

## EDITOR'S NOTE / NOTE DE LA RÉDACTRICE

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Welcome to the latest issue of *Labour, Capital and Society*. This issue touches on some of the most crucial aspects of labour's social role, whether as part of a politically-engaged labour movement or as economic actors within developing economies.

On the eve of South Africa's elections in April 2009, we include three articles organised into the theme – *South African Labour and the Rise of Neoliberalism*. These address the shifting power relations facing the country as labour and left groups struggle in response to rising neoliberalism, growing class differentiation and the shifting nature of the country's capitalist classes.

Devan Pillay analyzes the role of labour within the Tripartite Alliance, and the shift occurring within the African National Congress leadership in the aftermath of the Polokwane meetings in December 2007 that is shaping their election preparations. The author poses a fundamental question in his analysis of the creation of a Zuma coalition – does it represent a new democratic trajectory on the part of the ANC or the rise of an intolerant neo-Stalinist populist politics?

Vishwas Satgar further analyzes labour in the face of the country's fourteen years of neoliberal restructuring. He argues that in spite of the advent of democracy and the tradition of mass-led politics, South Africa's experience with neoliberalism has seen the emergence of transnationalized capitalism which together with a 'passive revolution', has not resulted in a transformation in favour of the historically oppressed.

The struggle between popular groups and interests aligned with neoliberal change continues in Carolyn Bassett's examination of the way in which the discourse around the country's debt was used to build consensus around the ANC's economic program. Using examples of opposition to government economic policy arising from the campaigns of Jubilee 2000 and the People's Budget, as well as from COSATU, the author demonstrates the way in which government succeeded, according to its own analysis, in avoiding the worst dangers of a debt trap, thereby enabling a more popular agenda to go forward.

Beyond this theme, individual articles touch on equally interesting phenomena. Marc-Antonin Hennebert examines a new form of international labour alliance between workers in different branches of Quebecor World, a Canadian multinational and the campaign they undertook to prevent the company from using one group of workers against another. He analyzes whether this campaign has succeeded in creating a countervailing power to unilateral company action.

Finally, Roger Southall looks at the new resource scramble going on in Africa as some of the most powerful multinational companies seek new rich deposits of oil, gas and minerals. He demonstrates however that the increase in foreign direct investment might make economies seem richer, yet African labour has largely been excluded from what sometimes seems to be new benefits. Instead labour is often displaced and facing increasing unemployment.

Finally, we have included a short version of the Call for Papers for the upcoming special issue on Natural Resources, labour and community. The full version can be found at [www.lcs-tcs.com](http://www.lcs-tcs.com). You can also consult the web page to find the list of books available for review.