



WORKERS WORLD NEWS



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ILRIG extends our heartfelt condolences and full solidarity with Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM) as they mourn yet another fallen comrade. We send strength, courage and comfort to the family and friends of comrade Lindokuhle Mnguni.

WE NEED A MORE GROUNDED, CLIMATE-CONSCIOUS MEDIA

by Dale T. McKinley

For the vast majority of the world's population, climate change has become an ever-more integral, sizeable and destructive part of daily life. Despite this reality, for that same majority there remains a huge deficit of basic climate change information/facts, science, relevant policy issues as well as the more immediate responses and systemic alternatives needed. This is where the media comes in.



Photograph: Ashraf Hendricks

The media both in South Africa and elsewhere, with a few exceptions and mostly located in non-dominant spaces, have not done a very good job in reducing that deficit. Besides the general failure to engage in consistent, accessible and widespread coverage and dissemination of the basics mentioned above, the centring of climate change related experiences/stories of the most vulnerable, have largely been absent as well.

Many media scholars have argued that the so-called 'mainstream' media has a poor track record of representing the interests and stories of the poor, exploited, marginalised and most vulnerable. However, as myself and co-author Julie Reid argued in our 2020 book *Tell Our Story: Multiplying Voices in the News Media*, the term 'dominant media' is preferred precisely because it is understood less in terms of the formal structures of media ownership or market share but more in respect of its content, which frames the direction of a dominant societal narrative.

This dominant media comprises the myriad collection (both public and private) of media reports, journalists, editors, articles, broadcasts and media outlets, which collectively shape the trajectory of public discourse on any particular issue towards the same or a similar cohesive understanding - i.e. a dominant narrative. That narrative emanates from the dominant media's habitual reflection of an 'elite bias', which privileges and foregrounds the interests of a small segment of society that possess political, social and economic power.

The practical result in most cases is that the content and choices of the stories told, replicate and reinforce the dominant discourses and thought in society.

As specifically applied to contemporary South Africa, it is crucial to locate all of this within a historical context. That context is foundationally centred around the systemic economic and social power and hierarchies of the colonial (apartheid) past, inclusive of and combining class, race, gender and sexuality. Applying this to post-1994

South Africa, that power and those hierarchies were then superimposed onto the political 'rule' of the new South African state. This fit neatly into the fundamentals of a capitalist neo-liberalism, that has since remained the dominant domestic and global 'developmental' frame.

The resultant 'double dominant' frame - i.e. thought/narrative and development - has allowed for the normalisation of South Africa's incredible levels of violence/conflict, socio-economic inequality and environmental destruction. Crucially, for this normalisation to be sustained, there is the need to constantly reproduce and disseminate a storyline of inevitability that validates the frame. In other words, the inevitability of poverty, of structural inequality, of economic exploitation, of environmental destruction, of profit maximisation, of corruption and, of racial, gender and sexual subjugation and discrimination. It is this contextual reality within which we can best understand and locate the character and content of the dominant media's contemporary coverage of climate change.

Fortunately, there are many comprehensive empirical and analytical studies by scholars and journalists that speak directly to that coverage. Evelyn Tagbo, a Nigerian journalist conducted a 2009-2010 study of newspaper coverage of climate change in both Nigeria and South Africa. She found that the number of articles published in two of Nigeria's main newspapers (the *Guardian* and *Vanguard*) over a 6 month period were equivalent to less than 0.1% of the total number of articles published. For South Africa's *Star* and *Mail & Guardian* the percentage was only slightly higher at 0.3%. In addition, Tagbo noted that the bulk of published articles were "culled from foreign institutions and researchers", thus ensuring that "much-needed local angles [were] left out."

Similarly a 2017 study of media coverage of climate change in Zimbabwe and South Africa by Henri-Count Evans of the University of

Eswatini concluded that it was "low and is linked more to international events, with few stories being relevant to regional climate change issues." Additionally, the study found that "the reporters who cover climate change issues lack the training and specialised skills necessary to cover the topic satisfactorily."

Most recent is Dominic Okoliko's 2021 PhD dissertation at the University of Stellenbosch on 'Media(ted) climate change in South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya'. Okoliko's exhaustive research confirms the dominance of elite voices and views (especially from energy corporates and governments) in not only discussing/analysing climate change but in offering alternatives related to energy sources, policy, consciousness and education. Importantly, he finds that most coverage ignores "the localisation of climate discourse through the experience of peoples affected by the impacts of climate change" and that a key "limitation to attaining inclusive climate change coverage ... [is] the profit model of media organisations" which ensures "minimal newsroom attention."

There are very few (and very small) alternative/non-profit media outlets in South Africa such as *Groundup*, *Elithsa* and *Viewfinder*, alongside rare exceptions in the dominant media such as the *Daily Maverick's* 'Our Burning Planet' project/series that deserve our accolades and support for their climate change knowledge and coverage. However, there is much that needs to be done when it comes to the dominant media's coverage of climate change. Among the most needed are:

- To source relevant climate change focused non-profit organisations to conduct training for journalists, presenters, editors and producers on topics and skills needed to produce and deliver quality, accessible, inclusive and grounded content on climate change-related issues, human-centred stories and struggles.

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Water No Get Enemy by the African Ecofeminist Collective

EDITORIAL

Around the world, in the form of rising temperatures, pandemics, scarce natural resources, forced migration, and increasing natural disasters, we are seeing the impacts of unbridled capitalist expansion on the environment. In this issue of *Workers' World News*, we foreground this issue of climate crisis. Our lead article, written by Dale McKinley, presents a critique of the South African mainstream media landscape, in relation to its lack of coverage on climate issues, and offers some guidance for what can be done to rectify this situation. In *Gender News*, Ferrial Adam shows the gendered impact of climate crisis through the case of access to water (or lack thereof) for women and children in rural South African communities.

The *My Struggle* section in this issue reproduces a part of the Climate Justice Charter, the result of a civil-society driven campaign which aims to build and guide a democratic movement advancing environmental justice. Our Cultural Page features a piece of writing and a poster produced by the African Ecofeminist Collective (AEC), on the role of art in celebrating and defending water. This forms part of a popular education poster series on water struggles by the AEC. Rounding out our climate focus, this issue's poster, created by Mikayla Boorany for ILRIG, depicts the need to fight for a new system altogether when tackling the climate crisis, with the understanding that mere reform of capitalism will not get at the root of the problem.

In *International News*, Jeremy Daphne writes about the revolutionary wave sweeping across Latin America, and the need to draw inspiration from these struggles. Shawn Hattingh continues his Educational Series on Popular Power, and looks to the Councils of Aragon during the Spanish Revolution, for lessons in directly-democratic organising and worker ownership. Finally, the *From the ILRIG Resource Centre* section highlights a recent popular education booklet titled *Fruits of Our Labour: A feminist workbook for farmworker women*, written by Alex Hotz and Leila Khan. While this publication is directed at farmworker women in CSAAWU in particular, it is our hope that organisers across many different activist spaces can make use of this booklet and the activities and case studies inside it to build feminist knowledge and strengthen women's organising power.

Whether we are talking about climate crisis, the pandemic, or the patriarchy, we know that the poor and working class in the Global South are always the hardest hit. At the same time, it is the poor and working class that are also rising up and organising for alternative systems and in defense of the planet and the most marginalised the world over, and it is them and their struggles that we must pay close attention to and take leadership from in the search for a new, more sustainable world.

Pull-out poster

ON LAST PAGE

'System Change not Climate Change'

by Mikayla Boorany

(@mikaylaboorany on Instagram)

...there is much that needs to be done when it comes to the dominant media's coverage of climate change

GENDER NEWS by Dr. Ferrial Adam*

POOR GOVERNANCE LEAVES WOMEN AND CHILDREN BATTLING TO ACCESS WATER



“The quantity and quality of our water affects women and girls disproportionately in terms of domestic use, safety, building livelihoods and opportunities.”

Photograph: Ashraf Hendricks

Drought, failing infrastructure, unrestrained pollution, failure by authorities to plan, and outright theft of resources have left many South African communities struggling for basic water resources. Those in distress are no longer the rural communities out of public view, but also increasingly in cities.

The quantity and quality of our water affects women and girls disproportionately in terms of domestic use, safety, building livelihoods and opportunities.

South Africa is a naturally water-scarce country, but it is the poor level of access that affects the quantity of water for most poor households. In recent years we have also witnessed the deterioration of the quality of our water as more rivers and streams are being polluted by failing wastewater treatment plants and industrial effluent.

In many developing countries, having piped water and taps in your homes still seems to be a privilege. According to UNESCO, almost 75% of households in sub-Saharan Africa fetch water from a source away from their home. In South Africa, Stats SA reports that less than half (45.2%) of households have piped water in their homes, less than a third (29.4%) have piped water in their yards and 12.2% rely on a communal tap, which means hours spent queuing and carrying. Many other households still rely on rivers, streams and communal supplies. These numbers do not tell the full story: in far too many areas of South Africa, water sources have been so badly maintained or developed by municipalities and national government that even where there are taps, there is nothing in them.

Years of drought have worsened this problem, for example in Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape, where authorities have poor communities with inadequate and erratic backup. In Giyani, despite the R4 billion water project, more than 60% of households still do not have water in their yards, very largely due to the corruption in that project.

The task to collect water falls on the shoulders

of young girls and women. Around the world, over 200 million hours is spent every day by women and girls walking to source water and then carrying home heavy containers (at least 20kg) on their heads or backs. This not only affects their time for school or paid work but also makes them vulnerable to abuse and attacks.

The lack of water poses additional stresses for women as they need water for adequate sanitation and hygiene facilities especially during menstruation. In addition, it's not just about fetching the water, but it is also about the poor quality of the water. Poor water quality can affect basic hygiene and women's health that can result in issues such as urinary infections or even affect their self-esteem.

The quality of our drinking water resources and wastewater treatment in South Africa has rapidly deteriorated over the last decade.

The Department of Water and Sanitation's Blue Drop report, finally released in April after 8 years of not being released, shows that 1 186 water supply systems (77%) fail to meet legal standards, underlining the widespread failure of municipalities. The country has 52% of water supply systems that range from medium to critical risk. In addition, a mere 23 of 995 wastewater treatment plants obtained a Green Drop certification.

The poor quality adds to the challenges that women face. For example, in the King Sabata Dalindyebo municipality, women walk at least a kilometre to fetch dirty water from a spring that often contains fungi and worms, and has to be strained and boiled before use, adding to their time they spend on collecting and cleaning the water. In Komga, in Amathole municipality, there has been no water in the taps for 10 years.

The poor quality of water also affects food production and livelihoods, especially smallholder farmers, many of whom are women. In South Africa, there are approximately two million smallholder farmers compared to 35 000 commercial growers. Many of these farmers rely on the land to feed their families with hopefully some surplus to sell or trade.

While women farmers play a vital role in food production and food security, a 2019 study on women farmers in Africa found they

disproportionately face a number of challenges and are less likely to succeed than their male counterparts. They are less likely to own land and also experience a lack of access to water, seeds, credit, and technology. A 2018 study suggests that women would achieve higher welfare than men with the same level of water access, as an increase of access to water could increase agricultural production and/or productivity, which results in improved farm incomes.

We need to acknowledge the role of smallholder farmers to reduce hunger in the country and understand the gender dimensions and challenges that the majority of smallholder women farmers are facing. A review is needed of agriculture policies that will register smallholder women farmers as water users and that reduce the gap they face in access to water. Climate Change

and extreme weather will only make these farmers more vulnerable. Farmers with more access to water face less risk of crop failure. The agricultural sector as a whole needs to shift from one of heavy water usage to one that can better guard our water resources.

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by the lack of access to fair quantity and good quality water. We need to have a gender-sensitive approach in our policies, campaigns and activities, as understanding the needs of girls and women in relation to water is vital to achieve gender equity (in terms of health), to combat poverty (smallholder women farmer growth) and hunger (food security), and to create a strong network of water guardians.

This article was originally published by WaterCAN.

WE NEED A MORE GROUNDED, CLIMATE-CONSCIOUS MEDIA continued from pg.1:

- To have specific, dedicated and regular climate change reporting/discussion slots on both (public and private) radio and TV channels, which prioritise perspectives and stories/experiences emanating from grassroots organisations and those who are most vulnerable to climate change.

- To set up dedicated and data-free sections of websites as well as make widespread use of non-internet, basic, cost-free texting/messaging platforms, that can provide popular access to and dissemination of, crucial, up-to-date science/facts and information, alerts and opportunities to share localised information as well as personal stories and experiences.

- To seek out and cover more positive/success stories highlighting how ordinary people (particularly the youth) are struggling, educating, adapting, developing solutions and using technologies to engage, confront and limit climate change.

- To create more and better-informed/researched content that locates and explains the human side of climate change and which connects the dots between the climate crisis, key political, social, economic policies and environmental/weather events.

Amidst the unprecedented expansion of fossil fuel exploration and production across the globe (largely driven by developed capitalist economies), the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) announced last month that they had approved the auctioning of a number of oil and gas exploration blocks in the heart of the world's second-largest rainforest and largest tropical peatland complex. Those areas currently absorb a decade's worth of global carbon emissions.

When asked about the main reasons for this decision, Mr Tosi Mpanu, the nation's lead representative on climate issues and an adviser to the minister of hydrocarbons stated that the "sole goal ... is to earn enough revenue" to help reduce poverty and generate economic growth. "That's our priority," Mr. Mpanu said, "our priority is not to save the planet."

You might have missed this hugely important news (for everyone who lives on this planet) because it was largely absent from South Africa's dominant media landscape. Need we say more...?

This article was originally published in the Daily Maverick as part of the Climate Justice Charter Movement educational series.

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THE SPANISH REVOLUTION AND THE COUNCILS/COLLECTIVES OF ARAGON

"In the CNT-controlled areas, workers and poor peasants seized farms, companies and government services and placed them under the collective ownership of the working class and peasants".

In this series, we are looking at examples of movements that have built structures to become alternatives to the state and capitalism; not just as part of a revolution but as part of building towards one. As such, these movements have built organisations of self-governance as part of daily resistance so that people involved could develop the skills to collectively run society during and after a revolution without the need for politicians and bosses. In this too, they have shown an alternative to electoral politics.

The Spanish Revolution

Perhaps one of the most noteworthy examples of such a struggle was the Spanish Revolution of 1936. On 19 July 1936, fascists attempted to take over the state through the army – in a bid to ironically prevent a revolution by the working class and poor peasants. To stop this coup, workers in cities, such as Barcelona, armed themselves and fought against the fascist forces.

In many places the fascist army was defeated, but not all, and a 3 year long civil war followed. This meant Spain was split into regions in July 1936 – one controlled by the fascists, one controlled by the state led by the Socialist and Communist Parties, and one controlled by workers and poor peasants who were members of an anarcho-syndicalist (meaning it aimed for a state-less form of socialism) union called the National Confederation of Labour (CNT).

In the CNT-controlled areas, workers and poor peasants seized farms, companies and government services and placed them under the collective ownership of the working class and peasants. In these workplaces, workers began running operations democratically without bosses.

Bad Alliances

Due to the reality that the fascists were not fully defeated, a debate was held in the CNT in August 1936 on whether to form an alliance with the state forces – the Socialist and Communist Parties – or to deepen the revolution and fully implement a

form of socialism based on working class self-governance without the state. The latter option would mean not only fighting the fascists, but also the Socialist and Communist Parties who wanted to maintain the state and their positions in it. In most places, the CNT chose to align with the state to focus the fight on the fascists (which as we will see below turned out to be a huge error). In these areas, the state structures were re-established with the acceptance of the CNT, but companies remained under worker democracy until May 1937.

The Case of Aragon

In one province called Aragon, the workers and peasants who were part of the CNT took a very different decision and decided to fully build and expand the revolution. In Aragon, workers had also taken over companies and farms and had collectivised them under worker democracy. But once they had decided to deepen the revolution, they took a further step and confederated the companies into town-wide democratic collectives and a regional council. Workers from all companies and farms would send mandated delegates to these collectives and the council. Through this, the needs of all people in Aragon were met, profit-making was ended, and exchange was coordinated. Production even increased under this system and new services, such as electricity and telephones, were extended to poor areas.

Most importantly, and what made Aragon different, is that in this province, the state was also abolished and a new system of direct democracy

was established. Through this, each town would hold regular assemblies to ensure workers and poor peasants ran daily life democratically at a local level. Each assembly would then send mandated delegates to regional councils to ensure co-ordination across different towns. A Regional Council of Defense was also elected to ensure the revolution could be defended through a system of armed worker militias.

A long history of organising

The revolution in Aragon and in wider Spain, however, was not a spontaneous uprising. Rather, it was the culmination of 50 years of organising by anarcho-syndicalist unions. These unions were consciously based on structures of direct democracy of collectives and mandated delegates to councils. There was an explicit logic in organising in this way – these structures were viewed as training grounds for workers to be able to run the economy and wider society when a revolution occurred. When the revolution happened, therefore, workers and poor peasants in Aragon already had some experience they could use not only to get rid of capitalists and politicians, but then collectively run society themselves.

The defeat of the Spanish Revolution

Sadly, the fascists eventually won the civil war in Spain in 1939. The revolution, however, had been defeated long before then: the Communist and Socialist Parties that held state power defeated it in 1937. The reason for this is the Communist and Socialist politicians saw the workers' revolution based on direct democracy and the collective ownership of the economy as a threat to their power in the state. In May 1937, the state took military action to end worker democracy. In Barcelona, workers resisted and fought against the state's army in May 1937. When the fighting was

happening, key people in the CNT however called on workers in Barcelona to lay down their arms and respect the alliance with the state, arguing that a war against the Socialist and Communist controlled state would weaken the fight against fascists. In the end the workers laid down their weapons, and the state seized control of workplaces, ended worker democracy and gave factories, farms and other companies back to the capitalists loyal to the state.

In Aragon, because workers and poor peasants had got rid of the state, the revolution continued for longer – until August 1937. In August, the Spanish state's military – under a General from the Communist Party, Enrique Lister – invaded Aragon. The worker and peasant's militia fought back, but were finally militarily defeated as they were now isolated as the only force still fighting to defend the revolution. Once Lister's army had won, the state was re-instated and companies in Aragon were also handed back to capitalists loyal to the state. With this, the revolution was ended.

Conclusion

Although the revolution was defeated, the experience in Spain and especially Aragon shows that a form of socialism can be created and run by the working class – without a state – through structures based on direct democracy. This is an important lesson that shows direct democracy can be linked to socialism, that a democratic working-class power can be built and that politicians are not needed to lead struggles. It also demonstrates that the way we build our organisations today, if based on radically participatory structures, can be used as training-grounds to take over the economy and run society in the future. As such, the experience of Aragon demonstrates that there is a revolutionary politics that can be carried out without seeking to stand in state elections or seeking state power which, as Spain showed, is a hierarchical structure that cannot bring freedom for the working class.



THE CLIMATE JUSTICE CHARTER

Below is an extract from the Climate Justice Charter. To read the full charter, please visit www.cjcm.org.za/the-charter

Principles for Deep Just Transitions

Every community, village, town, city and workplace has to advance the deep just transition to ensure socio-ecological transformation. The following principles shall guide the alternatives, plans and processes towards a deep just transition in our society:

1. Climate justice: Those least responsible must not be harmed or carry the cost of climate impacts. Hence the needs of workers, the poor, the landless, people with disabilities, grassroots women, children and vulnerable communities have to be at the centre of the deep just transition. The benefits of socio-ecological transformation must be shared equally.
2. Social justice: Climate justice is social justice. Confronting all forms of discrimination and oppression as it relates to race, class, gender, sex and age, to secure climate and social justice.
3. Eco-centric living: To live simply, slowly and consciously, in an eco-centric way, which recognises the sanctity of all life forms, our inter-connections and enables an ethics of respect and care.
4. Participatory democracy: All climate and deep

just transition policies must be informed by the voices, consent and needs of all people, especially those facing harm.

5. Socialised ownership: In workplaces and communities, people's power must express itself through democratic control and ownership, including through democratic public utilities, cooperatives, commoning, communal ownership and participatory planning, including participatory budgeting, in towns and cities, to ensure collective management of the life enabling commons and systems.
6. International solidarity: Everyone's struggle is a shared struggle to sustain life. In the context of worsening climate shocks, international solidarity is central to the deep just transition as it serves to unite all who are struggling for emancipation and for a post carbon world.
7. Decoloniality: Colonial, neo-colonial and imperial domination are driving us towards extinction. This is based on the worship of extractivism, technology, finance, violence and markets. We will actively delink from this system as we affirm an emancipatory relationship between humans and with non-human nature rooted in our history, culture, knowledge and the wider struggle of the oppressed on planet earth.
8. Intergenerational justice: Care for our planetary commons and ecosystems is crucial for intergenerational justice; to secure a future for our children, youth and those not yet born.

Towards a People Driven Climate Justice State

1. The South African state has to become a climate justice state that recognises the climate emergency, whilst strengthening our democracy. It has to be guided by the vision, goals, principles and people-led systemic alternatives contained in this Charter and all its climate policies must be aligned to realise this Charter. More specifically, a climate justice state will also:
 2. Enable participatory planning for deep just transitions from below.
 3. Develop public finance mechanisms such as a public climate insurance fund and green bonds, provide a climate crisis mandate to the Reserve Bank, re-orientate all public and private finance institutions to support the deep just transition and advance the tax proposals in this charter.
 4. Ensure progressive regulations that will curtail the destructive logic of capital, place limits on corporations, and importantly, place a ban on any future fossil fuel extraction.
 5. Decarbonise all state practices and achieve a zero-carbon footprint in all its activities;
 6. Administratively and constitutionally redesign state structures as parts of the country become unliveable.
 7. Prepare the country for rising sea levels and take appropriate measures as part of participatory planning.
8. Strengthen local government to have enhanced powers and democratic planning competencies to deal with the climate crisis.
9. Develop institutional capacity through a people-led climate disaster management system, which includes a national fire service, fully functional public hospitals, rapid response emergency teams, increased capacity for the weather services and disaster management infrastructure.
10. Promote research and innovation to deepen systemic transformation for deep just transitions from below, actively raise public awareness and ensure all public institutions are climate justice leaders.
11. Reduce all wasteful spending, end corruption and professionalise the state bureaucracy by appointing the best people in the country to serve in government. A truly non-racial and women led bureaucracy must be created.
12. Advance a climate justice orientation in its international relations, including renewing radical Pan-Africanism, through promoting: a climate justice position amongst African governments to demand climate debt reparations from the global north as part of a Climate Justice Deal; climate justice sanctions against carbon criminal states; solidarity towards refugees and migrants; research; systemic alternatives; renewable energy pooling; climate disaster response capabilities; and call for an 'End To Fossil Fuel Treaty' in the UN system that benefits African governments.



FROM THE ILRIG RESOURCE CENTRE

by Alex Hotz and Leila Khan

FRUITS OF OUR LABOUR: A FEMINIST WORKBOOK FOR FARMWORKER WOMEN



Collage by Duduetsang Lamola (@blk.banaana on Instagram)

WHAT IS FEMINISM?

There are many different types of feminism, and there have been many debates and disagreements between feminist groups throughout history about how to define and practice feminism. This is why it can be difficult to define feminism – there are many definitions! However, feminism can be broadly understood as a political movement which challenges patriarchy.

For some, feminism is about women being equal to men, having greater representation of women in leadership, and helping women succeed within the capitalist system by changing laws and policies. This is called liberal feminism, and usually only benefits privileged and wealthy women. For others, feminism is about putting an end to patriarchal systems of inequality. It is not about having the same power as men because they understand that within the systems of capitalism and patriarchy, this power comes from violence, oppression and inequality. Feminism cannot just be about putting women in positions of power or having more representation of women, because women can also uphold and reinforce patriarchy. These feminists argue that we need to disrupt patriarchal power and fight for a completely different world. This is the position of radical feminism. There are many more kinds of feminism, including within the categories of liberal and radical feminism. This workbook embraces a radical definition of feminism and draws lessons from radical feminist principles and practices.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM FEMINISM?

In the long history of feminist resistance against patriarchy, important tools of analysis and forms of organising have been developed. It can be useful to reflect on these when we are trying to think about how to make our own organisations more effective

in the struggle for women's liberation. Below are some key lessons from feminism:

The gender lens

The 'gender lens' is like putting on a pair of spectacles which focuses/ zooms in on gender inequality. It is about applying an analysis of gender to different situations – to see how people are treated differently based on their gender. The gender lens can help us see how men are dominant or privileged in society, and how power operates in a gendered way. For example, applying a gender lens to a workplace can help raise questions like 'why are women underrepresented?' and 'why are men paid more for the same work?'. The gender lens raises further questions like 'what are the specific issues facing women in the workplace?' and 'are women's issues being taken up by the union?'. Using the gender lens is also useful in highlighting the struggles and contributions of women, which otherwise go unnoticed.

The personal is political

This is a feminist slogan which highlights the fact that the personal experiences and suffering of women form part of a broader system of oppression. Feminists use this slogan to help women realise that their personal experiences of violence and abuse can be understood as part of a systemic political problem, which must be challenged collectively. This has helped many women see that they are not to blame for their suffering and abuse, and that they are not alone. The idea that 'the personal is political' has inspired women to form consciousness-raising groups, which are spaces for women to share their experiences, learn from each other, connect their experiences to the broader problem of patriarchy, and come up with strategies to defend themselves and improve their conditions together

Reject gender roles

Patriarchy tells us that society is divided into men and women, and that there are strict gender roles that must be followed, meaning that men must behave in certain ways and hold certain power, and women must behave in certain ways and should be submissive. Patriarchy also says that if you behave in a way that is different from those expectations, you should be punished or excluded – think about how women who choose not to have children are talked about as if there is something wrong with them, or how men are shamed for liking pink, makeup, dresses or anything that is considered 'feminine' under patriarchy. These roles and expectations are reinforced everywhere, including in the workplace, in unions, cultural institutions, and in the home. But feminism reminds us that gender is a social construct – there is no biological or scientific reason for these different roles and expectations. Feminists reject the false idea that our reproductive organs should determine what we are allowed to do and what we are not allowed to do, and that many people do not fit into the boxes of 'man' and 'woman' as defined by patriarchy. Some examples of how feminists challenge gender roles is through demanding that housework and childcare is shared by men, or by training women activists to chair meetings so that they feel more confident to take up leadership roles in their organisations.

Recognise unpaid care work

An important contribution by feminists has been to recognise the expectation placed on women to do unpaid work in their homes and communities, such as cooking, cleaning, raising children or looking after the sick and elderly. This type of work is known as unpaid care work or reproductive labour. This expectation is placed on working women as well as women who are not formally employed. In the case of working women, they face a 'double burden' as explained in Chapter 1,

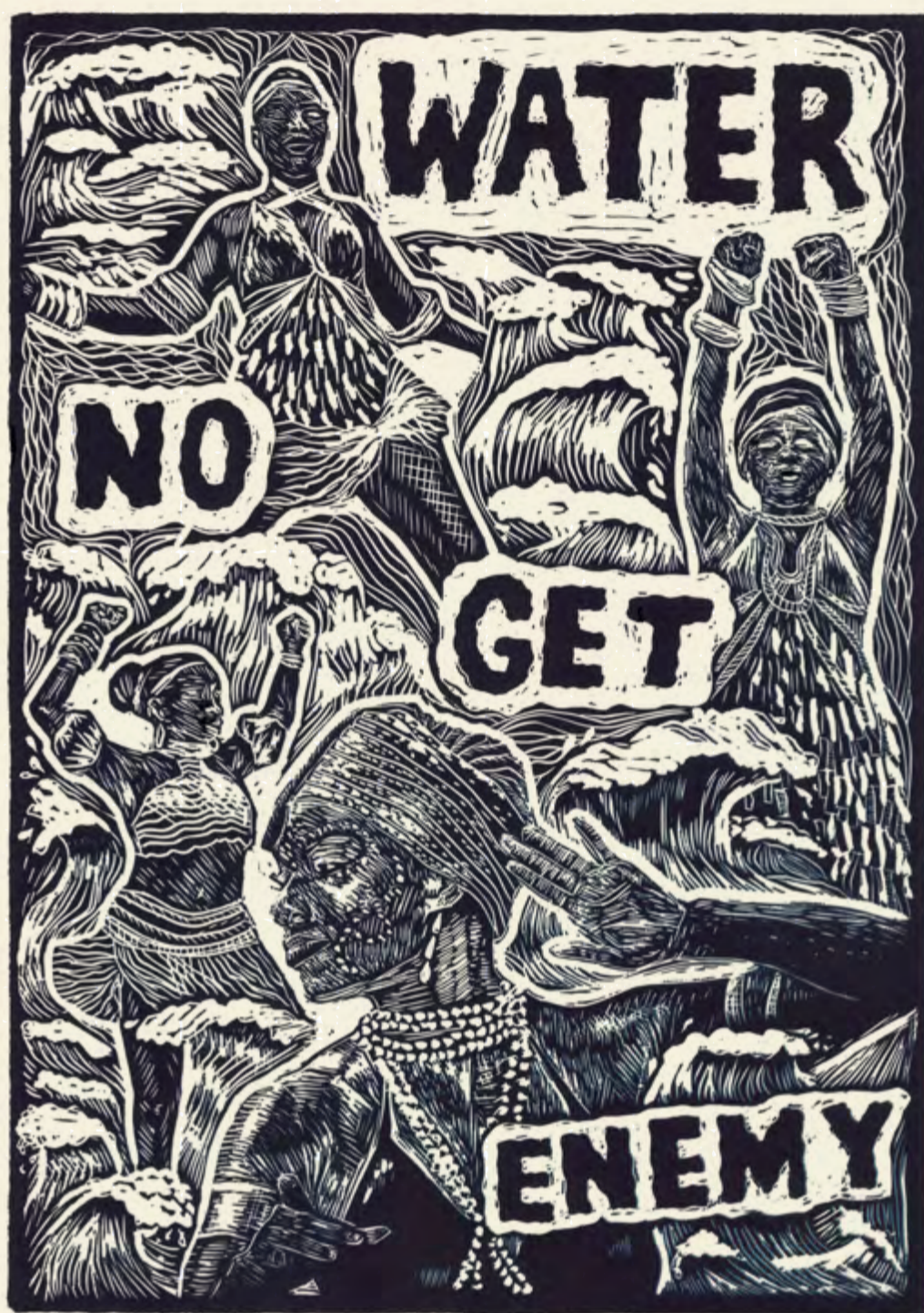
because they have to do this unpaid care work after they finish their paid work. Feminist organisations and movements have tried to solve this problem in different ways, including through demanding wages for housework, fighting for basic income grants, or insisting that men share the work in the home and community.

Practice self and collective care

Because women play a central role in caring for their households and communities, and because women are so often victims of violence, feminism teaches us that self-care and collective care should be an important part of how we organise. Self-care is about ensuring that we take time for rest and enjoyment, and look after our bodies and mental health. Collective care is about looking after one another, building networks of support, and creating projects and institutions to meet the needs of the wider community. Practicing care is an important organising strategy to build sustainable movements. Many activists leave movements because they are exhausted and burnt out, and this is especially true for women. When people are cared for and have the energy to care for each other, they are better able to struggle together, come up with solutions, resolve conflict and win demands. Some examples of how movements practice self and collective care are:

- Holding informal gatherings outside of organisational meetings to check in with each other.
- Creating safe and healing spaces to talk about experiences of violence.
- Offering therapeutic activities such as meditation, art sessions or exercise classes.
- Building and sustaining community gardens and running community feeding schemes.

You can download and read the rest of this booklet, as well as our other educational resources, on our website at www.ilrigsa.org.za/resources



WATER NO GET ENEMY

The importance of a cultural resistance consciousness in the struggle for water as a commons and for the commons as a whole is often neglected or erased. The culture of oppressed people is resistance, through art we are able to rekindle the hope for environmental reclamation, resuscitation and in fact, redemption. Culture gives us the strength to respond to threats in imaginative ways that symbolically honour the poetic, sonic and visual traditions of the oppressed. Through art and cultural resistance, water's subjectivity and belonging to all the elements of the earth is restored. Culture teaches us that music and dance are the energies that move water, turning bodies into flesh dripped in saltwater, dancing on water – water dancing on us.

Culture teaches us that the deprivation of water is tantamount to the theft of joy, worship, memory and dreams. Art reminds us that water was our first country, it was our first movement and rhythm, and the first poetic habitation. Art reminds us of the water buried under cities as a result of the invasion of colonial infrastructures. In the wake of colonial disruption and fragmentation, art historicizes the condition of the peoples and their lands, the spiritual fracture, severed connection to both land and water and by doing so raises a counter-narrative in confrontation against powerful institutions and governments on behalf of the dispossessed and the environment.

Words and poster by The African Ecofeminist Collective (AEC), an autonomous anti-capitalist group started in 2013 by several African feminist organizers, academics, researchers, and grassroots activists, all working on the intersections of gender, economy and ecological justice on the continent of Africa

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Are you involved in progressive struggles or grassroots workplace/community organising that needs solidarity or that you think more activists should be made aware of? Do you have an analysis of or insights into a struggle or social/political/economic issue or development – whether local, regional or international – that is of interest or relevance to progressive/working class activists and struggles in South Africa that you would like to share? Do you have questions/comments about or disagreements with something published in Workers' World News?

Send us your article (max. 600 words) by email or Facebook private message and we will consider publishing it in a future issue.



CALLING ALL CULTURAL ACTIVISTS

We would love to feature your artwork advocating for alternatives to capitalism, fascism and patriarchy. Please help us make this an inspiring publication by sending us your poetry & songs, photography & graphic design, paintings & drawings, reports & manifestos of cultural activist interventions etc.



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SYSTEM CHANGE NOT CLIMATE CHANGE



WE HAVE TO FIGHT FOR AN ECONOMY THAT RESPECTS NATURE AND USES NATURAL RESOURCES WITH CARE. WE HAVE TO ENSURE THE ECONOMY PRODUCES FOR PEOPLE NOT PROFIT.



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