

## Epilogue

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The conclusion of this work was edited during the days after the killing of the people in the Lenasia-South land occupation. The *Red Ants Security Relocation & Eviction Services* had attacked the occupiers on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2017. The City of Johannesburg has spoken of two people killed, whereas the number residents have announced is nine dead: eight residents and one security officer.<sup>1</sup>

The video of 14-years old Ona Dubula from Imizamo Yethu, who could have lost his ability to speak forever, after a police officer shot repeatedly into his mouth with rubber bullets, shocked all those who were not aware of the barenness with which police brutality is being applied in housing protests. Dubula's mother, Pinckie Dubula, had lost her home in the last fire that broke out in Imizamo Yethu in February 2017. She explained that she does not even have the means to get back to Imizamo Yethu from hospital. Hangberg residents, who have been threatened for years to be forcibly evicted and in whose protest action Dubula was shot, collected the boy from hospital four days later. They also raised R900 for the boy and his mother. The good news: Dubula did not lose his ability to speak.<sup>2</sup>

The ongoing protests in Imizamo Yethu against Cape Town city government plans to "temporarily relocate" the residents in order to upgrade the area and make it fire-resistant as the City claims, have left several persons killed. Nineteen-years old Siyamthanda Betana, our fellow University of the Western Cape student and Imizamo Yethu resident, was shot in a protest on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of July 2017. Two days after his death, his father, Thabiso Betana, collapsed and died in hospital<sup>3</sup>.

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1 Conversation with Shaheed Mahomed. September 27, 2017; Holder, Thomas: *City of Johannesburg Defends Removal of Illegal Land Grabbers in Univille*. September 22, 2017.

2 GroundUp article. De Greef, Kimon: *Ona Dubula Returns Home*. September 19, 2017.

3 SA Breaking News article: *Father dies after hearing of son's death*. July 25, 2017.

Earlier, in January 2017, Songezo Ndude was wounded by stun grenades and rubber bullets during related protests in Imizamo Yethu. He died a couple of hours later in hospital.

"In a meeting in Parliament in June, IPID [Independent Police Investigative Directorate] reported that in the first half of 2016/17, there were 3,313 cases reported to it and that 1,857 of these were assault cases. There were 207 deaths as a result of police action and another 154 deaths in police custody. The Western Cape had the highest number of assault cases at 425."<sup>4</sup>

Perceiving these deaths as ceaseless shocks that shatter our everyday might at least mean that we have not become used to catastrophe. But there is a question that me and my friend Mohammad Shabangu have asked each other in our last conversation: Have we not all become Fukuyamists, if we do not interrogate the idea of the social, political, and economic? Are we not complicit in the reproduction of this idea of "the End of History", if we do not debate and work for these new imaginations? And at the same time, has this thirst of wanting to "change the world" and the hopelessness such a will brings with, not made us narrow our own imagination about what is possible, what is impossible, and how can these two be put into an effective relationship?

The shack dwellers movement, the metal workers' movement, the farm-workers movement, the students' movement, - why does what they envision for the future of the people of South Africa, not materialise? Is it systematic oppression of the movements, or weaknesses in organisation and political analysis, or a mixture of both? These are questions that should not be answered intuitively. Future studies conducted by members of the movements that deal with the intricacies of social movements in South Africa and their oppression, could possibly help to understand why these movements do not succeed in reaching their demands. From the specific internationalist perspective from which I thought, perceived, and analysed the gathered data, another, very central question developed as well: The worker's movement in Iran is not nearly as strong as the one in South Africa. The political radicalisation of about 300 000 metal workers in South Africa, their split from the reformist Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and their reorganisation within the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA), is a bottom-up political formation that seems unthinkable in present-day Iran.

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4 Times Live article. Furlong, Ashleigh; De Greef, Kimon; Contsana, Mary-Anne and Hendricks, Ashraf: *A History of Violence: Police Action in Hout Bay*. September 13, 2017.

When NUMSA was expelled, seven other worker's unions left COSATU as well: The Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU), The South African State and Allied Workers Union (SASAWU), the Public Allied Workers Union (PAWUSA), the South African Commercial, Catering, and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU), the Democratic Nursing Organization of South Africa (DENOSA) and the Communication Workers Union (CWU).

What if in Iran, despite the systematic oppression of sugarcane workers, bus drivers, metal and machine workers and workers from other sectors, will be able to unite to a stronger and bigger movement than they form at the moment and reorganise themselves in official democratically organised unions? How devastating will it be, if the experiences of systematic oppression of workers' movements in countries like South Africa are not taken into account to become an integral part of the political and economic analysis of oppression on the one hand, and self-organisation on the other hand? The same concerns apply for the shack dwellers; farm workers; and student movements.

If shack dwellers and other spatially marginalised in other geographies would like to learn from Abahlali baseMjondolo, how exactly must they evaluate the murdered, assassinated, people shot in protests and the disappeared? At the same time, how can they learn from Abahlali's past and present strategies, discussions and political contents?

It is one thing to exchange about the forms of politico-economic violences applied in different geographies. The other is to thoroughly learn from the strengths of social movements and from the socio-political energy they release. The analysis of the role of city and provincial governments, the business sector and media as a mediator of governmental/business sector discourse, in forced evictions and criminalisation of "the people" that this work was devoted to, can help in the formulation of these new questions and the gathering of their responses.

The main aim of this book was to make an argument for de-segregating and de-partitioning city space and natural landscape and challenge fixed ideas of class and *race* that reproduce politico-economic inequality. It remains indebted to "the people" of South Africa, from whom I learned that suffering and struggling are not the same thing, that an individual who only suffers without imagining to actually change his or her own condition, will never endeavour to disrupt political and economic violence or to gather for a collective cause. The many conversations held during the process of this work will travel with me, to put it in Mrs. George's words, "wherever I go". In the face of the

político-economic oppression analysed in this work on the one side, and the thousands of protests, strikes, and political events organised every year in the Western Cape and in other parts of South Africa on the other side, I remain in hope.