some people, those who didn't come with pre-established ideological positions might have seen the elections as a possible way of reigniting the movement. And I also think the lack of imagination to some extent ... what the nature and character of post-apartheid politics is has already been circumscribed by an institutional framework that we are now standing outside of and in order for us to be real political players we need to enter the electoral terrain and it is ultimately on this terrain that we mature, that it was the kind natural evolution, the type that we were was the electoral kind of end. And I seriously kind of departed from those kind of perspectives in so far as ... the potential of the APF was to create and to kind of return to other forms of democratic contestation and to at the very least, I don't have a kind of general problem with elections but unless we have working democratic forms of our own making it makes no sense to enter into these highly institutionalised forms that can only then end in a certain kind of capture of us politically. This is precisely because, and I mean we saw this partly with the SECC experience, where a person literally walked away from them, their candidate. So they managed to deal with that as Trevor points out but nonetheless I think that experience has nevertheless shown that unless you want to put your faith in the loyalty of a cadre you need to do some movement building work to ground that beforehand and that movement building work is precisely the creation of alternative forms of democratic practice and co-existence that needed to be locally established, which is why I did say I would support an electoral campaign at the time if it was like linked to community assemblies and so forth and these could be sustained, you know made real kind of organs of popular expressions of collective power." **Ahmed Veriava**

Moving forward: challenges for the APF and social movements in general

"I think the challenge for me lies into how to create not just a common set of demands but a political programmatic understanding of these demands that exists within the APF ... how to translate that to other movements and then find the appropriate organisational form for that unity. As I said, it doesn't have to necessarily have to be under the banner of the APF. What is the appropriate form, taking into account the state of the movements, you know politically, ideologically, organisationally and even resource wise, financial resource wise? Because this movement can also become exhausted ... and that is when reactionary sentiments can take root. There is even this thing about the conference of the left and I think that is one of the problems I have with the left, you know was in the APF the way they see how unity, how mass movements are built, similar mistakes are being repeated now with initiatives that people just want to create structures you know what I mean and think that is going to bring about unity and a new mass organisational mass movement and all of that and not sort of not appreciating the task of building a movement and all the shit that goes with it [laughter] to put it that way. So I think for me that is going to be... that's the key challenge, you know for the APF and the movement generally." **John Appolis**

“I don’t think we spent enough time learning from others. I think sometimes the way we assimilated lessons even from our own struggles, were, because it was done with a lot of point scoring from the side of left groups often, I don’t think the way people learnt it or assimilated ... maybe it could have been done in a more comradely way, we could have drawn the lessons out in a different kind of way. I think that the unemployed thing - that yes there was a lot of discussion around income generation and so and for me it was partly a reflection of in a sense almost of a patriarchal nature of the organisation, that those things are small things, they are not revolutionary, they are not political enough and they are women’s things even though no one is articulating like that. So and I am not saying that about the income generation, and I think just being able to break that divide and recognising people more as people, with a life, with a home, with a family with a personal life, would have forced us to make more... create more spaces to do... to take the income part, to take the unemployed question, to take that into account.” **Nina Benjamin**

“I think the things we don’t have as social movements is the time on the alternatives which people always ask – ‘but what alternatives are you giving us?’. If you can have a tie there which can be able to debate alternative infrastructure which can sustain the people’s initiatives we will be going a mileage. So if we can be able to establish in the social movements the organs which will make people be able to do things themselves because there is no any other source of economy, there is no any other consumer other than the poor person on the ground so we always get that power and then give it to other people rather than do it. We can learn from women, women are running societies; they are running *stokvels* which are able to sustain them. We as organisations for people on the ground why are we failing to do that? We can learn from the Boers. I always say the Boers were poor whites on the ground and they deliberately started organs which were able to up lift them from that poverty. We also are supposed to inculcate that into the people themselves otherwise our struggle will then be wasted because we are not a challenge to the system.” **Phineas Malapela**

“Even with now there’s always this thing of yes we do reconnect you know, we reconnect for people when people come to our meetings. But there is there’s always this issue of poverty I think. And even when we are organising in the community people will come to meetings, you will see next week they’re not there. People are looking for jobs and I think that’s a challenge for the APF I think, not only for APF, even for SECC because if you can look at SECC five, six years ago and now, you will see a huge difference. There is that loyalty, there are those people who are consistent in coming to meetings, when we organise and march, but the majority is not there you know. It’s either they found jobs or they are looking or they feel “you know what; you know this route is not getting anywhere, it’s not taking me anywhere you know”. So I think that’s a challenge for the APF.” **Teboho Mashota**

“It’s been what, ten years now and we still agree that the society that we’re living in is messed up. But the problem is with also with the changes I mean I can’t sit here and say government is not dealing with it. ANC is dealing with it you know. There are houses and even our own member ... I know some of my comrades, if they can hear me say this they’ll think “ah this is now a bourgeoisie” but you see I sit here as a mother with two kids but what I am thinking about is; “okay what am I going to cook for my kids?” And someone will say you are working, so I mean really. And even me who is working, I have to worry about paying a bond you know, I have to worry about paying school fees and you sit alone and you think okay now my salary is not able to accommodate the bond so I am thinking about an RDP. If I am thinking like that then what about even just an ordinary person who is our member? When we criticise people and say “come elections you will see people going and queuing for food parcels” you know what I think we are living in hard times really. I am not going to blame people for anything; honestly I am not going to blame them. So I think this is also the challenge that we are facing as social movements, even our own members who are in leadership positions, they also have the same problems. We have those problems I mean we worry about a lot of things you know. So sometimes I think maybe this is why people don’t come to our meetings anymore you know because they feel we’re not giving them what they want. Maybe this is why, I don’t know, really you’ll find us fighting over money because we really need this money. So I think it’s, compared to six years ago it’s, it has changed. I think the conditions are really making it difficult for one to think about politics.” **Teboho Mashota**

“I think people got a bit frightened [by recent shifts / battles in ANC] and now the [question of an alternative is quite urgent because although we used to fight against ANC but we never liked the DA and those type of people so the ANC was almost a devil we knew and the devil which sometimes spoke our language and the devil we came from; whereas now recent developments with the ANC almost jumping over the cliff of reaction. I don’t think neo-liberal policies are just being many moral questions, leadership questions, gender, Zuma. So people realised that maybe there was just no way forward there. So I think increasingly we’ll see the APF being forced to deal with questions of elections, of building a party and in fact I know for a fact that some APF members were attracted to COPE and that’s not because they are running to win, it’s because something political which would challenge the ANC and be an alternative came around and the fact is that is what it needed.” **Trevor Ngwane**

“I think there’s a bit of confusion when it comes to the Zuma issue, from the affiliates you know. Like for instance two weeks ago I was at KCR giving a women’s day empowerment workshop and then you get to hear people wanting to sing Zuma songs and Zuma praises. And I still say that’s also because of a level of educational political understanding of what the issues are and knowing exactly what Zuma stands for. But also with the fact of the limited understanding of what human rights issues are and also gender equality issues. Because I mean if you look at Zuma as a person I mean women should actually be coming out and say, “fuck this man” you know. But no one actually does that because there’s this thing of thinking that Zuma is better than Mbeki precisely because Zuma can laugh and come to people and Mbeki wasn’t. So, it’s an issue of personality versus politics ... the question I would ask is has Zuma said there is something wrong with the ANC politics? He hasn’t and so there will never be any difference. But it is sad and it’s not only in the APF but actually in the whole civil society organisation, in the whole sector where there’s this confusion; the ANC is there and the therefore you sort of even lose the allies that you made you know as an organisation because people are thinking oh no, we know Zuma is going to come up with good things, and then on the other hand you understand that actually it’s not true so you are like actually two opposite sides and that actually destabilises the power in the strength of the civil society organisations in South Africa.” **Virginia Setshedi**

“Domestically the changed nature of what has happened over the last particular period – yes, I think I have already spoken to some of degrees to which that has been reflected in the confusion, not so much the ideological but tactical confusion of the APF, how to respond to what has been going on in the ANC and the changed rhetoric and the changed nature of what seems to be at least for some people - you said I could disagree with this which I do; I do not think that what has happened in the last while is yet, but there are seeds of it, but I don’t think as yet we can talk about a major ideological shift that has taken place. I think what is happening is the skirmishes; skirmishes over the more immediate direction and control and positionality within the state and the alliance that reflect at a more deeper level some very real ideological divisions but I don’t think those have come to the fore yet. So the APF in some ways has reflected that and has imbibed these things by its own sometimes confusion as to how to relate to what is going on not only in relation to the ANC and the state and the alliance but sometimes in relation to local levels; sometimes taking a very oppositional stance at one level and being very militant and willing to engage in direct confrontation and then very shortly thereafter doing the exact opposite; and sometimes these being the reflection of that kind of confusion and the shifts taking place. So I think that has happened predominately ... at a tactical level but I do think that it impinges upon the challenges that I mentioned earlier, which is that even though the APF has held to a particular strategic vision, that that strategic vision cannot serve it in the context of a rapidly changing international and domestic context where these ideological and strategic questions are going to come to the fore fairly soon. If the APF does not respond and does not recreate itself to respond to those things then it will become meaningless.” **Dale McKinley**

The future of the APF

“Taking into account the last two years, I think the APF is at a very critical stage. It’s either going to build on what it has achieved and established so far, you know more politically and organisationally or its going to implode. And the reason why I am saying this is that 2011 is coming, the 2011 local government elections and taking from our experience over the past, I mean years now, elections always create a lot of heightened sort of tensions within the organisation and sometimes we battle to get the organisation and militants to knuckle down in terms of having a deeper analysis of the state of the movements, or balance of forces you the alignment of the balance of forces both APF and also in South Africa. Most of the questions are sometimes then dealt with emotionally or with fixed, formulated sort of views and my fear, my concern is that, that might happen again in 2011. In a context where the APF, there are a lot of new militants in the APF, many of them are around now I think like two or three years. In fact I made a kind of short test in one of the political education workshop we had, Rosa Luxemburg, Political Education Workshops. So I asked the comrades who were in the meeting, there were about seventy comrades to put up their hands, those who were in the WSSD march. You know of seventy people, only ten put up their hands. You know this is a political education workshop with the leadership of the affiliates, so ten, fifteen percent of the people who were part of that workshop, who were part of WSSD. I think for me the consolidation, the political understanding, the organisational continuity, is going to be severed if the APF in the next months are not going to consolidate and entrench some of these things and there is definitely going to be a new leadership this year, within the APF and I am not sure that the new leadership will provide the necessary political and organisational continuity for the organisation and in 2011 elections will be approached, whatever position it takes, you know the question of maintaining an organisational movement even if you participate in 2011, you know whether that’s going to be possible if the leadership does not take over it doesn’t have that perspective, does have that understanding of the organisation, the movement, it is imperative and the tactics that it sort of undertakes in terms of responding to immediate sort of questions and spaces that are opening.” **John Appolis**

“It does need a big shuffling, shaking up and maybe if that shaking up is not possible, it will have to die, it will have to go through a process where things don’t work out and you start fresh, sometimes that is also necessary.” **Nina Benjamin**

“I told our chairperson last week when I came back, I told her - you come to the office you sit for 30 minutes, we talk and talk unnecessary things that are not benefiting the community, that is not even benefiting the organisation itself, that is not building comrades and especially new comrades who affiliated. After that we just have lunch, expensive lunch and go home. That’s my worry because people are suffering on the ground. Mobilisation is no longer there.” **Kgothatso Mola**

“I don’t mean to sound cynical, but I am cynical about the APF. My sense is that people are often part of the APF because there is nothing better to do, that it presents an opportunity to come to Joburg, to meet with other people and almost be like in a social network rather than an activist network. The questions of resources, organisational resources, monies are always the most fervently like argued in meetings; you can spend a whole meeting like discussing whether somebody’s going to move or who is going to be representing the organisation at a conference, and then substantive issues are not adequately dealt with. But you know that is of course justified by the fact that those are the concerns of comrades who are hustling to get to the APF and be part of the organisation. My cynicism is also about the sense that the APF has become an academic curiosity, because I am dealing with the website and media, I often get messages from students and there are so many students who want to come and do research at the APF, it has just become something of a cliché and maybe that affects my own appreciation of what the APF is doing, my sense of us being rather more of academic value, than activist value.” **Nicolas Dieltiens**

“We may be having differences as an organisation but in an organisation there are always people who, whether making mistakes or not, but there are always people who are always driving the organisation. Maybe think that they are driving it into the wrong direction you know, but there are always people who keep the organisation together. So I think I mean people like yourself, John and other comrades. We’ve had critics you know comrades “No you are doing this wrong, you are doing this right” but I mean if you sit and think and say “okay, in the APF let me remove this one and this one and this one and see where it would’ve gone”. I don’t know maybe we would have become a political party now and died or something you know? And also the debates that we always have, I think that’s also what kept us going despite the differences, I think that kept us going. Having that vision for the organisation and people who were able for ten years to be there and drive it.” **Teboho Mashota**

“I think organisations such as the APF are really in demand, they are more needed now than ever, because as we stand right now the marginalised, they’ve sort of been forgotten from the whole spectrum of things, they are so-so forgotten. The only time anyone ever remembers them is during the election time, of course we know that, and the marginalised actually they also know that now and they are saying ‘you know we are not going to be used, you know we need to be constantly, we are part of this community, you cannot shelve us, put us in a closet and then open that closet only when you feel it suits you’. That’s why we are seeing these ... hardly a week goes by without us hearing of those delivery protests. So I think organisations such as the APF are more relevant now than ever and I feel even the government is feeling the pinch, it is actually feeling the pressure.” **Sehlaphe Sibanda**

“I would like APF to get into the elections then we must have people who will stand for APF in the local [elections] in 2011, even in national if possible. But what I say to community is we need to strengthen our organisation starting from the ground level from the local government election having our own councillors, those who belong to the APF so that we can have a word in the council. Because now we are fighting with people who are in their house, we are standing outside their house; when they open their door they find us there and we send a message we don’t know if the person when coming inside is talking the message the very same way we told them so we want to have some leaders in the house of the APF, council house, provincial even national. We need to have something in common ... I think it is high time now for us to stand for our self and show the socialists are there then we can debate with them even in the parliament, not only outside.” **Mammy Tladi**

“I think we are all wishing that the APF can still be there after twenty years in regards to issues of service delivery because problems are there within the country and they are going to continue to be there. But I think quite importantly the work that has been done by the APF has been quite uplifting to some of the communities which have been there and that has not been appreciated by organisations outside the APF; the ANC itself and other movements have not appreciated and looked at the relevance of movements like the APF. I think for some of us we have been there with communities, we have dealt with some of the issues on a daily basis [and] when you start to look back to say somebody comes up to you and say ‘well I was helped by the APF I was not evicted from my house, I am still staying in that house, I am still having access to water, I have resolved issues around electricity, my

children were able to go to school’ - that even in itself will inspire to say the movement has to continue and give that support to the community. I think it will be for myself personally ...quite a setback to the improvement of our people’s lives, to see an organisation like the APF you know stopping to exist because of lack of cadres who have the vision to make sure that they carry the objectives of the organisation or the movement in helping or servicing the communities.” **Silumko Radebe**

“Yes the state has changed its response but those responses never said that the APF was no longer necessary. And I think as a social movement APF is still important in this point in time because it is not always only about policies, it is also about the voice that is different from the voice of the traditional political parties. For me as an individual, the APF was sort of a home like for the voiceless people. And we will continuously need that you know as I see it. But the responses were like maybe they did kill some momentum in some of the affiliates or even in some of the APF but for me I never had that experience. I just saw it as still necessary and it will continue to be necessary because we will have the political parties but the voice of the marginalised and the working class will always be needed.” **Virginia Setshedi**

“One of the things that interested me about this project was that I thought that the ability to tell the story of the APF from its end as opposed to so many narratives of the APF before the story was over - you never knew how it might conclude - I think you can finally tell the story of how the APF finally concludes. But hopefully that end is also a new beginning, the kinds of political formations and the kind of political practices and imagination it has forged, the kind of positive moments of the APF, is something that I do hope has a real future. I do think that the APF will probably exist in one form or another. But I think there’s a particular APF that belongs to a particular period of South Africa’s transition from apartheid and it is part of the history of that, those contestations, anxieties and tensions. I think the APF and I think this is not something - unless you come from a very old school Marxist perspective and believe that the only kind of political formation for the working class is the revolutionary party - then you have to see this as part of an ongoing part of development of struggle and these kinds of shifts. It’s like I never saw the future of the APF as the future of the revolutionary party, you know what I mean, the passing of the APF is not necessarily a bad thing, so long that the energies that gave it its vigour and so forth can help re-establish a new political terrain, new political solidarities that makes sense to whatever struggles that are now going to present themselves. But like I said, the APF will exist in some kind of form or another but the kind of APF that was a product of that particular period is no more; what that means I am not really sure yet.” **Ahmed Veriava**

“I wish I had the crystal ball. I’m in two minds, personally. There is one part of what I see as the future in terms of the APF as a potentially a very positive future. And I don’t ... I want to stress this, I don’t see the future of the APF solely in terms of the organisational form that it’s had up to now. If the APF morphs into something else and joins up with other organisations I consider that as part of the growth of the APF whether or not it retains the name ‘APF’ or whatever. There’s a part of me that sees the real potential for that to happen in the next few years; that the APF begins to move beyond itself essentially and its somewhat own narrow confines and lends itself - what it has accumulated, its experience, its weight, its politics - to something that is much bigger but also something which has much more impact societally. I’m not sure what form that might take but I think there is the real possibility that that can happen. However, that is mitigated to a large extent by a very forthright and honest assessment of the present state of the APF and its challenges. A serious challenge to the APF and which has the potential to make or break the APF, is its internal consolidation. And what I mean by that is ... that the second and third layer of cadreship is going to have to come to the fore and is going to have to take the struggle forward and I mean internally take up the positions, the responsibilities, the tasks and all those kinds of things. We cannot continue with the situation in the APF - irrespective of what is going on outside the APF but just to exist as an organisation - without the will and desire to reproduce the internal strengths of the APF and its own leadership and its own capacity. And I certainly think that it’s something that has to happen otherwise the APF folds irrespective of whether or not there is a whole range of struggles going on. I do think however even if that [APF folding] does happen ...that what the APF leaves behind will not disappear necessarily. I foresee in that scenario, I see a situation where the various communities that have capacitated themselves and are really serious about what they do will continue those struggles and there will be new forms that will arise in bringing those together, assisting and supporting. I think right now it’s somewhat ironic that in the 10th anniversary year of the APF, the APF sits on a knife edge in a lot of ways - it can go one way or go the other and I’m not sure which way it’s headed. On a personal level one of the things that has driven me to sustain this activism [since the inception of the APF] ... is a sense of personal integrity and honesty. And I humbly submit that is something that I do believe is necessary in any struggle, in any movement. I do think that ... without that and the reproduction of that within a movement like the APF that it doesn’t matter how hard we struggle or how hard we try - if the honesty and personal integrity is not there we are always going to fail in the end. I do hope that some of that residue has hopefully been left, irrespective of all the arguments and other things that have happened and that I have personally been involved in - that that sticks. Because it doesn’t matter what the organisational form is as far as I’m concerned that takes place, what matters is the content of your activism and struggle” **Dale McKinley**

EXTRACTS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH APF COMMUNITY AFFILIATE LEADERS AND ACTIVISTS

Personal politicisation and activism

“My mother was not working, was a house wife and my father was a garden boy. He was just a garden boy but he struggled with the ANC, he was involved in the struggle, he was part of the struggle.” **Ellen Chaucer –Weinberg Concerned Residents WCR**

“While we were there in Wynberg, a lawyer came ... to just bring an eviction order, that’s when I started. ‘No man this is too much we can’t live like this, we don’t have proper water, we don’t have electricity’ - we report it to the landlord he doesn’t want to do anything about it so we started, I started recruiting other residents to talk about this and then we went to the Civic Association. It didn’t help much but we went to the meetings, every Tuesdays we went to the meetings, how to do things right and then we fought this eviction order before we joined the APF.” **Ellen Chauke – WCR**

“That’s where I started to be active in politics but since we were living in Bophuthatswana, I mean that was very dangerous you couldn’t expose yourself to being somebody who is political, but the students who came from Soweto because we had students who came from Soweto, from all over South Africa, that were very much active during the 1976 period until when they were in high school. They used to tell us about the stories and I had the desire to, I mean do the same thing in our area. That’s where I started. When I was working for ISCOR and things were not going on well when I was elected shop steward it was because most of the time when there were issues management would say they will chose people whom they could talk to, I was one of them most of the time. Most of the time we would achieve what we wanted and workers felt that I should become a shop steward and that happened.” **Mashao Chauke – Schubert Park Residents Association (SPRA)**

“Actually I grew up as a person who has a negative attitude, I wanted to have reason for everything that I do and then in the early ‘80s in 1984 I joined with the ANC. In those days we only knew about the ANC, we didn’t know about other parties and then I was recruited to the PAC around 1986 / 87, it’s when I started doing things in the community like, taking land forcefully, putting people in that land, fighting, while I was still in the township I was always going there to help the community and the like. While I was in Pretoria in 1999 seeing people on TV wearing APF t-shirts I told my wife, I said ‘I need to join with these people, I think this is a platform that I want’ because with the PAC and AZAPO there was no movement and their politics they look old, they were talking about Sobukwe, but now the APF they were addressing the problems that we are seeing now and there was no politics that so-and-so is a hero the way they go on. I liked the vibrancy of addressing the issue, I liked the vibrancy of making people alert that the ANC is not going to change their lives, it’s going to make things more and more difficult as by then there were a lot of people who were losing jobs through privatisation, people losing houses, you know there were a lot of things and the ANC was doing what was not expected. And also, the way the government was recruiting, when they mobilised us to vote for them they didn’t tell us that we will bring in a system of doing things by privatising, they said, ‘Vote for us, you’ll get a better life’ - now the better life was going to be a sour life.” **Sipho Jantjie – Katorus Concerned Residents (KCR)**

“I start to be African Congress in 1947 in WNT [Western Native Township]. And Mandela was still working at Crown Mine when I was there. I was very busy with ANC, we were collecting, you know those money which we used to call 1 in 6 to build ANC and it was becoming bigger and we used to go to George Goch Hostel and make meetings there and when they start to harass Mandela it’s where we were very, very popular. I was even being arrested...quite a long time I was arrested in Hillbrow while there was still that big police station for us we used to call Number 4. I was there for 6 months, they lock us in. When we start to burn the passes for people at Zola, I was there carrying my child at the back. So it’s where I start to run away because they saw us when we took passes from ladies ... and burn them there.” **Florence Kwashu - Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC)**

“I leave the ANC in 1990. Because I could see after Chris Hani’s death, you understand what is going on. You know, Ramaphosa, he’s just here; he grew up here in Chiawelo. Their house is here, Cyril Ramaphosa. And then

he’s the one who gave me a clue that, “Florence, what’s going on now, I don’t see’ because Ramaphosa was supposed to be next to Mandela. He is the one who pointed Mandela. Mandela wanted to point Cyril and then Mbeki had all those things, challenging people. So I said, “No they even don’t look after us’. And I never vote for them.” **Florence Kwashu - SECC**

“You know I liked the effort that mother did. She was a very strong woman and when I grew up I just told myself I just want to be like mom. And when she passed away in 1992 through a petrol bomb because they threw a petrol bomb in the bedroom ...when she passed away I told myself that I must go through whatever that she did and I started engaging myself at the age of thirteen years, and I was attending youth meetings and all that because that’s what she wanted me actually to do. It continued until the [1994] elections ... until I saw it was not right, the ANC is only benefiting for itself not for the people. Then I decided to stop and it was very difficult for my father because he couldn’t understand why I’m stopping and I said. ‘I can’t do something that I won’t benefit from and the treatment’. I did not know how the ANC was weighing things because they were not concentrating on what people wanted, they were looking like at how to fill up their own pockets then I said to my father, ‘No, this is wrong.’” **Kgothatso Mola – ISCOR Concerned Residents (ICR)**

“You know living with your grandmother, like it’s us, in fact there were eight of us, the grandchildren of my grandmother, we were staying with my grandmother there. And because like she was getting grant money and it was always a problem when she was supposed to give us pocket money to go to school and she will complain that, “I don’t have money I have to pay rent, I have to pay electricity” and all those things. And it was sad that most of the times she wanted to do those things for us but because of the money that she was getting all these things that she was supposed to do she couldn’t do that. We were having problems of electricity and my grandmother was complaining that she doesn’t have money to pay and there were cut offs and she was very scared that if it is cut off then what was going to happen to us?” **Thabo Molefe – SECC**

“Well around the late 80s I remember I joined the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania PAC the student wing at that time. It was then a student organisation at the time and then at a later stage I became a member of the youth wing which was then called Azanian Youth Unity. And at some point immediately after 1994, one became demoralised and I ceased these political activisms as a member due to the dissatisfaction of the direction that the PAC was taking which, as you know that the PAC was divided into two at some point during that era of negotiations. Some were saying, “No, let’s negotiate and abandon the armed struggle”, some were saying, “No let’s continue with the armed struggle and fast track the process.” So I went along with the group that was saying let’s fast track the process at the time. So when the other group won and took over the negotiation of the peace it became clear at some point that we have lost it and one stopped being active in the PAC up until the beginning of the new era where one went back to PAC looking at the political commission that was moving forward but only to find that the PAC at that time was still running around in circles. They were not moving forward and I found myself getting more involved in my community struggle and we linked somehow with the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee SECC.” **Siphiwe Segodi – Thembalihle Crisis Committee (TCC)**

“In Thokoza the community there were divided during that time where there were two areas, they called them “no go areas”. So if you’re staying in a particular side, you’re just called an IFP [Inkatha Freedom Party] person whether you were not, if you’re staying on a particular side they said, ‘You’re an ANC people’. So by that time we had been caught up in that situation and I remember there were a lot of things that were taking place during that time. And then there is the hatred and that political attitude from one another and there were lot of killings that time. Then something tragic happened there. Someone was killed, a woman in fact was killed... it was a community member. Then we went to bury that woman. In our procession to the graveyard, there was an attack. In fact, our car was totally attacked in front of the SANDF. So one of the cars they tried to chase those people because they were attacking us with AK, I was driving the car that time. So two people have been killed in my car ... so one of the cars, the occupants of that car they just try and chase someone there, they saw that it’s the one who was shooting at us. So they caught up with that man and they killed that man. So when we tried to proceed ... I didn’t know that they killed that person because they just drive off and enter into a township ... the same soldiers they came to us and arrested us. So it was unfortunate because I was not even involved in that thing. And then the other thing that I was afraid of because I couldn’t able to say anything in the court during that time, I was afraid of being attacked because I’d be killed then. So we were sentenced, me I was sentenced to seven years ... then I stayed there for about five and a half years then I was released in 1999. Then I go back to the community ... I started working with them because I was just elected when I was not in the meeting ... they came to me in my house and then they asked me to join them, I said, ‘No, it’s fine, I can work with them’. That’s when I started to work with them.” **Bheki Xaba – KCR**

Privatisation: meaning and context

“You know fortunately when I was doing standard 9 I studied a certain book by George Orwell and that book taught me precisely what happened. I think it [knowledge of privatisation] happened not by accident since most of my entire life I had seen more especially from ISCOR, when reengineering started at ISCOR in 1997 there were other reengineering processes which started before then but the 1997 one was a major one and I could see that because I was in the leadership of the shop steward council. After we were retrenched and after were like, I mean, not having a job and sometimes doing odd jobs what happened is that we started reorganising retrenched people and that was from Atteridgeville side. Most of the people when they were retrenched they went to stay in squatter camps and then since we used to have meetings. That’s where I started realising that privatisation on people and especially women and children because what I saw most of the women, some being widows, some children without parents came to those meetings and said, ‘My father used to work for that company so I’m coming to represent him’. And sometimes when we were in those meetings we had to make some collection because some people did not have money to buy food at home. So that’s when I realised that privatisation had a very huge impact on people’s lives particularly the poor especially women and children who lost the people that were supporting them.” **Mashao Chauke – SPRA**

“The issue of privatisation became important because we saw privatisation ...a lot of people were going to lose employment and if parastatals then like Telkom were to be privatised they were going to be expensive like they are today, they are not accessible to many people. Eskom, for example,, a lot of workers have been retrenched so these were the fears that were concrete, including the unions that people are losing employment and that privatisation is not going to address the basic services like where if a company is privatised it’s going to look for profit but if it’s not privatised they are going to look for the interests of the people, of its workers.” **Sipho Magudulela – KCR**

“So for me it’s always been that that it’s not fair, you can’t work in a bakery shop and bake bread everyday but at the end of the day you can’t afford to buy your children bread every day. So for me that’s how it was explained and that’s how I understood it that you know, that privatisation on its own is a problem to those who don’t have because it comes with certain demands on its own and people’s lives are undermined and profit comes before everything. For me that’s how I understood it, it’s how easy sometimes when I get to tell the next person that privatisation is this, taking something that’s been owned by the community and taking it to this one person to own it which is not fair.” **Thabo Molefe – SECC**

“My activism started from schooling. I was one of the pupils who are coming from a very disadvantaged family which I was struggling to pay even R50 for school fees for the rest of the year so with such background I became interested to understand, to unpack the real issues and then ... there was a campaign called ‘No Fee Schools’ and I became interested in the campaign. Along the way, that’s when I learnt that paying school fees or paying such services that government is catering for elements of privatisation.” **Meshack Tladi – Vaal Community Forum (VCF)**

“Trevor you know who was part of the formation of the APF, but I don’t think it was SECC because SECC then didn’t know about the APF. So in a way he, how can I put it, he had interest in joining with other groups, to form yes the APF because he understood how privatisation was going to affect people. So after that then that’s when I remember what used to happen is after those meetings then he would go to the SECC to say I attended this meeting, this is what was happening and I think even with the SECC there was still ... the issue then was electricity, and privatisation was far from electricity, people didn’t understand how it was fitting in into the daily cut offs of electricity you know. It took some time for people to understand because I remember, they would say “down with capitalism” and some of us would be like “okay, that’s if people understand what that is”. There were always critiques around using such words, you know like globalisation, we were like okay, those words are up there and there are bread and butter issues which people came for you know. People are in the SECC because of the evictions, because of the cut off, not because of globalisation because they don’t understand what it does. So it took some time for people to understand how it affects them.” **Teboho Mashota – SECC**

“In my community when I told them about the Anti-Privatisation Forum, they asked me what was that Anti Privatisation Forum; I said to them, ‘According to my understanding, the Anti-Privatisation is the people who refused to the decision of our government, because now what our government is doing is trying to privatise everything so that the jobs were now being minimised and people won’t get jobs, that is why we have the Anti-Privatisation, because they are against the privatisation that our government is doing’. So they said to me, ‘Well, if that is the case why you don’t change this name of the Vaal Community Forum, to the Anti-Privatisation Forum’. I said, ‘No, the Anti-Privatisation Forum is the mother body of the forums that are on the ground so that the forums can get, maybe, some advice and resources from them to push the struggle of the poor forward’.” **Mammy Tladi – VCF**

History and character of community and organisation

“Most of the community were outsiders in fact, the foreigners because we had people from Malawi. As time goes on there came people from Maputo, from Zimbabwe we started living with them, so each and everybody there was just coming in and out after we started the struggle. There was places where the garages which was empty so we took the people to come in.” **Ellen Chauke – WCR**

“Schubart Park is in the heart of the City of Tshwane which is Pretoria. It’s at the corner of Schubart and Vermeuleen and it’s at the City Centre. Okay, so previously that’s where poor white were staying and their rental was subsidised by government or the municipality so what happened was that after liberation, after the apartheid laws were abolished black people started to stay in those units. So what happened is that even the services deteriorated to a level where it was unacceptable. I started staying there in 2006 and it was mainly because there was a need to organise those people in that area to make sure that they resist whatever was brought by municipality and government. So, as the years went by since the apartheid era the white community decreased and from the immigrants there was an increase of the people that were from other countries that came to stay in the area so meaning that it was about 50% immigrants, 50% South Africans with the white community diminishing until to a level where by you can say now the population of the white community is about 10% or less. So we went on like that until we managed to organise the community, the whole community to speak with one voice to say this is what we want because there were no more services there and then the place was falling apart and then we organised one big march that went to the municipality of Tshwane and that was in 2007. What happened is that we were amazed on the 22nd of July when we woke up in the morning we found the place swarmed with Red Ants, Metro Police, SAPS and even the army. They wanted everybody out and the eviction ... they got the court order that, okay we did not know of. That was the first thing that we challenged that was not procedurally obtained and the second thing is that we did not know that there will be any eviction in the area so what we did because people were leaving for work, we tried to, we organised the people and challenged, we resisted the eviction and that resulted into some fatalities. We managed to stop the eviction, that was mainly because of one; people resisted, they did not take it lightly that they were being evicted and the second point is that they were evicted without any alternative accommodation and also people were angered by the manner in which the municipality wanted to evict them so that resistance assisted and we managed to stop it. The last time we checked there were more than 9000 people ... staying in three blocks. It happened that at one stage in one flat 25 people were staying there.” **Mashao Chauke – SPRA**

“Kliptown is another space, you know, you find all the human race in Kliptown. Now the problem is that when you’re coming to Kliptown there were a lot of things that were not going right. First of all using the bucket system in this century was one of the things that affected me and also to see how the children were brought up. You’ll find that in a room like 3mx3m room you’ll find the whole family staying there, there is no electricity, there is no water. Also the other thing is the problem that we were facing around drugs and alcohol abuse and also the domestic violence that was there and also the other thing is that there were a lot of people who were not working. We had a lot of challenges and also when you look at the leadership, we had bad leadership because everyone is joining ANC to survive and they are power-mongers, they are people who want to see themselves and their families getting rich and the like now they were misleading the communities, they were coming with lies to delay the process of negotiations with regards to housing and other issues and also there was no unity. People were divided. There were those who were staying in the houses and those who are staying in the shacks. If you are staying in the houses you cannot address people who are staying in the shacks, if you are staying in the shacks you cannot address people who are staying in the houses and also when we going to the meetings it was always talking about membership and if you don’t have membership of ANC or SANCO you won’t get a house. Now I wanted to teach people, actually we were starting the Kliptown Concerned Residents, we wanted to teach people to stand up and fight for their rights and also make them be able to take decisions and make them to challenge people who come with bad attitude within the community.” **Sipho Jantjie – KCR**

“ESKOM cut the electricity and then they put those pre- paid and then it’s where I begin to run to SECC. And then I start that time, until now. And I didn’t move. When you go to ESKOM, now when a person goes to ESKOM they tell them go to SECC or if you don’t know go to Mam’Kwashu. You go to the office, you go and complain and the Councillor says, go to Mam’Kwashu. And then we light for you. I said, “Okay, when they say to you, ‘who lights?’, you say, Operation Khanyisa. Don’t even hesitate, tell them that.” **Florence Kwashu - SECC**

“Politically the level of politics there [in KCR] was too weak as you know its members were from SANCO but the problem was that the leadership had a problem with SANCO and they engaged with the ANC. The ANC had an

attitude therefore they were seeking for a political home which they, not necessarily of becoming a political party but a political party that was going to take their issues up like a political party that is in parliament. That is why they moved around political parties and did that ... so it was part of seeking for a political home. But also there was an element of opportunism within the KCR where people felt powerful and they felt can't we challenge the ANC in terms of local government elections which is now dominating the APF where people are behaving like they are seeking revenge from the ANC, they want to be councillors as if being a councillor alone is going to address their problem." **Sipho Magudulela - KCR**

"Because we started as ex-workers we tried to organise all the companies, we have Samancor, we have all these companies. So we started having meetings next to my place. Because of the demands of the community we thought now we must get to the source and how people are losing jobs and how it affects communities. If you've got no jobs you won't be able to pay for services charges, you won't be able to pay up your house so that's when we see evictions so we were able to invite other structures like that. Getting the source will accelerate our struggles to eviction, to electricity, access to water. We even went further to get IDs for the people because if we look at the source of people to lose their houses, if you have no ID the councillors will take your house and give to somebody else. And if you don't have a job they take your house and sell it to other bank, to other companies so you will be evicted. We look at that and build that presently as I say one struggle can build up more struggles." **Solomon Makhanya – ISECC**

"Eventually we made inroads into environmental struggles and then managed to gather people together and we eventually launched Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance which was basically an APF initiative because the APF sent us to the Elijah Barayi workshop where environmental organisations were there and the instrumental ones as WCCC and Samancor because they were having environmental issues both of them. And we decided to take the initiative in the Vaal and then gather other organisations in the Vaal and then launch that project which is viable now. And then it has moved to a level where we have even developed an environmental plan for the Vaal and we are part of the monitoring with the government, industry and other bodies and I think we made an impact there and now the focus is on the pollution of water and air quality and waste management and we are all in that things with the municipalities and engaged in that. We are participating and waging the struggle as necessary." **Phineas Malapela – WCCC**

"Nobody comes to our houses or to our yards to open and see how many water we have used there, they just charge us - they are sitting there and they just bring us a statement. So we want to stop that system because it is not fair - we are not saying we are refusing to pay water but we want a fair thing because the system is not fair for us. Also, in Evaton West we are the only community that paid R250 to be allocated in RDP houses. The problem is that we are overcrowded because of its one room there. The houses were built half so the foundation they didn't finish it since from 1997." **Abram Mokete – Evaton West Community Crisis Committee (EWCCC)**

"There was an issue with the councillors - most of the time they were switching off our electricity and they don't take our waste removals. So we have seen and sit down as a community and say this thing we want to take the municipality by its horn. So that's when we start forming TECRA. Because at that time we were still with TRA which is Tembisa Residents Association, so normally we were sending some of the executives to speak to the councillors but they were not doing that. So we just get out of that TRA and formed TECRA because we know how to communicate with the councillors and the mayors and so forth. So we opened that platform since from that day." **Johannes Mokonyane – Tembisa Concerned Residents Association (TECRA)**

"The majority of the people are the youth and the people who are single parents. Unemployment is high in Bophelong. There are no jobs for youth including old people there is no jobs for them. But we are surrounded by a lot of industries but they are not doing anything for youth in Bophelong who are unemployed so there are a lot of consequences of unemployment, crime is high. The challenges that are we are experiencing now is the young guys who are using drugs that they call nyaope it's an ARV drug, they smoke it. And also teenage pregnancy is high in Bophelong and HIV and AIDS and also sex workers mostly youth in my area are selling their bodies so that they can survive at the end of the day. Most people in my area got T.B. and got bronchitis because Arcelor Mittal is polluting ... we are close to it maybe it's +/- 15 minutes from where I'm staying." **Portia Mosia – Bophelong Community Development Forum (BOCOSFO)**

"I became a member of BOSOCFO [Bophelong Community Service Forum] through cultural programmes. That's how they mobilised to get youth in their struggle. We normally do dramas but out of our dramas we educate, not only entertaining. Because when I was first starting to join BOCOSFO they educate youth on the lifestyle in

Bophelong, the politics around ourselves, what is happening around countries that sort of thing because they know that youth they like entertainment rather than to read or to go to the workshops to listen, that's the tool that they use to mobilise. It's a community. We've got a few structures, we had a committee which was Concerned Learners Committee, which was formed out of BOCOSFO - it was dealing with issues of students and schools. Also we have a health committee because there were our members who were disabled so we decided to form a health committee and then we call it multipurpose disabled centre. We also got ABET, adult training." **Portia Mosia – BOCOSFO**

"The Tsakane Community Forum was started ... as a response to student exclusion in the township because they were saying that you cannot repeat matric; if you fail matric you must go somewhere, an adult school and finish off your matric. But also it was a response to rent related problems because by that time they were saying that if you don't pay rent they will attach your properties and all those things. But actually I think it was a response to student exclusion from college. Students were no longer allowed to continue with their studies if they fail matric. Of course it grew to deal with other issues, service delivery, housing and so on. But it is dominated by young people. Young people from the beginning up to now were playing a leading role as compared to the elders." **Lawrence Ntuli – TCF**

"Thembelihle as an area is an informal settlement, I mean shacks, houses and some people built houses with brick and mortar – very few, but it's an informal settlement which was established in early '80s, around the '80s, I understand. It began and obviously there was resistance between those who occupied the land and the regime at that time which wanted to move them from there but only to find out when the committee formation began to come in then from the side of the previous regime the ushering in of the new dispensation, you know the Mandela's and them campaigning to get into power they also saved Thembelihle. I was told; I was not around that time. I was already staying in Thembelihle but when that happened I was not there, they were told that, "This land is yours, you must stay here we will build houses here etc." **Siphiwe Segodi – TCC**

"The area that I'm coming from is disadvantaged, it's still underdeveloped even at the moment ... there are no developments that are happening there, everything is still the same. I think our community was formed in '79 ... I thinking its forming 31 years this year and we are having one entire road around the community. I think we are having something like +/- 3000 households in that area so it's a very big community. Having one entire road which I think does not make sense. When it rains there won't be cars that are moving around so from such communities we understand that over the weekend that's when we have a lot of burials so we struggle, some buses, even the hearse, cars will be stuck in that mud that is caused by the rain. Some you'll find that they are jobless because at the end of the job the bank will come and re possess houses so people were starting to gather themselves to make some sort of a community concerned residents to say we need to stop these evictions from continuing So those are the kind of issues that were raised by the community residents to say we have to form - what do you call it - an alternative structure which is a committee concerned residents that their views will be much more heard than sending a delegate which is a ward councillor that was not even passing the message that is delegated to send through to his or her superior. So they felt there is a need for them to organise themselves and be united. The community that I'm coming from is a very diverse one - I mean we've got PAC members, ANC members, SOPA members. The problem that was encountered was after the local elections which were happening in 1999, the community was having a lot of complaints ... a lot of expectations were expected that there was going to be development, there was going to be job creation. However because that development didn't happen some members from ANC, from PAC, from SOPA from these political parties they themselves said they need to distance themselves from political parties but to stand as community residents ... it does not matter whether you are from a political party which is in power or not. They decided that as residents they need to gather themselves and come together and address such issues that they are faced with." **Meshack Tladi – VCF**

"As a Social Movement or Crisis Committee, Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee didn't operate with constitution because we didn't want something that will bind us to focus on certain issues because it is a crisis. And then we open our operation to deal with all the problems that are facing the community and it was also operating as advice committee because now people were bringing all different social problems to the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee and when it was formed we tried to look into this structuring the organisation and see other structures of the NGO's, the CPO'S. But with the Crisis Committee we said, 'No, we don't need same structures but we need people who will be coordinating campaigns'. Now we had a chairperson, deputy secretariat and a deputy secretary. We didn't have a treasurer in the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee because we didn't have money and then when we were thinking of challenging the crisis that people are facing, the burning issues." **Richard Mokolo - Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee (OFWCC)**

Formation, structure, objectives of community organisations

“The reasons were rent, service delivery because if you are paying rent the landlord must see to it that services are done - nothing of the sort was done. I think the landlord went to his lawyers to lay a complaint about that and they come with a bundle of papers for each and every person who is living in the yard. So that’s when we started marching ... you can see that it was unfair to others so we tried to engage with other structures outside how to do this, how to do that.” **Ellen Chauke – WCR**

“What happens is that we have got floor reps who are responsible for the floors and the floor rep on the floor is part of the block committee. From the block committee they chose a coordinator for that block and that coordinator will be forming a committee with other block coordinators. There is a major committee which has been chosen after each and every year. What happens is that the municipality of Tshwane, we inform the municipality of Tshwane and they also inform their own people to come and observe. We have the elections each and every year and it doesn’t matter where you came from. If you’re nominated and become elected you’re part of the committee. We have got about 9 representatives who were with the other portfolios being the normal ones, chairperson, deputy chairperson and we have got about 4 women on our committee.” **Mashao Chauke – SPRA**

“Most people in Kliptown they are government they are ANC members and some are DA members, to make them neutral you cannot just come ... I saw many people that side they like going to church and the like and we used the Bible. What we did is that we made our organisation neutral and then there were some scriptures that we were using from the Bible that the people must believe in themselves and that the people must be able to take good decisions and then we told them that power was in their hands and we also translated what the ANC was saying, saying ‘*Amandla ngawethu*’ it means that they are the ones who’ve got the power and the people recognise that the very same people are misleading them and what changed the people is that we wanted to teach the people that they must stand for themselves and fight and we achieved that. For the past 6 years we operated in another way, we didn’t have a solid committee ... what we were teaching them is that to us we didn’t have a leader, we were all leaders; we take a decision now and we apply it now. We didn’t have structures because if we had those structures the opponents can always attack us and say these people want to build a political party or whatever. By saying that everyone is a leader it was also helping us block the streets when we demonstrated, even when the police were asking us who is mobilising you they cannot say so-and-so is mobilising us, everyone is a leader we cannot say that these are our leaders of KCR. Me, I came in as an organiser, I was always maintaining that I’m an organiser, I’m building a link between you and people who could help us and those people who could help us it was always the comrades from social movements like APF, Jubilee’s and the like and also taking them from the settlements to the workshops and the like.” **Sipho Jantjie – *Kliptown Concerned Residents (KCR2)***

“What we did, we hold meeting every Wednesday. We call people that every Wednesday what’s going to happen, what we must do and what people want. What must we do when these lights go? They say, “No we must fight, we must fight ESKOM!” Alright, “How do you fight ESKOM?” “We light, if they switch off we light’. That’s why ESKOM has come across of this green box because of Chiawelo, they switch off we light. And then we open all the structures. [With water pre-paid meters] ... we know how to dig that thing up. We did it right here in Chiawelo and the Police he say he’s going to shoot us. I say, “shoot.” We open that thing, we dig, we dig and then the water comes to the house. And then they came to me to close my water and I said, “close it, to me it’s free, I’m free, do whatever you want to do but ... by 5 o’clock I will have water!” **Florence Kwasha – SECC**

“Just to teach the community - if you can see from 2000 there is a lot of things that is happening on the ground especially the formation of the municipalities. As you know we were having the old East Rand one, now it’s Ekurhuleni and so we are participating in two municipalities which is Ekurhuleni Metro and Joburg metro. So for instance most of the people they do not differentiate between the mayor and the councillors, the premier and the president, they do not know the difference. So our main aim and objective is that they know their rights and to know whom they are dealing with.” **Johannes Mokonyane – TECRA**

[Referring to the split in the SECC] “Basically pride was involved; the element of owning the organisation, the organisation was this individual. He had a way of running this organisation according to his own specific standards and when we questioned them he didn’t take kindly to that. That’s when we said, ‘Why don’t we leave this organisation seeing that it’s this individual’s organisation and form an organisation that will be controlled by the people on the ground’. So that was the idea of the SCR.” **Simon Mthembu – *Soweto Concerned Residents (SCR)***

“Politically we were strong because affiliates of APF they help us in so many things and they help us to identify our struggle and to check which relevant things we can struggle against. It helped; the class didn’t matter because we are saying in our organisation education is not the first thing people should have. Most of our members are not educated. As elderly people some have never been to school so we must talk a language that they will understand, get to their fears and challenges and try and sort them out. What we are doing was supposed to be done by the civic association but somewhere down the line they didn’t take up the struggle, they chose to go on the armpit of the ANC and we came on very strongly and we prevented evictions, whatever struggle we took we made it a point that people should identify with us.” **Simon Mthembu – SCR**

“In 2000-2001, TCC was formed - actually it was inspired by SECC, at that time. SECC was connecting electricity for people of Soweto who were disconnected because they couldn’t pay. So in Thembelihle what happened is that the people who formed TCC had the belief, had this idea that we need to form an organisation that will make sure that we get electricity in Thembelihle, that was the main purpose of the commission of TCC which I joined at a very early stage of its formation and also bought the idea that we need to use the commission to fight for electricity. But as time goes by it became clear that, well, why not fight for all ... water, housing and so forth? So currently that’s what TCC is fighting for, to get it all there.” **Siphiwe Segodi – TCC**

“In terms of human resources it’s easier because we are a community based organisation to access as many members as possible. I mean there are many campaigns that we are doing that is door-to-door campaign, pamphlet distribution, we hold public meetings, holding workshops so a lot of activities that we are doing. So I think in terms of membership we are very strong. In terms of resources because we are not yet a registered organisation we are still operating as a community based organisation that is not yet registered - I think we will process our registration documents this year. In terms of finance what we are dealing with mainly what we are focusing on is having public meetings to say we can contribute. We are relying on the contribution that the residents are making, whatever 20c, 50c it will be up to an individual to say how much they can afford. That was indeed helping us. I remember when APF was in crisis that assisted us a lot because we were able to go to our account and fork out something to progress the campaigns that the organisation should take them up.” **Meshack Tladi – VCF**

“Our focus mainly is on CBO’s Community Based Organisations not political organisations. SANCO, we will be meeting with the individuals of SANCO when they are involved with the community development because they are saying, because they start regarding APF as a political organisation and this is the propaganda that they use. They say “the APF is a political organisation you know” and they’re talking nonsense. Now we have a way of finding them because when we invite the CBO’s they are even restricting them, they are going to talk about the CBO’s politics and then service delivery and no one is going to defend any political party because as Anti Privatisation Forum, we regard ourselves as a Community Based Organisation, we are dealing with community issues. Now what is important from the Anti-Privatisation Forum is to provide more education to the people to make them aware about why, because we use even the ‘why’ method; why we are suffering, why we are struggling, why you know and the people for them to analyse the root cause of the problem. You know, now this is how you start conscientising people, educating people because they think that ‘oh Orange Farm Water Crises Committee they are always speaking about the ‘anti privatisation’, ‘anti privatisation’, but you can use the other language also to oppose that, now this is the strategy that we are using.” **Richard Mokolo – OFWCC**

WCAR & WSSD: context, meaning, impact

“People who are confined to the space of South Africa and people of Kathlehong when they get to share views from not only people from South Africa but from all over the world who are suffering from the same conditions they are stereotyping the people assuming that everybody will be – for example so and so is okay, everybody in Latin America is fine. So it was quite an experience, it was an eye opening occasion for most of the comrades so the scope of the comrades was never now narrow, it was open, it was wide in terms of how they saw the world.” **Sipho Magudulela – KCR**

“I was chased by the National Intelligence Agency you know before the WSSD. They knocked at my door every time and sometimes they came and I was not around, I was in Hong Kong attending the World Water Forum in Hong Kong. When I came back I was told there were Intelligence walking after me and then they left their telephone numbers, they left their addresses where I can meet them at the Head Quarters of the police station in Vereeniging. But when I came back they pushed for meeting with me trying to understand more about Anti Privatisation Forum, trying to make me scared to work with the Anti-Privatisation Forum and then also using the very same old style of spying on people or building spies, inform about the preparations about World Summit on Sustainable Development because they were worried about that.” **Richard Mokolo – OFWCC**

“That impacted a lot in our organisation, even in myself ... seeing that the APF is broader and its deeper and its taking us too far so that even the whole world can recognise us about what we are doing. And then in the community itself, by that march ... they saw over the TV what is happening, and they thought the APF is just an organisation that is here on the ground, not going anywhere, but now by seeing this APF was supposed to be the movement that have members in the parliament also so that they can be the voice of the community, because all that APF is doing is benefiting something to the communities. And even in Vaal, in the VCF, there was this woman who said to me, ‘We didn’t realise that in the APF there is white people who are there, we thought maybe it is only black people’. When they go with you they say, ‘Ooh the APF is so broader, even the white people are supporting the APF’. They can see, they thought every white people is in the bourgeoisie, they didn’t think that there are those who disagree with that thing. So by doing that, by coming to the APF, VCF has really benefited a lot of people.” **Mammy Tladi – VCF**

Relationship with, and membership of the APF: character and impact

“The APF gave us resources ... when we want pamphlets or what or transportation. We tried to have our own maybe meeting but APF was there for us. You know when you are an activist you have to have some knowledge in things. We were activists but we didn’t know anything about political issues. So then with the APF there were workshops, political workshops, there were subcommittees where you would go and attend to gain that knowledge how to go about housing committees, media committee, labour you name them . All that people are struggling about is there in the APF so we gain a lot in the APF.” **Ellen Chauke – WCR**

“We had heard about the APF, what the APF was doing on the ground, assisting communities and those kinds of things and we wanted to be part of the APF so that we can consolidate our struggle, so that we can be able to win our struggles, so that we can be able to get some assistance of some sort whether it was material or I mean some support from the APF because we even thought that initially the APF might be to be in a position to win struggles for us, you know. But after we joined the APF we realised that we were the APF and we were supposed to carry on with our struggles just as much as we were doing before we joined the APF. It was after joining the APF that people started to question why things are not done like this because the APF provided political education to that community. And it was helpful for the community to identify certain things that they have been denied and it was because of the APF’s politics that were presented to the community which was a true reflection of what was happening countrywide that shaped what they wanted to do and achieve. I think I am what I am now because of the Anti-Privatisation Forum and it was because of certain people in the APF leadership who made sure that, I mean it was not about individual struggles, it was about a collective ... I see myself as someone who has got the knowledge.” **Mashao Chauke – SPRA**

They [local and national government] regard Schubart Park as the APF, when they talk of Schubart Park, they say when the APF takes action that won’t be nice so now they try - meaning that in terms of that government and the municipality and the national government and the local government they are trying everything to make sure that they try to address the issues and with the APF being our mother body we have achieved a lot. Why - because initially they say ‘no’ they were not going to renovate with those people being there but after we were in the APF we managed to say that we were not going anywhere. When they checked the profile of Schubart Park and when they checked the profile of the Anti-Privatisation Forum they realised that they were not going to win there because we were not going to take that lying down. They even agreed to putting of lifts in the buildings to make sure that the people will move from one floor to another easily and they also agreed that they were going to renovate the two blocks and all the people with lease agreements they will start with them, they will put them in those two blocks then they will renovate the rest. We have got 2 representatives who go to meet with the officials of the municipality to check where might things have gone wrong after the previous meeting so that those kinds of things can be addressed and that was purely because we were part of the APF.” **Mashao Chauke – SPRA**

“We joined because there was a lot of freedom in the APF - it was not dictating terms for us as an organisation. We could come to it with a request and they will do according to the request. They were also respecting us ... and it was also good for us in our organisation through all these challenges that I mentioned of leadership, we could like sustain our ideology within the communities and also with APF there was a great potential of helping us with lot of things and also opening our eyes and minds to things that we didn’t know. It has assisted us to keep the struggle going, for instance you could be arrested today and released tomorrow and continue with what we were doing. And also with other things like informing us when we protest what we must do and when we meet up the police what we must do, you know giving us the whole knowledge of what we were doing. So it helped us a lot and also to link us with various other organisations, that also helped in work-shopping us that also opened our eyes in doing things. **Sipho Jantjie – KCR2**

“When the government decided to evict people from Kwa-Mazisa because the officials of the ruling party bought the building, they allegedly bought it for R5m a building worth R22m they wanted to sell it to the government for R15m so that they will get a profit of R10m and when we got the information we informed the government because according to the agreement that building was supposed to be handed over to the government not sold to the government. The government decided not to buy it and those guys decided they want to evict people from there. So APF played a very important role in that resistance eventually that building now has been taken over by the government, it’s going to be reconstructed and be part of the township. That eviction failed and those guys who bought it lost it as the government has taken it as it was supposed to be done originally.” **Phineas Malapela – WCCC**

“I think sometimes us as black people, sometimes when you see a white person facing the same problem as you or wanting to fight the same problem, you see now that is the problem because sometimes our thinking is that white people are not poor, they have money, they don’t experience privatisation, they don’t feel it ...but when you see white people now starting to engage with you, of the other colour you say to yourself, this is the struggle now. And one thing that we never did as SECC is that we never like discussed people in terms of the colour of their skin but we discussed people in terms of the experience and the knowledge that they have of particular issues and that’s how we got, I think to align with the APF and also to be vocal.” **Thabo Molefe – SECC**

“The whole world was here in Phiri, you would find people from Japan, interviewing people about water, Germany, Italy, USA, people from all over. Before the World Cup they were coming here so ANC was saying, ‘What are these white people doing here in Phiri because the whole world was watching?’ We were sometimes singing when we were handing in the memorandums, ‘The whole world is watching, the whole world is watching, you are selling water, we are not going to vote because you are selling water’.” **Jabu Molobela – Phiri Concerned Residents (PCR)**

“I grew up in a community whereby white people were at a distance. We were not very close, you’ll go to town and see them and go ‘there are white people’ that’s it and leave them. But in terms of interacting and engaging [when he joined the APF] and so forth you know, them showing solidarity to the circumstances that people are living in, in the communities that we are coming from, it was a different way of understanding issues like hearing from their comments. Because at that time I was not yet clear on the issues that we were deliberating on, I was not even clear about them but then it was fascinating for me to see the kind of interaction that was there, there was not the issue of we are fighting them, there was engagement people were engaging. You know these white people were coming with their perspectives to assist people with institutions and ideas, assisting people with problems that are there.” **Sithembiso Nhlapo – Youth Learners Representative Forum (YLRF)**

“As a result of our mobilisations we managed to resist when the Johannesburg City Council attempted to move our area to some kilometres away, we managed to resist as a community united but also due to the unity that we had through the APF and other organisations that we were working with at that time. We managed also to get quick information and resources on how to secure legal representation and opinions on the matter, which I think became very important for us. But also during that conversation, we also managed to kick out the Councillor from the area that used to be a stronghold of the ANC, they could do what they liked there but after that period we kicked off the Councillor and the best... I mean there was a shifting move, I mean the political landscape shifted a bit which I believe is due to the strength that we got from external forces which we were linked with like APF. Well I suppose I can talk about APF in terms of its support both via education, educating us with regard to policies, with regard to rights, with regard to a number of issues, privatisation; its strength as a policy and its impact to the poor etc. but, also as an organisation how to do things. So there is a lot of strength that we drew as Thembelihle from the APF.” **Siphiwe Segodi – TCC**

“What has been developed was to make people aware of the policies of the government, because people when they are fighting for a certain crisis, it is only the focus of water and then when the water issue is resolved what is the next? All the crisis committees were focused on a certain issue and then we realised that the challenge is not only that issue but it is the system by itself and linking all these social problems with global struggle, you know the globalisation. And we are so fortunate, I personally was fortunate through the support of the Anti-Privatisation Forum to attend some of the international meetings, World Trade Organisational conferences where governments were making deals you know around privatising basic services and then the influence of the World Bank, the influence of the World Bank and the IMF. Now all those things are structures that are not exposed in the communities. People in Orange Farm when you talk about the World Bank you don’t know what that is. When you talk about the World Trade Organisation they don’t know about, you know the World Economic Forum. It is only the Minister of Trade, the Presidents and then there is not transparency in the country to come and report

back to the people about all these international conferences. People they only see when the ministers or the president going to Geneva, going to England but they don't know what they are going to do. They think they are going to represent them and they are going to invite the, you know the investors, but how that affects their lives people are not aware. Like for instance the question of the debate that the government is running away from - of nationalisation, capitalism. Now what we have achieved ... we created space from the community to start realising that beyond the government there are other structures where the government is not accounting to the voters, it is not the voters will be considered only during the election period, but after the elections, who is taking the decisions? And the other thing that is what we see as an achievement in Orange Farm is the struggle of blaming the ward councillors, the Mayors without looking into the system. If the people who chose the mayor, even they fight but after changing the mayor, changing the councillor things are becoming cool for a certain period, an example of what happened, is what happened in Balfour, when Zuma went there, Malema and the other ministers went to celebrate firing the Mayor with bottles of wines, but after the mayor nothing happened, no delivery, meaning that it is not the problem of these individuals but it is a system by itself. Now our main, main focus is to educate people about the system. Members of the APF when they talk, you can listen, you can hear about people who understand their story because from the RDP policy, GEAR policy, ASGISA you know, because from the APF there is a lot of education and information about the economics, political economics of the government, how the Government is shifting? Why the government is shifting? Who is pressurising the government? Who has got powers between the business and the voters? You know because every time now after the elections there is war between the business, it's fighting for its space and the community also will be coming in and say, 'We demand one, two, three', now the government is not actually knowing where to go and that is where you will find the government shifting from the poor, running with the business. This is how the Anti-Privatisation Forum assisted its members to understand the local and international politics." **Richard Mokolo – OFWCC**

"To my understanding APF was trying to empower the community because it seems in our communities most of our people didn't get well learnt from schools and they don't know their rights, they don't know how to fight for their rights. So APF from my understanding have brought us forward to light of seeing where to go, when you fight for a thing, you must go this way, approach this person or approach this office to get what you need." **Mammy Tladi – VCF**

Response of the ANC and the state: consequences and impact

"We march to the ARP demanding houses because there was this thing of corruption. We heard that they were taking people from somewhere else - Tembisa, Soweto giving them houses in Alexandra and they know that Alexandra is a very tiny place there is no space, so once you take somebody from outside how about those people who are living within Alexandra. So it was a problem but there was no response still. They [ANC and the state] don't respond maybe giving us an answer of what they are going to do ... you have to push them to come to you. Last time I pushed them I think it was in 2009. I pushed them that I do not have any more answers to tell the people so you have to go down there and talk to the people. What they did when they go, they start dividing us, now saying, 'Your leadership doesn't want you to go ... so I'm here to tell you that as time goes on we will stop moving you out'. That's bullshit. You are not talking the right thing, you must tell the people straight what's going on, what's wrong, why are you not moving them to the houses because what we see you register people at night, you just choose your friends to register at night." **Ellen Chauke- WCR**

"Most of the people that came to our meetings were the immigrants and most of the people that were very active were immigrants. I remember there was Christmas of 2008, something nasty happened because the municipality thought that, in fact their plan was to interview people during that time when people have gone home, they thought there will be less people to resist. They started by switching off the lights, the entire building. We tolerated the first day, the second day I remember it was the 20th; we gave them an ultimatum that come the 22nd then there will be chaos. They ignored us after that we called them and they said they are on leave, there is no one who can attend to our problems, there is no electricity. And then the 25th we woke up in the morning, in fact on the 24th we organised the barricades. We woke up in the morning we took the barricades, the tyres the dustbins, the tyres we barricaded and then we waited for the first police vehicle that came. It was stoned. They were lucky they escaped - it was supposed to be burned. We fought with the police. The central police they called Atteridgeville, all the metro police they came. At 4 o'clock the area commissioner of the SAPS came ... we said to him there is no electricity but the electricity has been switched off deliberately and ... we want electricity to be restored, I mean we want to enjoy Christmas just like other people. He contacted a few people from the municipality and he

said if they do not restore electricity he is going to withdraw all the police and what ever happened it will be their responsibility and I tell you within an hour electricity was restored. What I can tell you is that the majority of the throwing stones, who were doing everything, was the immigrants. So they responded positively to our struggle to say, 'This is our struggle, we have to fight for it' ... the immigrants constituted the majority of the people who were struggling there." **Mashao Chauke – SPRA**

"We came up with the strategy that guys if you want something to us we can do it, us is just to mediate between you guys just tell us what you want. The people, they wanted the ministers, actually they wanted to see the councillor first and we brought the councillor to the people and we also brought many people. Government people and the ANC people they couldn't bring their people, their officials but we managed to do that. It was not easy always teaching them that, 'We know that you love the ANC but let us think of ourselves first before you think of another person. Let's get houses first and after getting houses, you can join whatever party that you want'. And also when we drafted the Kliptown Constitution we made it clear that we would work with different parties but when they came in we didn't want them to come with their mentality and the like and we don't want them to praise their organisation within the movement of the people because that was because we are a civic. Sometimes we would have meetings with the station commissioner and explain to them that, 'When we protest you shoot at us, you arrest us but what we are fighting for is the benefit of everyone'. Now we said, 'Let's have a working relationship', ... and also what we explained to them is that most of the policemen had children with some of the community members and now they were shooting at those people. It was breaking up families and it would turn that people do not want police at their side and there was this things where the police were killed and they said 'Adopt a cop'. So we want to 'Adopt a cop' and the 'Cop must adopt us'. We said, 'If you don't address our issues with the president, let us address our issues and you must also help us'. **Sipho Jantjie – KCR**

"The ANC what it's doing, it's like somebody who is riding a horse - when you get tired, you'll get off and maybe get someone else who will take over and ride that horse. The problem is that the ANC is not there for the poor - it can change its policies, it can change its leadership, it can punish whoever is not doing. As we saw now they were doing this thing of reshuffling - it failed. Everything that they do they are always failing and in everything that they did us as the community of Kliptown have not benefited and will never benefit up until they can come out and sit down with the community and hear what needs to be done because most of the people who are leading us, especially in the ANC, those people are there for themselves and not for the community. They can start new political parties or whatever but the thing is they are not doing that for the community, they are doing it for themselves and it's just politics." **Sipho Jantjie – KCR**

"They were trying to force people to ... so that they will have to sign to leave the houses. So when I saw that situation I went to intervene, I spoke to management, police management ... I will phone them and tell Captain De Villiers, I would say, 'Captain, there are people arrested for trespassing and you know trespassing is not a serious crime - can you give these people bail?' Then he would organise somebody the following day. So the prosecutors and the police who were corrupt realised that when I was there, there was no progress in terms of their cases. So ... they said within two weeks you will be arrested. So before two weeks I was arrested and I was kept in prison for 23 days. I was not allowed bail until after 23 days when I was given bail [part of longer story involving him being shot at by police evicting a comrade and being beaten up by the same police] **Sipho Magudulela – KCR**

"You know the ANC was shocked, to be honest it was shocked. Some councillors said ... in fact there were documents which said if the ANC could work closely with KCR then they could manage to control this area, in fact then they could change some of the conditions under which people were living. So for us it was a victory where the councillors really realised that." **Sipho Magudulela – KCR**

"Sometimes police can be brutal to our community especially when it comes to the tear gas they just shoot straight to the person. As you know they mustn't shoot straight to the person, they must at least shoot downwards so to shoot straight like that cause a problem because some they are injured they don't hear right and some they become blind." **Johannes Mokonyane – TECRA**

"We've been sending memorandums to them [Metro Council], to Gwen Ramakgoba when she was still the mayor there, to the Office of the President and we didn't have any response so they are doing nothing about our matter." **Kgothatso Mola – ICR**

"At times we would reconnect and the policemen would come and they will just look at you and go past the place, and say, 'Eish, it's SECC' Because as SECC we used to be identified by the t-shirt, even now the people

that are doing work we wear t-shirts. And those who were arrested it was even difficult at the court to be handled like a criminal case because most of the time they will say, “Okay I’ve arrested this guy who was doing an illegal connection - is anything stolen - no, nothing stolen”. So Eskom can say maybe the damages. So the response of the state was also saying they no longer want to arrest people who are doing illegal connections and specifically like in Orlando because they were saying that, “You arrest this person, the next day you see a thousand people marching through the gates for this one particular person”. And I can tell you now, even now in Soweto you can go and do an illegal connection and the policemen will just go past and just leave you alone.” **Thabo Molefe – SECC**

“Others amongst the comrades were selling us out because I remember one day there is a guy who came to me trying to get more information about APF asking me about names ... so they promised me that they will give me ‘something and I will be grand’. So that guy says he is NIA, he said his name is Touch, they call him Touch and I tried to ask him his real name and he said, ‘No, we will talk’. He said they will organise a phone so that they will call me. Then I raised it in the meeting of the coalition, I said, ‘Comrades, look, there is so-and-so’, unaware sometimes I was supposed to choose who I was telling instead of saying it in a meeting because that particular spy or sell out was inside that meeting, because he left me for those few weeks, after a while he came back and he stopped the car and said, ‘You Jabu, you are a coward, why are you telling those people about so-and-so - here is what we have about that meeting’ ... attendance register because that one was a photocopy of the attendance register and my name was there.” **Jabu Molobela – PCR**

“They’ll give some jobs, others they incorporate to leadership ranks and then obviously give them free houses. For example, there is one female comrade by the name of Brenda, she is currently in Legae, I mean the way it happened it was clear to everyone. It was clear coercion. She was coerced into the leadership of the ANC, she left sometime and she was given a house in Eastly. Recently our Deputy Chairperson - some 3-4 months back - was given a position of CEO without proper procedures ... she was moved from the struggle side to the CEO offices. And again our Secretary Comrade Ghetto was followed at night and told that tomorrow Johannesburg Road Agency is hiring people. So the councillor phoned him directly and wanted to give him a job. That morning fortunately I passed there when I was going to the district office and I found many people there which proved that there was some employment opportunity there. But obviously he was just going to put him via the back doors but as comrades knowing our positions and principles we came out and said this is the situation, we’re not going to... so I’m saying it happens, sometimes we don’t know some of the things that happen but that’s what has been happening, undermining the leaders via such things.” I must say that somewhere somehow it has affected the struggle a lot because once you stand in front of the community and talk, they will point out and say, “But you guys you’re saying this today but tomorrow you’re on the other side”. I was just making an example with Brenda but there are a number people who have been...so from the side of the community it reduces confidence on the leadership but also with repression in particular, where force is used, you find out when we call for marches, direct mass action it takes time for us to reach a conclusion because we have to debate and say there will be shooting, there will be that and that. So it also makes things very difficult. Sometimes we even lose positions when it comes to taking mass action because some people feel that, “But we don’t want to go, we’re going to get arrested”. So, I must say that it has affected and I think somehow if it wasn’t for such action, I believe the TCC will be very much stronger than it is now.” **Siphiwe Segodi – TCC**

“That is known by the barrel of a gun you know bringing the police with guns, rubber bullets, bird shot, tear gas, water cannon and then shooting, arresting and then threatening some of the leaders. Most of the people of Orange Farm, after experiencing this harassment from the police they realised that the truth does not want you to carry a gun or protect it with a gun. And then they realised that why government always when people are fighting for their basic service, for their rights you will find police coming you know and scaring people with arrest. But what motivated people more is when they realise that even when they take them to court, tomorrow morning they come back. There was a lot of waste of time where police you know didn’t even have a case, police didn’t have a case against people who are protesting because they take you there and then we paid bail for other comrades, you will find we paid bail today and next time when they appear the case is dismissed. Now it’s just only just to make people scared but that also helped a lot because people realised that this harassment is also helping to motivate the people.” **Richard Mokolo – OFWCC**

“Even the policemen, I used to tell them I also used to fight for you because when you were evicted from your houses, I try to protect you but now here you are trying to harass us as maybe we are people that you don’t know or we are mad dogs who don’t know what we are doing. But now you have tried to let me down by killing my son, thinking that by doing that I will never go to the community and continue with that. But now according to myself, since they have done that now they made me more and more powerful and more cheeky; because now I don’t care

who is who, I am just doing what I want to do at the time I wanted to do. And I approached them, if you can kill me, it doesn’t mean that the struggle will be dead because there is some comrades that with the struggle and they know more about the struggle than me, unfortunately they are more educated than me. Now they ... just come and tell me, ‘Ma Tladi, you are old now, don’t continue with these things, you will die, people will kill us’. I say I don’t care, Jesus has died for us.” **Mammy Tladi – VCF**

Organisational structure & character of the early APF

“In Joburg High court I can say we did have our victory because the judge didn’t want to grant the eviction order, instead he wanted to know if there is any place which was allocated for us. So unfortunately nobody for the local government came they just sent a two sentence note to the judge and then he was so furious then he said, ‘No, I can’t accept this’. They tried to bribe us, saying maybe we can have R500 000 of which, when you calculate it, each person must have R85.00 - what can we do with R85? We are homeless, we don’t have money, we are not working, we don’t have money to buy material maybe to build a shack somewhere else and where are you going to build that shack ‘cause each and every land has its own. So that was that and then the judge didn’t grant any eviction. And then the developer, I don’t know what happened or maybe they found new lawyers because there was one lawyer who was an elderly person, I think he told them something and then they decided to withdraw the case here in Joburg, they took it to Pretoria so they started afresh. Instead of taking us to court they took the government to court because they said the government has an obligation to us. So now they want to call everybody from the local government, starting with Nomvula Mokonyane [MEC for Housing], she was there. The judge went straight to the point that I can’t just grant the eviction because I can’t just say people must be evicted. Where are they going? Do you have a specific place for them? Unfortunately there was none, they called the ARP 3 times, 3 days in a box, nothing was said, ‘No land for us, no place for us’. So we said. ‘Okay, let’s call the big fish’. They called Nomvula and her cabinet, there was nothing. They called the province - nothing was said. They called the minister for housing - by that time it was Lindiwe Sisulu. In my understanding or maybe what I’m thinking is that Sisulu told them that they must give us the place to stay and they decided that they must give us the camps, temporary camps to live there until, because extension 7 was congested, so they just can’t take us to the houses, we have to wait a bit so that’s how our case ended. Until today we are still living in the camps.” **Ellen Chauke – WCR**

“The initial goal as I said was the issue of housing so we strengthened our struggle and joined the APF which is one of the achievements of APF and KCR was the process of SERVCON. So this process came with its complications because this process was supposed to bring a relief to the people who were experiencing problems. But actually it was abused and that is when a lot of our comrades became corrupt because they were associated with some of the people, the councillors. As a result people who were residing in those houses, people who were evicted - title deeds were not given back to them even some of these comrades. A lot of people lack trust in the organisation due to this corruption that was happening. Leadership was the one that got title deeds; most of the people could not as they were busy with the programme.” **Sipho Magudulela – KCR**

“You know, we also had the marches, we’ve had marches before...we would give memorandums, no answers you know, we tried to engage in meetings, no answers and then we said, “No, we’re just fed up, we can’t fight here a losing battle, let’s do something just to show that we mean business.” You know, the anger, when you’re angry, your anger is very high, you know, you can do anything when you’re angry and when you’re hungry at the same time you can do anything. [We wanted to] say, “We marched, we gave you a memorandum, you don’t give us any response so it’s better for us to give you a taste of your own medicine ... you failed to listen to us so if you fail to listen to us we also have ways of making you listen.” **Thabo Molefe - SECC**

“In Phiri we said no to pre-paid ... they cut it even those who were saying prepaid is good, they starting crying s saying, ‘Help us remove this thing’. Others started by passing pre-paid, others started by passing certain pipes with the influence of us. We got real direction from coalition who were saying, ‘People can resist but don’t do that and that because the court case is still on’, even if it took a long run for the case to be finalised, we were resisting even now.” **Jabu Molobela – PCR**

“It was eye opening seeing these intellectuals within the organisation [APF] trying to do this and impacting the skills within comrades and getting involved in that aspect and getting information about what is research, what is happening with research, what we should be doing? From that time on I grew in terms of what was required in terms of skills of developing packs within the APF, in terms of doing the programmes and other aspects and also mentally I grew in terms of engagement. I’ve gained quite a lot of things from my time with the APF when I

started until now it has grown. I was also inspired to further my studies. I think what I'm doing currently is through understanding that I got from APF...understanding that education is key for one to develop. It was a very good stepping stone for bringing change in my life, I think for me things have changed a lot. I see things in a different way ... because in my understanding I wanted to do this managerial post being a manager, getting whatever but when I came to APF I saw things in a different way. It kind of brought change to who I am. I am what I am because of the APF." **Sithembiso Nhlapo – YLRF**

"In the last past few years or so we started changing and telling them [communities] about electricity and the engagement that we are having alternatives I think has an impact in the sense that people have changed their minds about how to access electricity and what kind of electricity are they needing. In communities that we have worked with and that we have engaged with I think now they are clear as to what are the dangers and what are the positives and negatives of alternative electricity and how we can have electricity." **Sithembiso Nhlapo – YLRF**

"We wanted the government to build housing for the people in the informal settlement ... actually to install services like water, sanitation and to build roads, you see and to ... We had a march to Ekurhuleni, also we had a march locally. As a result of our march I think we secured some gains because houses were built, services were installed like sanitation and water. In other words, our struggle secured some gains, it was not for nothing." **Lawrence Ntuli – TCF**

I think in terms of financial resources we were fortunate enough to be part of the APF I think the APF can assist 70% of our activities ... even if we are relying on the community to make some donations, they are making some difference but not much because we cannot force people to pop out some money if they don't have it. But APF has been taking care of such issues hence I'm saying we are grateful. The problem that occurred was we became much more relaxed to say if we are having a particular mass meeting APF will provide so we became much more relaxed because we were having other ways. We were supposed to continue doing that because it was going to sustain us for longer period even if the APF is not there." **Meshack Tladi – VCF**

"We have medical doctors operating in Orange Farm who cannot declare themselves as supporters or members of the Anti-Privatisation Forum but who can support the Anti-Privatisation Forum indirectly. When some of the comrades are shot during the campaign the protest that we are doing ... unlike taking them to the ambulances where they will be arrested we have negotiated with the local doctors to support our campaigns of struggle and we inform them, we take our members to the local doctors because those are the resources that we have and we have local business people. When there is struggle especially when there is this kind of blockade, when we are organising the blockade by 1am / 2am people are on the street, they start blockading and by seven / eight the comrades are exhausted, they are hungry and there is no time for this comrades to go home and make food. Now we have a good business relationship with our business people to support the struggle with food so when the comrades are fighting there and then there is somewhere where we store food for them, they come and they eat and they go back to their bases you know. And in the food security projects, this spinach that we are growing here we use the pots of the preschools, we cook and then the neighbouring houses from where the action takes place, we put food there, comrades will come one or two at a time they eat, they leave they go back because we try to sustain our struggle. That's why sometimes you'll find Orange Farm campaigns, blockades takes long you know around two, three, four days continuing because even comrades will say, 'Ay, I am tired', but they've got support of other people behind. Some of the comrades we train them for first aid because we don't need the first aid of the system you know, you cannot fight a system and at the very same time that system you know to take care of you when you are injured. Now we've got our own caregivers, these people of HIV and AIDS they are local workers, they are members of us and then we phone them but when there are injuries or whatever, they must be next to us so that they can take care of our comrades. Now this relationship that we developed with other community based organisations helped to sustain the struggle, helped a lot with sustaining the struggle but if the struggle is only for the comrades, the radicals ... we see ourselves as radicals and then we leave others aside now it's dangerous because each and every person has got a role to play in the community in the struggle. Every person is important it's not only people who live in red T-shirts, the APF T-shirts, but even people we differ with them politically but with the community work we come together because the basic services that we are fighting for are the basic services that are used by all, it's not only Anti-privatisation services that we are demanding, but it's for all, from the ANC, the PAC, the Inkatha's, the DA, whoever needs those services. And where you'll find these people, you will find them from the unemployed, unemployment is hitting hard on every person, it can be ANC its hitting you, its HIV and AIDS it is hitting hard on all the people and then from these caregivers you'll find people from different ideologies but their focus is to service the people, they are providing the service that is not even supported by the government. These are the community initiatives that were supposed to be supported by the government but the government is not supporting this initiative and then it's easy to mobilise people to take up the struggle. Now this is another form of you

know sustaining the struggle and making people aware of when we talk about solidarity. Solidarity does not mean that you need someone from outside the community to come and show solidarity. Solidarity can be done even in the family life or your neighbour can show solidarity. We didn't say, 'Join the APF', we didn't need them to join the APF but we want them to do the work of the APF." **Richard Mokolo – OFWCC**

Relationships with other organisations and APF affiliates

"We are engaged with this PAC because of this housing struggle. I still remember when we go to picket they were there assisting us in Sandton. We went to Soccer City stadium they were there with us, and then we went to Joburg Housing department they were with us. So I can say we've got that good relationship going on. And we have got this slot on Alex FM ... every Tuesday we used to go there to talk about service delivery, everything in connection with human rights, so we called one of them to be with us. The NGOs, we have got this AIDS programme with this AIDS organisation which we came with open care so I think we need to go more and more to those people and built a very strong relationship." **Ellen Chauke – WCR**

"We meet with other organisations through the APF because those organisations are affiliated to the APF. There are some committees where we meet together, we talk about this, we plan the struggle, we plan the marches. So by so doing we link with each other from Tshwane, from East Rand, from Vaal, from Soweto, Joburg we kind of link our struggles and have become strong. We've got people who we are working with like people from ILRIG in Cape Town; there are people from Abahlali Basemjondolo we are linking with them through the APF." **Ellen Chauke – WCR**

After what happened [SPRA's march etc.] people started to realise that communities belonging to the APF, we had a great number of communities that wanted to come and assist them - for example, Mooiplaas, Mamelodi, Atteridgeville, Itereleng and many other areas. We went to those areas. As Tshwane we went and mobilised those areas. It's just that it was unfortunate that we couldn't affiliate those areas to the APF due to the politics of the APF like they would be restructuring and there will be that and that and that has cost us a lot of hardships in our Tshwane region. A lot of communities were disappointed because they thought that the APF does not want them, that was one problem which was there but the other communities related to us, I mean if they have problems they come to use as if we are an advice centre, for advice, in order to struggle with them so for us to mobilise is very easy in our area because when we go to an area we are already known and the people just fall into our programme of action with ease." **Mashao Chauke – SPRA**

"That [the APF's large number of affiliates and linking them] to me was a brilliant thing – it's what I enjoy most in APF. The problem is that I've seen the people in Kliptown they only know about their own struggles, so for us to go to other affiliates it was great and you could see sometimes that I'm saying that I'm suffering [but] these people are worse than me or these people are not worse than me but they have the very same challenge that we have and we could see how they do things, we could learn from them and take that and apply it to our community. Because by attending workshops you could think that you understand but by going down on the grassroots level because if you do things physically that is when you understand." **Sipho Jantjie – KCR2**

"Partly the reason for KCR to die was because of this contesting in local government elections. People got confused and a lot of people got disgruntled and they were exposed to this corruption of DRA Displaces Ratepayers Association where people are charged R1350 which is going to the lawyers and there is no lawyer whilst they are arrested in courts. Up to so far none of them has got title deeds ... they are getting ripped off and the leadership simply said, 'We don't deal with DRA', and I said, 'That was not enough, you need to explain to people because you took them to DRA, they remained there, they do not know the difference between DRA and KCR'." **Sipho Magudulela – KCR**

"Another disturbing factor which is called the Socialist Group where they will recruit people from other affiliates and confuse a lot of our comrades and really this Socialist Group I don't think their mandate is socialism I think its disruption of organisations. Because while people get into this then a faction erupts and inner squabbles in the region starts people fighting for control of the region or whatever. You don't know what is the agenda maybe the agenda is that they want to go to elections so if they want to form a political party why don't they go outside? Political parties are outside us; they must go there, form a political party and canvass for people in the name of a political party which is what they need to focus on. You won't understand what is actually happening with these people because these

movements are actually taking away our comrades to disillusionment. Cause like the last time when we went to the Conference of the Democratic Left at the end you could see that the real problem is that people are seeing the APF ... as potential commodities that they can use to form their own organisations.” **Sipho Magudulela – KCR**

“I would tell them that we are not anti-ANC because we are watch dogs. Because they [the ANC] have promised we make sure ... that they are doing that or not. If they fail then you see us coming in consulting them or marching or do whatever so we are just rectifying what they are not doing well.” **Johannes Mokonyane – TECRA**

“Some NGOs, you see as soon as they see struggle they see an opportunity, they see an opportunity of funding and write proposals for whatever research ... They don’t see a struggle as a way of deepening development ... they see an opportunity for them to have more funding to conduct a research. And some of the NGOs they don’t share with the affiliates of the APF - they go and present different papers there by different conferences and they will be recognised. They are more of an entrepreneur of a different sort and when they see struggle they see research opportunity. You see, they don’t see opportunity of fighting further ...” **Lawrence Ntuli – TCF**

“The problem with the political groupings [in the APF] is they are now bringing their positions to say, ‘This is how we view things, this is how we want things to run’, so it becomes in contradiction to what you are doing in community. I think to divert the APF focus that will contradict everything and will put a lot of communities to crisis because a lot of communities are looking at the APF as an organisation that should be directing them - but now if APF were to shift focus and became a political party that will bring about conflict.” **Meshack Tladi – VCF**

“That helped Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee a lot because any struggles that take place from Orange Farm in particular, it becomes known internationally and we receive international solidarity. You know there are people from abroad who are making statements, supporting our struggles and people from Orange Farm they even see that they are not alone in the struggle, it is an international struggle and when people are visiting Orange Farm from the international world they are having an experience with them. An example is where we had a seminar around water services... and then looking into the water supply - how many litres of water are supplied from the municipality to the people, individual people, twenty five litres per person and then when other people from Italy telling you we are using eight hundred litres per person per day. South Africa is not actually a dry country and then people, there is water but there is no access of water if you don’t have money and then people start realising that there’s a problem of water and then they struggle, the difference between the developing countries and the under developed countries and they start measuring South Africa as one of the country that is claiming to meet the standard of the global world while it is not providing people with the very same standard. Because you will meet the standard as long as you got money, because when you don’t have money you cannot, it’s only the rich that can get better services.” **Richard Mokolo – OFWCC**

“When I was the chairperson of the region - because I used to be assisting the communities and then doing my organisational issues in the communities - it became a challenge because in the movement itself we also have problems ourselves; with the one foot in the movement, the other foot, they are still working for the political parties being the impimpi [spies] of those parties. **Mammy Tladi – VCF**

Strengths and weaknesses of organisations, and APF successes and failures

“We’ve got electricity, we managed to get electricity because in the shack you know they do not want to give people electricity but we told them we want electricity. There were no windows but we told them we want them to put in the windows, we want the windows they put in the windows. So I can see the struggle is very strong. Knowledge is power, knowledge is power. Through APF I know the right channels, what to do if I don’t get this, what must I do you. So I’ve got that knowledge, the APF work-shopped me, I know what to do, I know who to approach if I’ve got a problem” **Ellen Chauke – WCR**

“I have to say with Eskom help, cutting off made SECC become stronger at reconnecting electricity and you know, I’m proud to say that since we did the reconnections as SECC there was never one house that blew up or was burnt, there was never that with the SECC. All the connections that we’ve done even now some houses they are using that and there was never something wrong that happened. And you know because I was also reconnecting electricity at the time and it was fun in fact. I remember this one time we just went to Orlando West and there was this old lady, I think she was staying by herself and she didn’t have electricity I think for three months. And her house was smelling of paraffin and when we got to this house with Sifiso - Sifiso who was working at Khanya

because he was the first chief operator of the SECC - and when we switched on the electricity I saw tears on that woman’s face and I said to myself, ‘Which means we’re doing the right thing’.” **Thabo Molefe – SECC**

“Sometimes you find that maybe you want the funds to do something only to find that we don’t have enough money. I really don’t know what is going on ... the leadership I knew was almost perfect, not exactly perfect but you can talk to them and they will understand your situation and give you what you want, guide you on the way. But now I think our leadership it’s failing us.” **Ellen Chauke – WCR**

“I think I have to be honest. The APF was once a powerhouse and when you talk about the APF more especially with the government officials or whoever then people will start taking you seriously. But it came to a time whereby the politics of the APF changed into personal issues, that is one problem that I realised with the APF, that has weakened the struggles of the APF itself and also other weaknesses that I have seen is that most of the APF are unemployed and as the APF there hasn’t been something, I mean a programme that could assist the unemployed comrades in order to make a living for themselves so that they shouldn’t be depending on the APF. Now people are seeing the APF as an ATM, if they do not have money then they go to the APF, they will be given money and they will be left with R10 to buy bread, those kinds of things. And, also the last point that I want to make is about power mongering, it’s not about the struggles anymore it’s about who is holding which position which has got a negative impact on the struggles of the APF, but that does not mean that that can’t be corrected. I think there has to be a clear way of how to address those problems and I think if the issues of leadership in the APF can be addressed then those problems can be solved because I believe the role of the leadership is to unite all APF affiliates to struggle for one common purpose which is to destroy privatisation and its policies.” **Mashao Chauke – SPRA**

“The government is stubborn you know they are so stubborn, instead of responding to our demands they will always change councillors and officials and say this one was not delivering maybe this one will deliver. The problem is this corruption that is in government it’s the one that are making things not achieved. There are a lot of things that we have achieved but the ANC claims those rewards. I remember the time when we didn’t have toilets and the like they brought toilets in, I remember there were evictions that were taking place, they stopped and also issue of water, in the places that we didn’t have water we have water. But electricity is still a problem but now we have started with Operation Khanyisa, we are connecting illegally and also we break all the box and there are people who are being arrested but the community will always donate money to bail them out. Kliptown is a no-go area for the government, they are so afraid of it because they know people that side are fighting and we have also achieved to fight the ANC even the DA in the area. We managed also to win the RDP houses which were built in Kliptown ... also we managed to join up with people who are staying in the flats to make one committee with them, we speak in one voice and now we have managed to take out the management in the Walter Sisulu Square, they will be leaving at the end of this month so we hope that the changes are coming. The government has a fear of if they do as we want they will maybe think that we have overpowered them so that they bring things bit by bit but I think our voices are being heard. **Sipho Jantjie – KCR2**

“Why was KCR divided? You only find that there was an element of indiscipline people who started, I think it was around financial matters where people were seen, who came in later to the KCR and became part of the APF. They started corruption and elements of unethical behaviour within the APF and they saw the opportunity of money and they started fighting.” **Sipho Magudulela – KCR**

“The strength of the APF is allowing us to have a platform, communities have a platform to express themselves and it is also giving communities a lot of exposure. Like we assist communities in terms of their issues being covered by the media and all that and also in making a relationship that is beneficial to the communities like relationships with organisations like Earthlife, international organisations, ILRIG ... and I think this is what the APF is doing.” **Sipho Magudulela – KCR**

“The people got houses in Sol Tsotesi informal settlement and then other people we forced them to be moved - they were living in the muddy place when it’s raining you’ll find the house is in water so they were taken in a safe place and most of the people we were able to take to houses. Other success in general ... people who were struggling to get their monies from different companies got their monies, even Samancor people as I mentioned come to me and say I was injured while I was working and I didn’t get anything. We got their money - that is a success. And the people who didn’t have ID books they got them and others got the grant.” **Solomon Makhanya – ISECC**

“We have been fighting for the street lights - the street lights are there now. We have been fighting for roads because ... now they are busy making some tar road although it’s not all the streets. Schooling has also improved, remember we had only one school called Matome but now we have two schools.” **Abram Mokete – EWCC**

“The weakest point is that the APF must know what kind of organisations they are dealing with because you find there are some organisations which are coming in as a community but they are working for some political parties and that weakens the community organisations because they bring their own objectives inside the APF. That will cause problems in the future.” **Johannes Mokonyane – TECRA**

“When I got here [to the APF], what I liked most, the good part - it made me strong because I was losing hope in politics and it made me very strong because I found radical comrades. The people were even concerned about our problem and they assisted me with lawyers and everything that we tried. APF assisted residents mostly to resist because most of the comrades there are still scared. They are still scared and the APF taught us to be strong and not to let those administrators, management companies that are coming in the building to come and overrule us. The workshops that we had really built me because I came here blank minded even from legal side. What I hate most in APF is this gossip because it doesn't build communities and the people who are just coming to the office just to take money for nothing, that makes me very sick because at the end of the day most of the communities that are suffering on the ground.” **Kgothatso Mola – ICR**

“You ask yourself why do we have so many churches - we pray for one God, but there are so many churches. It's because we all want to be priests. It's the same in politics; we all want to be leaders. I think for me with the SECC that was the problem, you know. And leaders that say, “I've started this, I know better than everyone” I think for me that's not the struggle, what's important is to share information and you know build each other because we came together, fighting for the same thing. So I think that's one thing that pushed the SECC to a split ... people couldn't take it that you know there are leaders that have been there forever and the leaders didn't want to be questioned, which isn't the right thing. You can't say because you're the leader not to be questioned by the constituency. This isn't the old days where we would have kings who will tell us what to do.” **Thabo Molefe – SECC**

“You can't say, ‘We give you a position where you were elected by us and you want to control us not according to the policy that was set by us. You set your own policy personally then that's wrong and that's wrong leadership’. If we're failing to use the policy and constitution as our guidelines as a movement then wherever we're going, we're not seeing where we're going. It's not about someone being better ... it's all about running the organisation the way it should run. There's no Messiah in the struggle, I think that's one thing that is also important to me. For example like comrade Trevor, you can't say, ‘I started the SECC so I can control what happens and whatever’. That's not politics and if you're doing that, for instance, as a comrade then the very thing that we say the ANC is doing, you're doing the same thing, taking decisions on behalf of people but you said, ‘We're fighting the ANC because they make decisions on behalf of people’, but you're doing the same thing so it doesn't help.” **Thabo Molefe – SECC**

“SG was the Socialist Group which was Trevor's group, a political group and we held the meetings of the SG at the house in which I was living in Diepkloof. But we didn't agree on certain issues because it was like few people and it was too many men who were like taking decisions and I had questions; things about ‘so if you do - because it was like a sort of disciplined political group - we can't do this thing we can't do this, we can't talk like that’ you know and then people like myself were always reprimanded for doing this and for doing that. And then I questioned who actually disciplines the two you know gurus of the group. And then I guess that is how I was manoeuvred out of the group. But also I wasn't only manoeuvred out of the group but also out of the SECC ... so that people would like you know declare me as not an affiliate and stuff like that. And people ... were used to make sure that Virginia and Dudu are not elected to the executive anymore because they chow this foreigners money. We were like what money, because actually somehow we are also using our little money that we had in taking you know taxi's to Soweto and all that because there was no system at that time. And at the AGM where everyone was like we want a chairperson and a female chairperson, already they had identified a chairperson who will be suitable for what they were looking for because she will not be questioning things like I was questioning and also making people responsible. And they elected a woman from Meadowlands which I don't have a problem to elect another woman, but only if she was competent enough. She was not competent and Trevor and Bongani were the ones who've been telling her how to operate the organisation. And in my mind I still have that picture of how it happened at the AGM because Trevor had planted his people so that each and every caucus who had ever heard my name you know then people should speak out and say, ‘No, not Virginia’ and then some old lady ... raised my name and then people just kept quiet and someone seconded and then Trevor looked at this boy and said, ‘Speak’, you know, ‘Speak against whatever that's been raised’. And then this guy stood up and said ‘No. Not Virginia’, you know. And it was like, ‘Oh why? And then because at that time I was doing LLB so they justified it, ‘No, Virginia will be fine if she continues to be our legal officer’ ... but then I had said to myself, ‘I am not here for positions, I continue to be part of the organisations and whenever I am needed and whenever I have to do some work’. I continued to do it which was different from Dudu because I mean they did the same thing to her. So she was like, ‘No, I am not going to be part of this’.” **Virginia Setshedi – SECC**

“Actually when I joined BOCOSFO the main issue that was burning at that time it was the issue of students cause in Bophelong there was a policy whereby when paying you go and deposit the school fees and then you go to school with the receipt so that they will be able to give you the stationery. So we formed BLC which is concerned learners committee, we fight for that cause. In 2005 we got a, we call it a victory for us because ... we got stationery free of charge without paying school fees. The other thing we were fighting for were schools ... the [one] school was only in old location and there was over-crowding, you'll find that in one class there is + / - 70 children. So we pushed the government to build ... and currently now we are having three schools in our side which is two secondary and one primary.” **Portia Mosia – BOCOSFO**

“I can say for the past few years the APF was strong, the APF was able to challenge the government even when we were at our area when you're wearing APF t-shirt, they will support you. And then APF was supportive to the communities and APF was having a lot of affiliates. Now after APF have got like ten years, things have become very difficult, APF they don't have the members that they normally have like the previous years and in terms of the resources also APF is lacking in terms of the resources because of the misuse of funds by the comrades, even the thefts that we are experiencing as the organisation.” **Portia Mosia – BOCOSFO**

“Mostly our problems I will say was greed, greed played a very big part and dishonesty as well, people fighting for positions, people being jealous of other people's progress so that sort of put a damper on things.” **Simon Mthembu – SCR**

“I think for me APF has failed to sustain its comrades in the long run, I think we have lost key comrades, one by one – very, very key comrades and I have seen over the past years losing comrades due to the system. I'm not saying we undermine other comrades but we in certain times we know if this comrade is key, if the comrade is able to do something at the end of 1, 2, 3 and we can rely on these comrades on these issues. We have lost comrades in the organisation and it is a very difficult issue whereby every time we now have to start afresh and teach these comrades. You know we say, ‘There is this comrade, let's teach the comrade’, then the comrade now leaves the organisation and goes somewhere that is what has been happening, comrades taken to trainings and going away with those skills without benefiting the organisation. But one of the key aspects is the strength and able to capacitate comrades and building communities that we have and also with information comrades have gained and are able to stand up on their own in communities.” **Sithembiso Nhlapo – YLRF**

“The organisation is becoming weaker now. As soon as we address some of these service delivery issues, other people will decide, “No we don't want to be part of this organisation anymore” because now we've got electricity, we've got water and so on. They don't see the need of belonging to that organisation forever. I think this is one challenge which faces a number of community organisations because after people see delivery - delivery is happening - now therefore the organisation must know how it will move forward, what's next? I think it becomes important. But in our case I think we lost that constituency because now in our meeting few people were attending now even in our workshop. Now we decided that we have to be creative and go to other areas where there is no service delivery, maybe we can attract people into our organisation.” **Lawrence Ntuli – TCF**

“We are able to stop evictions immediately. As much as we are aware that there this is this happening even if it's not in a community that is not affiliated to our organisation we are going to respond immediately to call a meeting to say people to come out and we go in large numbers to stop it so we have been successful in that. We have been able to trace some of the estate agents that are selling people's houses, we have been able to expose some of this corrupt people that we are having even in these government areas. We have been able to expose some of the corrupt officials - I think three councillors have been removed. So these are some of the achievements.” **Meshack Tladi – VCF**

“You see APF has been my varsity because coming from the college I was having that mentality that everything is possible but since I came to the APF I became more factual in terms of my issues. And I became to be like; before I even raise a particular issue I need to be sure of my facts. If I object to a particular thing I need to have my facts. If they question such a particular way I need to be clear on such issues. I think I will say it first ... okay I was having political background but from the community perspective and then joining APF I became exposed to regional issues, to international issues so I became exposed to the entire world to understand what is happening in other worlds and to be able to compare what is happening in Iraq to what is happening in South Africa so I was able to do that. I was even able to assist some of my colleagues that are within the APF.” **Meshack Tladi – VCF**

“On the education side we've been doing tremendous work. We have been building relationships with universities, relations with other sectors that are directly focusing on education issues of which it was one of my good things.

APF has been providing education to its own cadres, to other members that are not even part of the APF. I am involved in such campaigns like no fee schools. So we have been playing a very important role especially at a community level. We have been going to schools, we have been able to engage them directly in terms of focus group discussions, in terms of SGB meetings, parents meetings to address such issues to say many people cannot afford. With our voice being out there and with some campaigns maybe pickets, marches, joint marches with the ERP Education Rights Programme ... that has been positive response on our side because the government came to recognise that there is a need to scrap the school fees. So we didn't stop there. We went back to our communities to make sure that we are playing another role in terms of, actually we are verifying to say that these schools are not charging their learners school fees and so forth so we have been exposing those that are continuing doing that so I think we have been playing a very important role as an organisation to such education issues. APF is now part of global network for education so our voice is not only in the communities that we are servicing but across the globe now. We make sure that this is exactly what APF is saying and we have written submissions, we have been exposing principals, we have been exposing officials, you see we have been doing a lot of work. What we are doing in communities now we've shifted the focus, to attend to the issues directly. We have been complaining that there are no schools libraries there are no degree in terms of educational issues. Now what we are doing, we are encouraging communities to be involved directly now, to say, 'You need to stand up to make sure that we need to take our education system seriously now. If you don't stand up and make a difference in our communities no one will'. If we were to rely on the government to make sure that government will come and see it might take fifty years to come so at the moment we will be struggling, suffering because it affects us directly now, so we are standing up." **Meshack Tladi – VCF**

"One of the things that bugged me during that time was that when someone comes with a report from the township the APF just takes that report as it is. They didn't go to do a site visit and see if what I'm saying is what's happening there. I'm just fabricating reports and other things and I'm just taken serious, as a person who is organising." **Bheki Xaba – KCR**

"When we established East Rand ... then the comrades of East Rand they elected people to serve in the structure. Comrade Trevor [APF Organiser] was there, he witnessed it. He never opposed that thing; he was an organiser in that thing. Then when we try to now organise ourselves, and to make sure that we draw programme of action and other things for the region ... we heard the rumours that Trevor is not happy, APF is not happy about the structure that was elected from this side. Then that's okay, we convened a meeting with the Secretary that was supposed to take place in Tembisa, then the meeting took place. That's where the other people they came with the suggestion that because Bheki is working, he must step down. I'm working for Khanya so I'm earning a salary so I must step down. Then because there was a meeting which I was not in that meeting that discussed the issue of payment that the Chairperson and the Coordinator of the Region will be getting salaries. I don't know whether you remember that...so that's where the thing started and then I was just like; "oh, that's the problem because this thing is not about money; it's about building structures that are going to respond to these problems that are facing the community on the ground." It was not about money. That is why I'm saying the comrades mustn't like go into things because they will be getting anything. A struggle is just about your own political consciousness." **Bheki Xaba – KCR**

The APF and xenophobia

"We fought that [xenophobic attacks in 2008] we didn't want anybody to enter the premises ... where I stay nobody was hurt and nobody even came in to harass people there. We didn't allow that to happen but people were very afraid about what will happen ... there was a defence for those communities. When we were evicted there was that rumour that those are not South Africans you can't give them ... those words were from officials from the government ... we can't give them places to live because they are foreigners. We said, 'Foreigner or no foreigner, those are people. What you have to do is to give them a place to stay. Maybe come to them and ask what's wrong. You know why they are here and you allow that to happen so there is no foreigner in this place'. Even the police, they used to send the police ... they tried to threaten us that we must run away. The police used to come at night and harass people, knock so we had this strategy when somebody maybe notices something at night we sent an sms, a 'please call' or just call if you have airtime to say that they are here, we have to take the whistle, whistle and everybody will get up and we just start fighting with the police there throwing stones at the van and they will go out running. We knew that the police were harassing people more especially those from outside - they will take their radios, they will take their monies. In Wynberg several times we went to meet the station commander. I still remember when we complained to Simon [the lawyer] that these people are harassing us, please write them a letter to the station commander notifying that if that happens we will do something which they will not like because when they came in somebody will close the gate with nowhere to go then it will be a disaster." **Ellen Chauke – WCR**

"When the xenophobic break out was happening already we were a member of the Anti-Privatisation Forum and we know that as a policy of the APF we do not discriminate against our own brothers. We knew what the problems were, what were the causes ... I remember we called one meeting whereby we addressed the meeting and said, 'In this area we are not going to discriminate, we are all one thing, we are fighting one struggle', and by then, I mean the struggle was at its highest. The municipality was forcing things to happen and we were saying no we are united so our focus was mainly on fighting our struggle than on fighting ourselves. We knew we needed each other and we had to protect each other so we managed very well to quell the xenophobic attacks in our area." **Mashao Chauke – SPRA**

"We also involved with an informal settlement next to Ramaphosa called Toyko Sexwale informal settlement. In Ramaphosa in fact we have people who are part of us which is going to assist us in the fight against xenophobia which in that area we had no inroads dealing with the issue around xenophobia which I think it's an achievement for us to go into that. I think it's an achievement for us to be part of this community next to Thokoza where there were reports about xenophobic attacks and all that but during their recent protest there was no element of that and we tried to educate people around that. We are planning that these workshops should have a workshop around xenophobia and all that so that we will begin to have a structure that is capable of dealing with the issues when they emerge." **Sipho Magudulela – KCR**

"One of the things that is very bad within our own organisation is this kind of tribalism is existing. They look at you and say, 'Where is this guy coming from?' ... I was just labelled as a new person who's just coming from KZN wanting to take over their organisation and all that... and those people who were saying that were new in the organisation. I recruited those people and allowed them to be part of the organisation because some of the old people said, "No, look, you can't allow these children to come to the organisation". I said, 'No, the organisation belongs to everyone in terms of gender, age and everything, the organisation should belong to everyone. So if we're solving problems, we're solving problems for everyone and if they have their problems they must partake in the organisation.' You can't say that So they just turn around and turned against me." **Bheki Xaba – KCR**

Impact of recent political shifts

"The fighting within the ANC the ruling party, it does affect us because when you are fighting corruption and the ANC is corrupted, amongst themselves they are fighting and then what about people on the ground? What are they going to achieve? Nothing because you are still corrupted, you're still fighting amongst themselves there is no time to see how we plan things on the ground." **Ellen Chauke – WCR**

"Their [the ANC's] resolution in Polokwane, one of admitting that GEAR is the cause of problems, you know they are giving us credit, they are acknowledging that what we advocated as seeing that privatisation is going to destroy a lot of jobs / people's lives is true although they are coming with it as a promise ... but the communities are now understanding the causes of the problem are privatisation and outsourcing." **Sipho Magudulela – KCR**

"Most [of the community] have said in future they won't vote for the ANC because it has promised them lies. The only members of ANC to my knowledge are the ones who are going to vote for the ANC because they have opportunities there." **Abram Mokete – EWCCC**

"In terms of maybe the decline in numbers and in terms of maybe the issues of the SECC, it's because of the victories that we have, because people said, 'Now they've given us so much and now we would like to sit down'. So really it's a question of how do people identify the SECC now? And I think for them they identify the SECC as an organisation where I can go and take a problem. And when we engage with people sometimes individually, people are tired of fighting in terms of, politically, you know. They feel that they fought so much against apartheid regime, now it's not the time to fight, it's the time to negotiate and come to a table, come to a decision ..." **Thabo Molefe – SECC**

"According to my assessment through these years there was no early democracy within the political parties, if you're trying to raise the general issue and the critical issues and become critical, you are expelled and even being killed so there is no democracy. So these people are kept in a situation where you're just given promises that are not met and then they are being confused and then they come on as to divide the people because that is the strategy, they don't want to see anyone who tried to contest the political space, more sufficiently the ruling party, they don't want that. Once you try to contest their political space you become an alien and then they will crush

you ... So that is the situation that I view the whole pattern of issues at this point in time. But our comrades are opportunistic because you need to stay wherever you are and don't be convinced. You need to engage people and even if they are trying to engage you, some of the comrades are being bought by money and other things and just sell out the people, people must be honest." **Bheki Xaba – KCR**

"I think about politically, changing the President it hasn't made any changes it has made things worse. Why I'm saying this because of the changing of President then here comes Zuma there was a very huge problem because now you can see even now women are being harassed, raped. Because if you ask other men, why must women be raped, they say, 'Yes we are doing it because the president have done it but he was never been caught so we will do it'. And the president now here, he is with a huge number of women, it seems he is undermining our rights and our views so to me this government and this new president that we have now, it seems like now we have brought forward a big problem of politics in our lives because since Zuma is the president, things seem to be harder than it used to be." **Mammy Tladi – VCF**

Role of, and challenges facing organisations: present and future

"Most of the time people don't have money and we've got those challenges. People fight to go to join the struggle but when they come home there is nothing to eat. So sometimes I think of something like how about we have project ploughing something may be cabbages, spinach, tomatoes or whatever so that people must be encouraged to work very hard and then when they are in the struggle they know that APF is doing something for us and maybe they are giving us money to do the gardening, small gardening something else or maybe projects like beading, knitting, sewing and that ... because really people are very poor and the APF can't give them jobs you see they managed to gather us together but they can't give us jobs. We have to struggle, we don't have housing, we don't have water, sanitation whatever, APF is doing something to help us to go and do those struggles but what about this poverty?" **Ellen Chauke – WCR**

"The biggest challenge is that there are people who are sitting here for money not for the organisation. You won't find them doing anything. I think our struggle has now reached a limit where we are saying we should really deal with this corruption and factionalism that has rocked the organisation. These factions in fact are around monies not around politics because people who abuse and shouting at the CCs and all that when you go to their areas they are doing nothing – nothing you cannot see them anywhere. Some of them hardly have meeting. I think we need to do something about it so that we have real people who are struggling, who are taking up issues because the people who are just sympathetic are looking at the opportunities to get closer to resources of the organisation rather than the struggle." **Sipho Magudulela -KCR**

"Let me speak about the individual because they are the most criticised parts of our organisation ... people like John, you [Dale]. But it's interesting that some people are saying, 'These are individuals', and they do not see the positive contribution. A lot of our affiliates are not taking up real issues, especially people who are coming with this criticism that people are individuals - but when you look at them they are doing nothing. People are busy focusing on personal issues on the contribution and performance of the individual issues. We need to educate our affiliates very well so that they understand very well what we are standing for and the issues that we should take up and they must not dwell on personal issues ... now you will go to a level of speaking about the issue of racism. The colour of the skin is just as irrelevant as the shape of our ears and our noses. We should focus on the contribution that people are doing that's all." **Sipho Magudulela – KCR**

"We are not very clear about the different funders to assist us to the different struggles which we have which is not funded or assisted by the APF. I think that one is a very critical role which we are supposed to iron up, to get someone who will teach us how to make a proposal and other things and all that in the correct position. As I say, people are not working, people are sick, they are all orphans. Where are those people going to get money from? It's a challenge to us, as I say, we are not working but we are supposed to take money from our pocket." **Solomon Makhanya – ISECC**

"Mostly when you trying to organise and mobilise the community others will ask, 'are we going to get paid?' So you see that is the problem caused by unemployment." **Abram Mokete – EWCCC**

"Our challenge is that as community we must come more together, we must work together as communities and we must make sure that there mustn't be any gap between the communities because if we open any gap between them and us then we will allow these political parties to come and absorb some of the members from the communities. And we must try and have something on the table for them because you can do some community work whereas your stomach is empty it's going to be difficult. So we must try and do something on that front then we can try and change the attitude of the communities." **Johannes Mokonyane – TECRA**

"I think the main challenges that we have as BOCOSFO is that the main members that we have who formed BOCOSFO they are no longer there and then others are now working, working for the government that we are fighting. So sometimes it's little bit difficult for us to challenge them because we've got a youth advisory centre in Bophelong and they are not pressing the issues of youth and if you go there some of our comrades who were members of BOCOSFO are working at the youth advisory centre. So it seems like they are playing with us because if you are much active in our organisation they will come to you and they will offer you a job or they will promise to offer you something so that you can be out of the organisation. So that's the challenge that we are having and then we have a weakness as comrades because we are unemployed. If they came to you, you can't say, 'No I don't want that offer' - sometimes you find that you need money to go to school and you accept the offer. So it's a serious challenge that we are having." **Portia Mosia – BOCOSFO**

Mostly what I have identified with people on the ground ... is that people are not aware of their rights and that is why they are being victimised. Because if a person comes wearing a suit and says, 'This house is being sold', that you must move out, 'We give you a week to move out', they won't challenge that, they comply. So that is the problem - we are still teaching them about their rights but gradually as older people they understand now that no one will come to your house and tell you what to do, fight for your rights. But we still need a very strong layer of leaders, people who are above these petty things, pilfering and all that. But you've got to understand that if you are dealing with people who are unemployed you get all these funny things happening but we are trying to address that challenge" **Simon Mthembu – SCR**

"How comrades sustain themselves is a big challenge for me because we more rely on funding rather than on self. I think the other aspect is to find ways and means of sustaining ourselves as an organisation besides relying on funders." **Sithembiso Nhlapo – YLRF**

"One must look at our constituency which we organise. If you organise people in the informal settlement, people are extremely poor, people who are not exposed to trade union, who are not even in formal jobs who are employed in informal economy, people who don't have an education. It's a challenge to bring those people into the fold of socialism as opposed if you're organising in the townships. In the informal settlement, it is much slower than if you're organising people who are exposed to trade unions, to varsities, to different forms of education, who are employed in the formal economy, you see. Those people that are more likely to reach what do you call ... class consciousness quicker than those who reside in informal settlements. They are not much threat to the state as far as I'm concerned as opposed to organised workers, as opposed to students, as opposed to people in the township. Now the problem of APF is that it was only organising the unemployed, it was more of an unemployed organisation, people who don't have self-esteem, who don't have confidence and so on, people who've got poor levels of education, which is one thing which explains why it's becoming more difficult for people to move closer to socialism. I'm not saying it cannot happen, it can happen but it can be...it can take more time." **Lawrence Ntuli – TCF**

"In terms of mobilising I think the challenges that we are faced with, we are still having that mentality that an elected person or an elected office bearer has to execute such task. We don't see it as our primary role as each and every member because if we elect a particular person we feel that person has the responsibility to do 1,2,3 ... even if that person is not around you don't close that gap even if you are knowledgeable about doing such chores - that is what I have experienced. Also, we have been providing popular education to our cadres, to the community and so forth but I think we must look on a bigger picture now to say if we are restructuring or transforming the APF to make sure that it is accessible to everyone I think we must now start to look at things in a different way to say, yes popular education is still relevant, we still need popular education but I think we must make it in conjunction with the formal one. We must make sure that there is formal education that is also happening because I have been seeing in these years that are past a lot of comrades working on the government SETAs. If we are having that kind of formal education we will have more comrades. I'm not encouraging that comrades must work for government but I'm saying we have more professional comrades." **Meshack Tladi – VCF**

“What I used to say, ‘The struggle starts from your own community, it’s not starting from somewhere else’. It doesn’t need you to have money for transport to go to that struggle. It doesn’t need any money to initiate the struggle on the ground. People have access to those struggles because struggle is just the way you are. So for me I understand that challenge of unemployed young people will get frustrated and confused. But for me it’s about a political understanding and being conscious about these social issues. To say, no one is going to solve this problem except me because no one I can invite from somewhere else to come and solve this problem, I must start something. I must start contesting this kind of a situation and you must be able to know the person and the thing that is the cause of that problem. There was a time when I was not working and I think it’s for a period of a year but I was very active because I used to go from one point to another just by myself in a township and doing research and finding out what are the problems. That was...for me that was the best time in my activism because that time I knew each and every corner of the township and know what is there and what is not and what is needed there, what is not. That is a problem. The comrades just sit around because they have no job ... and then the other thing, the problem, you can have the comrades when they are not working in the struggle but once they get the job they just disappear. They just disappear and have no interest at all so now you ask yourself, what is needed? What is needed it’s a work opportunity or being unemployed. So you don’t know. For me, that is not the factor that can affect the activism of a comrade, it’s about commitment.” **Bheki Xaba – KCR**

“I think this is a hard time for us to strengthen the work of the social movements more than focusing on the elections and we have been debating this for a long time as the APF and some of the people they feel they can oppose by participating inside. But an example is these by-laws that I spoke about and then they were designed during the presence of the very same people sitting there and then what they have done? Nothing, because in their council is a majority rule. Now as Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee we don’t see for our self-participating or that it is a right time for us to participate in the 2011 elections because the system is still the same. To participate in a system that we cannot change we’ve seen is a waste of time and then selling out your own people. Now we have a different understanding and that understanding is staying with the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee, even you can ask other people from Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee, they can tell you the very same thing. We are being approached by some other people to contest in the community you know, “we can stand as an independent”. No, no it will be a contradiction you know, we don’t want to contradict ourselves you know. We are not going to betray ourselves. We feel that from outside we are doing a lot, we can educate people, we can speak aloud without any conditions, we can fight against all this policies outside and we can put pressure. Like for instance the idea of protesting against these by-laws and using any method of going to fight. That is our vote. People will tell you that we are from the community, from the community but are they really meaning they are community and then what is community? We asked that question long time ago because how can we say we are community when we are divided you know? Now it is the responsibility of leaders like our community workers, like us to unite community that is our work. It is not easy, it is not child’s play it is a hell of a work. Now that will make people to start focusing on community development and you build community and from community development you start building organisation. You build community, you build organisation but you cannot build organisation when community is scattered. Now that is why we are trying to do” **Richard Mokolo - OFWCC**

APPENDIX A: Interview consent form



P O Box 31719
Braamfontein 2017
South Africa
Tel: (011) 717 1973
Fax: (011)
717 1964
e-mail: sfj@saha.org.za
www.saha.org.za

Physical address: William Cullen Library
University of the Witwatersrand

01 February 2010

Dear participant,

RE: CONSENT FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN AN INTERVIEW FOR THE SAHA PROJECT:

“Post-1994 Social Movement Histories: The Anti-Privatisation Forum”

The South African History Archive (SAHA), in partnership with Dr. Dale McKinley, is conducting a re-research project entitled – “Post-1994 Social Movement Histories: The Anti-Privatisation Forum”. You have been chosen to be interviewed for this project because you are either a past or present leader / activist within the APF and / or one of its community affiliates. This project seeks to collect and archive both written and oral histories of the APF and its community affiliates.

The interview, which forms part of the oral history component of the project, will consist of a wide range of questions put to you related to the history of the APF and / or the community affiliate. Besides your answers to the questions, you are free to add any additional information related to the history of the APF and / or a community affiliate that you feel are relevant and important.

By signing below, you indicate that your participation is of your own free will and that you give consent for your name to be used as part of this project. By signing below, you indicate that your participation is of your own free will and that you give consent for your name to be used as part of this project. You also give your consent for the interview to be recorded both in audio and visual format and for these recordings to be used in writing up a history of the APF as well as in audio (and possibly video) documentaries that will be produced as part of this project. If you do not want your name to be used, please check appropriate box below and this will be respected.

If you have any questions regarding this project, please ask these of Dr. McKinley.

Sincerely,

Catherine Kennedy – Acting Director

----- CONSENT

Name: _____

Please tick the check box below if you do not want your name to be used:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

I wish to remain anonymous

TRUSTEES: D Ntsebeza (Chairperson), H Kleinschmidt, N Biko, C Rassool,
L Callinicos, M Powell, R Saleh, N Nieftagodien, A Manion (ex-officio)

Non-Profit Organisation registration no.: 031-807-NPO / PBO

APPENDIX B: Questionnaire for APF leaders and activists

1. Please state your full name. _____

2. We want to know a few basic things about yourself ...
 - Where and when were you born? _____
 - Places that you have lived? _____
 - Your family? (parents, siblings / married, children etc.) _____

 - Schooling? _____
 - Work / jobs and other interests? _____

3. Describe how you became politicised / an activist? (involvement in liberation movement, other political groups / formations, civics etc?) _____

4. Why your specific interest in / attention to, issues of privatisation? _____

 - How do you understand privatisation? _____

 - Why was / is this important in the context of what was happening politically and economically in the immediate years after 1994? _____

5. How did you become involved in the APF (and at what stage in its development)? _____

 - (Where applicable) Follow up question about knowledge of / involvement in, groups / formations that initially came together to talk about formation of the APF? _____

6. (Where applicable) Tell us about the events / activities / processes etc. leading up to the formation of the APF? _____

 - How did the earlier formation of other 'new' social movements and the rise in various community struggles around basic services impact, if at all, on the formation and character of the APF? _____

7. (Where applicable) Who were the founding groups / formations / members of the APF? _____

 - In your opinion, was the political / ideological heterogeneity of the early APF a strength or a weakness (explain)? _____

8. What do you think were the main reasons why these initial groups / members formed the APF? _____

 - (Where applicable) What were the APF's founding principles and strategic vision (what was the APF hoping to achieve)? _____

9. (Where applicable) Describe the ways in which the APF was initially structured - organisationally - and the rationale behind this? _____

 - What, if any, links do you see behind the way in which the APF was structured and the previous forms and politics of liberation movement political parties, organisations, civics etc.? _____

10. (Where applicable) How did the ANC and its Alliance partners respond to the formation of the APF? _____

 - What impact, if any, did such responses have on the APF at that time? _____

11. (Where applicable) How did poor / working class communities and the independent left respond to the formation of the APF? _____

 - What impact, if any, did such responses have on the APF at that time? _____

12. (Where applicable) What were the key organisational and political / ideological challenges that faced the APF in the immediate period after it was formed? _____

 - What was the situation in terms of the APF losing / gaining members (at whatever level) during this period? _____

13. (Where applicable) In your opinion / experience, why did several original APF member organisations leave within the first two years of its existence? _____

- What was the overall impact / consequence of this? _____

14. (Where applicable) Describe the main / core activities that the APF engaged in during the first two years of its existence? _____
- Tell us a bit about the character and content of the APF's involvement in both the WCAR in 2001 and the WSSD in 2002? _____

 - What specific impacts (positive / negative) do you think these two large events had on the APF? _____

15. (Where applicable) Who did the APF work closely with (both domestically and internationally) during these early years – and why? _____

- Who did the APF consider to be its main 'enemies / adversaries' during these early years – and why? _____

16. (Where applicable) How did the APF support itself / its activities etc. – in terms of financial resources - during these early years? _____
- What led the APF to seek more formal, institutional financial support (and what were the internal debates around this, if any?) _____

17. How did the success in securing significant financial resources affect (positively / negatively) both the organisational and political character of the APF (explain)? _____
18. (Where applicable) What kinds of specific activities was the APF able to carry out in the period after securing this financial support that otherwise might not have been possible? _____

- What was the impact of these activities? _____

19. (Where applicable) Describe how the organisational make-up of the APF changed / shifted in the 'middle years' (i.e. from 2003) _____

- Growth/decline in involvement / membership of individual activists, political groupings and community organisations? _____

 - Character of democracy / decision-making within the APF? _____

20. What specific area(s) of work / activism were you / have you been, most involved in within the APF? _____

- What positions have you held (still hold) in the APF and / or in coalitions started by the APF? _____

 - Describe your experience with / in some of these activities and how these contributed to / impacted on the development of the overall character of the APF? _____

21. How would you describe the relationships between the various component members of the APF (i.e. individual activists, political groupings, community organisations) as the organisation has developed over the years (explain)? _____

22. (Where applicable) What would you identify as the main strengths and weaknesses of the APF during the 'middle years' period after 2003? _____

23. As the APF developed, did the key strategies and tactics of the organisation change in any substantive ways (explain with specifics)? _____

- Why was this the case (external / internal factors and contexts – macro / micro)? _____

24. Have the main campaigns and demands of the APF remained more or less the same since its formation or have they shifted substantially (explain)? _____

- What have been the main reasons behind this (coalition building)? _____

25. During the 'middle years' period, did the response (towards the APF) of the state, the ANC / Alliance change from the earlier period (if yes, explain character of change and impact on APF)? _____

26. What have been the APF's relationships / linkages with other social movements / community organisations and people's struggles over the last several years (both domestically and internationally)? _____

- Describe the ways in which the APF has approached and carried out coalition and solidarity work (and the impact that this had both organisationally and politically / ideologically)? _____

27. How would you describe the levels of political / social activism and consciousness amongst core APF members (explain)?
- Has the character of such activism and consciousness improved / declined as the organisation has developed after its formative years (explain)? _____

28. (Where applicable) When and why did you cease being an active member of the APF? _____

- Give us your thoughts on the APF and its activities since your departure _____

29. (Where applicable) Over the last several years, many social movements in South Africa have either ceased to exist or have experienced serious internal difficulties / challenges that have greatly weakened them. _____

- Why do you think this has been the case? _____

 - How have these affected the APF, if at all (SMI)? _____

 - Has the APF experienced similar internal difficulties / challenges – if so, identify and discuss? _____

 - How has the APF dealt with, and overcome, these difficulties / challenges? _____

30. Have the more recent political shifts / changes in South Africa (especially in relation to the state, the ANC and the alliance) impacted on the organisational and political character of the APF as well as its core campaigns / activities? If so, how? _____

31. (Where applicable) How has the APF adapted to the changing political and economic environment over the last few years (success / failure)? _____

- What has been the character / content of the APF's relationships with the ANC and its Alliance partners (plus individual unions) over the last few years (explain)? _____

32. Has the APF's core community constituency (membership) changed in any substantive way over the last few years (explain)? _____

33. (Where applicable) What would you describe as the main role of the APF in the present period? _____

- Do you think the APF remains socially and politically relevant in relation to its stated goals / vision? _____

34. What have been the APF's key strengths and achievements (relevant to the timeframe within which interviewee has been active within the APF)? _____

35. What have been the APF's key weaknesses and failings (relevant to the timeframe within which interviewee has been active within the APF)? _____

36. (Where applicable) What are the APF's main challenges in the present period? _____

- In the immediate future? _____

APPENDIX C: Questionnaire for APF community affiliate leaders and activists

1. Please state your full name. _____

2. We want to know a few basic things about yourself ...
 - Where and when were you born? _____
 - Places that you have lived? _____
 - Your family? (parents, siblings / married, children etc.) _____

 - Schooling? _____
 - Work / jobs and other interests? _____

3. Describe how you became politicised / an activist? (involvement in liberation movement, other political groups / formations, civics etc?) _____

4. Why your specific interest in / attention to, issues of privatisation? _____

 - How do you understand privatisation? _____

 - Why was / is this important in the context of what has happened in South Africa, politically and economically, in the post-1994 period? _____

5. Tell us a little bit about the history of the community you live in? _____

 - How would you describe the social (class) and political (ideological) character of your community? _____

6. What is the name of your community organisation (why was this name chosen)? _____

 - When was the organisation formed? _____

7. What were the main reasons behind its formation? _____

 - Describe the membership base of your organisation (gender, age, social status)? _____

8. How is your organisation structured (leadership, membership, meetings etc.)? _____

 - Describe the human and financial resources of your organisation? _____

 - What positions have you held (still hold) in the organisation? _____

9. How / when did your organisation come to hear / know about the APF? _____

 - Why did your organisation want to join the APF? _____

 - Have you or any members of your organisations held positions in the APF – if so, which ones and when? _____

10. Were there other social / political formations that your organisation considered joining (explain)? _____

11. What are the main goals / objectives of your organisation? _____

 - Have these changed / shifted over the years since its formation (why)? _____

12. How has your membership in the APF impacted on these goals / objectives? _____

13. What have been the key tactics (practical activities) that your organisation has engaged in (examples and why)? _____

 - Who / what have been the main 'targets' of these activities? _____

 - Have these changed / shifted over the years (why)? _____

14. How would you assess the impact of these activities (in terms of your organisation's stated goals / objectives and the realities in your community)? _____

- Have things remained pretty much the same, changed for the better / improved in your community or gotten worse (examples)? _____

15. How has the state (at whatever level but specifically at the local level) responded to the activities and mobilisations that your organisation has undertaken? _____

- Have you seen a change in the responses since your organisation was formed and particularly over the last few years in context of political shifts / changes in South Africa (explain)? _____

16. How would you describe the overall political environment within which your organisation has operated and continues to operate - specifically in relation to the activities / approach of the ANC and / or other political formations (examples)? _____

17. What have been the main strengths and weaknesses of your organisation? _____

- Have these changed since its formation (explain)? _____

 - What has your organisation done to build on its strengths and / or address its weaknesses? _____

18. What relationships, if any, has / does your organisation had / have with other community organisations, movements, political parties in South Africa outside of the APF (explain)? _____

- What about relationships on the international front? _____

19. How has your organisation's membership / involvement in the APF impacted on your organisation (politically / ideologically, organisationally, educationally, financially, solidarity)? _____

20. What have been the main areas of activism / work that your organisation has engaged in with / through the APF? _____

- How has this benefited your organisation? _____

21. How would you describe your organisation's relationship with other community affiliates of the APF (explain / examples)? _____

22. From your organisation's perspective, what have been the main strengths and weaknesses of the APF (and how has your organisation approached/dealt with these)? _____

23. (Where applicable) When and why did you cease being an active member of your organisation? _____

- Give us your thoughts on your organisation and its activities since your departure? _____

24. Have the more recent political shifts / changes in South Africa (especially in relation to the state, the ANC and the alliance) impacted on the organisational and political character of your organisation as well as its approach and activities? If so, how? _____

25. What would you describe as the main role of your organisation in the present period? _____

- Do you think it remains socially and politically relevant in relation to its stated goals / vision and in relation to the community? _____

26. What are your organisation's main challenges in the present period and also in the immediate future? _____

APPENDIX D: List of Interviewees

APF leaders and activists

1. **John Appolis** (former APF Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson)
2. **Trevor Ngwane** (former APF Secretary, organiser, founder-member of Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee and Socialist Group member)
3. **Florenca Belvedere** (former APF Treasurer)
4. **Dale McKinley** (former APF spokesperson, APF Treasurer, head of media-communications sub-committee and spokesperson of Social Movements Indaba)
5. **Virginia Setshedi** (former Coordinator of the Coalition against Water Privatisation and early founder-member of Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee) X
6. **Richard 'Bricks' Mokolo** (former APF Chairperson and founder-member of Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee) X
7. **Mammy Tladi** (APF Chairperson and founder-member of Vaal Community Forum) X
8. **Claire Ceruti** (member of Keep Left political group)
9. **Teboho Mashota** (former APF administrator and early member of Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee) X
10. **Ahmed Veriava** (former head of legal sub-committee)
11. **Prishani Naidoo** (former head of research sub-committee)
12. **Nicolas Dieltiens** (former head of media sub-committee)
13. **Mondli Hlatshwayo** (former head of media sub-committee and former Coordinator of the Social Movements Indaba)
14. **Nina Benjamin** (former coordinator of Remmoho)
15. **Silumko Radebe** (former APF organiser)
16. **Lucien van Der Walt** (former head of APF media-communications and founder-member of Zabalaza Anarchist Collective)
17. **Selaphi Sibanda** (former APF administrator)

X – denotes interviewees who doubled-up at APF and affiliate level

APPENDIX E: List of interviewees

APF community affiliate leaders and activists

1. **Lawrence Ntuli** (Tsakane Crisis Committee)
2. **Bheki Xaba** (Kathorus Concerned Residents – until 2005)
3. **Sipho Jantjie** (Kliptown Concerned Residents)
4. **Florence Kwashu** (Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee)
5. **Jabulani Molobela** (Phiri Concerned Residents)
6. **Simon Mthembu** (Soweto Concerned Residents)
7. **Siphiwe Segodi** (Tembalihle Crisis Committee)
8. **Ellen Chauke** (Wynberg Concerned Residents)
9. **Johannes Mokonyane** (Tembisa Concerned Residents Association)
10. **Portia Mosia** (Bophelong Community Development Forum)
11. **Mashao Chauke** (Tshwane Region and Schubart Park Residents Association)
12. **Solomon Makhanya** (Ironsides-Sebokeng-Eatonside Crisis Committee)
13. **Kgothatso Mola** (APF Secretary from 2010 and Quagga Estates)
14. **Sipho Magudulela** (East Rand Region and Kathorus Concerned Residents after 2007)
15. **Phineas Malapela** (APF Projects Coordinator and Working Class Crisis Committee)
16. **Abram Mokete** (Evaton West Community Crisis Committee)
17. **Thabo Molefe** (Coalition against Water Privatisation and Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee)
18. **Sithembiso Nhlapo** (Vaal Region and Youth Learners Representative Forum)
19. **Meshack Tladi** (Vaal Region and Vaal Community Forum)



This report is based on an oral history and document collection project on the South African social movement, the Anti- Privatisation Forum (APF), undertaken by the South African History Archive (SAHA) in 2010 and 2011. In line with SAHA's commitment to capture neglected histories within South Africa and contest 'histories from above', this project aimed to record stories of the APF's struggles for justice in direct response to the political and socio-economic conditions in which many poor communities have found themselves in the post-1994 era. In addition, the project was an attempt to explore the challenges and complexities of documenting, archiving and making accessible histories of community-based, often decentralized, social movements in South Africa.

The report includes a brief history of the APF, with substantive extracts from interviews with APF activists and leaders, organized thematically to surface the history of the social movement, its campaigns and activities, and to explore both the strengths and weaknesses inherent in such movements. The report is accompanied by a CD of a SAHA virtual exhibition, showcasing a number of the APF materials – from photographs, to interview transcripts, organizational reports and campaign materials – now archived at SAHA.

For more information about this project, please visit the SAHA virtual exhibition on the APF at www.saha.org.za/apf.

