

This chapter is taken from my MA Thesis, titled, Marikana: Taking a Subaltern Sphere of Politics Seriously.

Chapter Four: Worker Struggles as Community Struggles

The chapter deals with the changing spatial landscape of the mines in the post-apartheid era. It is here that the link between worker and community struggles becomes apparent, given the changing nature of space and community on the mines. It becomes more difficult to deny women's roles and contributions to political life on the mines in South Africa when we are confronted with the Marikana massacre. For the first time, women on the mines have made a public statement about living and working and being on the mines, a realm of experience previously ignored or silenced in most labour historiography. After the 1980s, mine-compounds were ethnically de-segregated and in the recent past, mine companies began to offer a living out allowance (LOA) to mineworkers who preferred not to stay in the hostels. As a result, there was an immediate growth of shack settlements around the platinum belt. With the development of shack settlements has been the introduction of family life on the mines, which has brought with it a new form of community politics that has not adequately been addressed in the public sphere or in new labour literature. It shows the continuation of a subaltern sphere of politics on the mines evidenced by the worker committees, and it shows how these struggles are linked to, and reinforced by the struggles of women and community. The chapter presents research done in Marikana in November 2012 and it is an attempt to write a living history of people who currently occupy the shack settlement called Nkaneng.

Most of the research presented here was done with the Marikana women's group called *Sikhala Sonke*. This happened for three reasons. The first, was that the appearance of an active women's organisation on the mines, linking their community struggles to the struggles of the men on the mountain was of immediate interest to me, particularly because it interrupted some, triumphalist, masculinist, Marxist analysis of the massacre at the time and it revealed a gendered space usually ignored in the mainstream media and academy. The women of Marikana made their existence and struggles public during and after the Marikana massacre, and shattered the quiet assumption that the mines remain a space that is inhabited by men only, or that their

contributions remain purely sexual. Examining the cultural context of migrant labourers, through rural and urban struggles, helps to conceptualise how the political sphere for women is constructed and how they exercise their political agency. Secondly, at the time of visiting Marikana, it was extremely tense and most of the men were not allowed to speak to journalists, researchers and outsiders on advice from their lawyers since most of them were involved in legal battles or about to be called to the Farlam Commission to give evidence. Most of the men I spoke to were family members or friends of the women in *Sikhala Sonke*, who very generously, offered to convince some of the men to speak to me. Lastly, the first book to appear about the Marikana massacre, by Peter Alexander et al, echoed the sentiments of an overly triumphalist and resolutely masculinist class analysis. Not only did they miss the significance of cultural context and the subaltern sphere of politics present at the mines, but also they completely ignored the strong links between the workers' struggles and the struggles of the community. This is of course, extremely unfortunate, since they were able to access the resources to go to Marikana immediately after the massacre had occurred and were able to speak to people before lawyers started putting pressure on them not to speak to anyone from outside their community. Thus the chapter also aims to tell some of the stories which were left out of mainstream analysis, or which occupied different spaces within it. It is an attempt to address many issues at the same time, precisely because of the messy and complex nature of politics in the Nkaneng community.

In many ways the research was undertaken with the idea of showing the intersection between race, class and gender politics and to show how, even if it is difficult, academic work cannot attempt to tell only certain parts of a complicated story. In fact, complex stories are often more humanising, and avoids the trap of objectification that pure class, race, or gender analysis, done separately, sometimes achieves. During the two weeks I spent listening, talking to and spending time with the women in *Sikhala Sonke*, and other people I was able to speak to, I began to understand more and more the limitations of theory, and here I am referring modernist theory, to explain lived experiences of people who straddle two different worlds and realities, and the importance of presenting it in this way.

The previous chapter outlined the limitation of some South African labour historiography that relies on nationalist or Marxist narratives to account for worker action on the mines. It highlighted the need to re-visit the gap between the brief period of unionisation by AMWU in 1946, and the arrival of the NUM in 1984 and to explore the ways in which workers were organising their struggles without union structures. Furthermore, it explained the limitations of seeing worker struggles outside of historical, social, and political context and it showed the continuation of pre-colonial political practices, through migrant labourers on the mines. It then argued that in order to adequately theorise the nature of political activity on the mines today, it is important to see how cultural political practices, or what I have called a subaltern sphere of politics on the mines, has resurfaced given the failure of the NUM to satisfy workers' needs in recent years. Thus far, the critique levelled at labour and nationalist historiography is that it has silenced a whole sphere of politics that would enhance our understanding of how battles are fought and won between mineworkers and the mines in South Africa.

This chapter links both the rural and the urban to understand the current context of mineworkers in Marikana today. Much has changed since the segregated and ethnically constituted single-sex hostels and the literature does not seem to reflect the changes in the spatial construction of mine-communities today. As the previous chapter has shown, most of the men who go to the mines from the former-Transkei and particularly Mpondoland, still have intentions to send money home and one day to return to the commons after their labour contracts have ended. However, many now have family members, including daughters, wives, and sons who have joined them in their shacks at the mines, often, to look for work. People generally still maintain the distinction between 'home' which is the Eastern Cape and Nkaneng, the shack settlement. Yet, together, the men, women, and their children in Marikana now constitute a new community that did not exist there before. The strikes and the subsequent massacre were an extreme moment of crisis for all and it was responded to, not merely through the constitution of worker committees but also as a community. If we are to speak about the worker, beyond productivist Marxist and economic understandings, then we must begin to provide, analyse, and give attention to the communities, which the workers are rooted in as people. In the case of the mineworker, these communities exist both in the rural and now, more recently, in

the 'urban' mining space. The previous chapters have shown how the rural has and continues to influence and shape politics in the urban space. This chapter goes further in writing part of a living history of Marikana, which is conscious of all who live and work there. It is an attempt to show how worker struggles are often rooted in community struggles and vice-versa, and that to divorce them, as some Marxist historiography has done, misses a whole sphere of political activity that could offer more insight and understanding into 'worker' struggles and how they are linked to other struggles for dignity. It reveals, through interviews with the women's organisation and some Lonmin employees, that there is definitely a subaltern sphere of politics that exists at the mines still, which has fused with rural and urban, pre-colonial and post-colonial ways of organising. What remains however, is a fidelity to a conception of democracy, and attempts to deepen and explore democratic praxis in a more meaningful and participatory way than the 'official domain' of politics would allow marginalised people. The continuation of a sense of justice, loyalty and community is evidenced through the interviews and time shared with people who were unable and unwilling to divorce what happened on the 16th of August to broader practices of injustice by Lonmin against its employees and how the company, the government and the union had ignored and discarded the communities of people they were supposed to protect and to be accountable to.

The chapter performs various functions and tries to tell several stories, which are only some of many narratives. It begins with women's contributions to community struggle, not only because women have been relegated to the margins of history for so long, but also because what is particularly interesting about the women's group in Marikana is that it was formed precisely during the moment of crisis in the community when there was a political, social and economic gap which the women had to face alone while the men were on the mountain. I have chosen to do this through various life stories of some of the women in the community. The first part outlines the formation of the women's organisation, why it is important; the issues it tackles (like land, housing and services) and the functions it performs in the community. Most importantly it reveals the sometimes silenced political, social and reproductive work of women and how this creates the environment in which workers' struggles become possible and, in some cases, successful. The second part of the chapter discusses the living history of the subaltern mineworker at Lonmin and how

race, domination, and exploitation continue to fundamentally shape people's experiences of the places in which they live and work. Finally, it considers the importance of acknowledging and considering cultural context, precisely because this allows for an understanding of the subaltern sphere of politics present on the mines and the cultural political tools which mineworkers have once again begun to employ outside of union structures. It is, in many ways, a counterforce to the limited understanding that some narrow Marxist and nationalist historiography offers in which the worker is theorised purely as a subject of capitalist exploitation devoid of agency, subjectivity, and most crucially context. Suren Pillay (2013: 37) has noted of the Marikana Massacre that "Where capital has provided the ideologically privileged turnkey for locating unions in a universal history of capitalism, the work as a migrant in a community resides within a subaltern history of colonialism and apartheid." Perhaps it would be more useful to say that the migrant in the Marikana community resides within a subaltern history of colonialism, apartheid, and elite nationalism. It is within this space, that the following body of research can be located.

Arriving at Wonderkop

I arrived at Wonderkop on the 1st of December 2012, after meeting Nomzekhelo, Wendy and Ncomeka in Johannesburg. They had been attending a 1in9¹ workshop learning to print t-shirts and I called Nomzekhelo, I had seen her number on an online statement for the Women's group in Marikana. She said I should pick them up at 8am at Johannesburg Park Station and we could drive to Marikana together. So I did.

Nomzekhelo Primrose Sonti is a strong, loud and cheerful woman. She moved to the North West Province eighteen years ago from the Eastern Cape in search of work. She found work at Samancor, a mine near Mooinooi, for a few years before being transferred to Eastern Platinum working for a company inside the mines, which sold clothes to mineworkers. She moved to a shack settlement in Wonderkop at Lonmin,

¹ Formed in 2006 to support Fezeka Kuzwayo, who brought a rape charge against the current president Jacob Zuma. The One in Nine Campaign is a feminist collective motivated by the desire to live in a society where women are the agents of their own lives. The Campaign supports survivors of sexual violence – those who report the crimes to the police and engage in the criminal justice system as well as those who choose not to or are unable to report their rapes. The campaign also works with individuals, communities, collectives, and organisations to generate feminist analyses of social problems and focuses on strategies for mobilisation and mass action. (See oneinnine.org.za)

Marikana in 2000 because it was close to where she was working at the Eastern Platinum mine. In 2012, she left her job because she was not earning enough money. In fact, she earned the same salary for the 18 years that she worked for Eastern Platinum. Her employers became increasingly more hostile towards her because of her involvement in community activism. They cancelled her leave because she did not attend work during the strikes and she started facing intimidation by employers.

Now she refers to herself as an activist. She is the secretary of the ANC aligned South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) branch at Wonderkop and she is one of the founders of the Marikana Women's Group. The women's group has also been referred to as the 'Women's Forum' and the 'Women's Movement' since they were only able to register it at the end of 2013 under the name *Sikhala Sonke*, which means, 'We cry together.' Nomzekhelo is a natural leader, commanding wide respect within the community, and is knowledgeable about how things work between the mine, the unions, the government, and the community. Ncomeka and Wendy have recently joined *Sikhala Sonke*, and they travelled with Nomzekhelo to the 1in9 workshops in Johannesburg.

Ncomeka Mbulawa, moved to Wonderkop a few years ago from Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape with her mother and a few of her brothers and sisters. Her father has worked for Lonmin as a whinge-operator since 1975 and her fiancé is contracted to Lonmin through an external company. Some of her siblings have been educated near Marikana at the surrounding schools and eventually they all moved to join their mother and father on the mine. She is 28 years old, has two children, and is currently unemployed. One of her children lives with her at the Nkaneng shack settlement and the other stays at her home in Lusikisiki with her granny. She is quiet and more reserved than any of us in the car, but during the time I am in Marikana we get along very well and she lets me sit at her house when I have nothing to do and we talk and watch television. She is soon to be married, which scares her a little. The custom is for her to stay in the Eastern Cape as a *makhoti* [married woman] with her husband's family to look after his mother. She does not want to go back, well at least not to look after someone's mother. One day during the drive to Marikana town, where people have to go to buy grocery items they cannot get at the shops in Wonderkop, Wendy tries to convince her to tell her fiancé she doesn't want to go. They both laugh as they

talk about what they are told to wear, to eat and how to speak. Wendy says she is pretty sure God did not say it should be so, and thinks it strange that Ncomeka has to look after someone else's mother, "where are these women's other children?" she asks. Wendy relates a story of her friend who called a family meeting when she arrived at her husband's home. After she thanked everyone for welcoming her, she told them they should not stop doing what they normally did on account of her arrival: if they swept, they should not stop because she was there; if they cooked, they should not stop if she was there. Apparently, everyone was super surprised, but didn't say anything. Ncomeka is intrigued but says it's the law and her fiancé is a mummy's boy anyway, so she will go for a month to appease people and return to Nkaneng to be with her husband.

Wendy Pretorious, is 34 and is now divorced. Her family is originally from King Williams Town in the Eastern Cape and they moved to Welkom when she was 11 years old because her father found work on the mine there. The mines slowly started to close and with them employment opportunities for many. Her father found work at Lonmin and had to leave his family in Welkom and relocate again. Six months ago, she decided to join her father to look for work on the mine, but this has not happened yet. Her father is a general worker at Lonmin and she was hopeful about finding work at the mine before the massacre. Now she is a little scared and hopes that as a member of *Sikhala Sonke* they can start other activities that will allow them to make some money.

We share stories while we drive to Marikana, Nomzekhelo knows many short cuts and it only takes us about an hour and a half to get there. Arriving on the mine is a surreal experience, if one has never grown up around the Witwatersrand. Nothing prepares one for the endless mounds of earth and rubble, impressive machinery, vehicles, giant shafts and long conveyor belts in the sky joining one massive concrete building to the next, everything looks a bit post-apocalyptic at first. Yet, Nomzekhelo makes it easy to weave in and out of unnamed roads; passing one mechanical process after another, all the way across the mines to arrive at Nkaneng, without an access card. When we got to one access point, the guard stopped us, Nomzekhelo rolled down her window and spoke to him briefly in isiXhosa explaining who she is and that we "were with her." He let us through, while she turned to me and said, "we don't

know each other, but we understand each other.” Eventually we arrived at a Lonmin signpost pointing to the different shafts, finally the last arrow on the board pointed right to ‘Wonderkop Village’ and to the shack settlement Nkaneng.

Nkaneng

The landscape of the mines has changed dramatically since the end of the compound system. The new “living out allowance” is now an option for those who choose not to live in the single-sex hostels. The money offered by the mines to those mineworkers who chose to take it, has meant the creation of large shack settlements around the mines as those workers who want to live with family or on their own, which would allow them to cook their own food and live with a fair amount of privacy move into their own shacks. The shack settlement is now home to hundreds of people, mineworkers and their wives, or husbands, their children and the animals they keep.

In isiXhosa and Sesotho, ‘Nkaneng’ is described by people who live there as, ‘taking away something by force’ and is the name given to the shack settlement, which symbolises the on-going struggle for land and services, people say they are literally there; ‘by force’ because no one seems to care about them and everything is a struggle. Chingono (2013: 12) also notes that it represents the intersection between ethnicity and settlement patterns. Nkaneng is home to mostly isiXhosa speaking people from the Eastern Cape, and a few other provinces in South Africa as well as other migrant labourers from Lesotho, Mozambique. This has created tension between people who live in the shack settlement and those who are able to live in RDP houses and receive services based on their ethnicity because the land here is owned by the Tswana Chief Bob Edward Bapo ba Mogale.

Nkaneng is divided into two sections. The ‘old part’ of the shack settlement is where some are connected to electricity or have pre-paid meters and access to taps. In the ‘new’ section, people do not have access to taps and many do not have electricity. There are no roads in the entire settlement. This is one of the major problems for people living there since everyone has to walk to the main road for taxis and other transport.

On the other side of Wonderkop, is the hostel section, where the male-only hostel blocks persist and the few family units available look like prison barricades with no yard, for the many children who are milling around, to play in. People sit outside in the boiling heat, as mineworkers come and go the whole day through, watching the buses take them and bring them back, watching men and a few women walk back and forth in their PPE (personal protective equipment). We pass taxis as they weave in and out of untarred roads, which are often barricaded by big cement blocks in the middle. We pass the closed National Union of Mineworkers office, a space they share with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the African National Congress (ANC). No one one has been there since the massacre and the offices remain closed.

When we get to the store where Thumeka works, some of the women whom we were going to meet are already there and Nomzekhelo and Thumeka hug after not having seen each other in while.

Thumeka Magonwanya arrived in Wonderkop in December 1999, looking for “greener pastures.” Born in Stutterheim, in the Eastern Cape, she left to Cape Town to study dress-making and returned to Stutterheim where she could not find work. Thirteen years ago, she moved to Wonderkop hoping to find employment as a dressmaker. When she could not find any work, and in lieu of resources to start making garments, she began selling things in the street which did not raise her enough capital either. She soon found work at a tavern where she earned R700 per month. She now works as a cashier at a Somali-owned wholesaler in Wonderkop. She has not found greener pastures yet, but she says she is still trying. In the meanwhile, she says the Somalians are good to her and allow her to hold meetings at the shop when she is at work and cannot attend them at the office on the other side in Nkaneng. She is a member of SANCO and a founding member of the Women’s Group, *Sikhala Sonke*. Her daughter currently works for Lonmin handing out explosives underground. Thumeka refers to her as “her son,” because she is her only child and she has gone to the mines to make money for them, as a son would do.

Nomzekhelo and Thumeka organised for me to meet with some of the women the next day in the office. The office is a large tin roofed structure with a concrete floor

that floods when it rains and heats up quickly when it is hot, it is used as a community centre and a meeting space for SANCO and now *Sikhala Sonke*.

Sikhala Sonke

Sikhala Sonke was started during the Lonmin Strikes in 2012. Nomzekhelo Sonti and Thumeka Magonwayana were two of the founding members of the organisation. It was initiated by the women who organically started to mobilise in the community because they were left to take care of homes and children and had the added responsibility of caring for the men on the mountain: husbands, brothers, sons and friends. They started to seriously think about an organisation of their own, which would endure after the massacre, through conversations with each other as well as through conversation and support from the women in the Marikana Support Group in Johannesburg. For Nomzekhelo and Thumeka there was no other choice than to support the men on the mountain and the women and children who were suffering because of the strike. Thumeka described the situation, as just really sad, “It was sad because the other women, they didn’t even have food in their houses. So we were helping each other. If I’ve got bread I would give my neighbour as well so she’s got something to eat with their children. So it was very sad. It was very sad. And other men didn’t even have money because they have to pay the mashonisa’s the loans, so it was very bad².”

They began praying together everyday after the first men were shot in Marikana, and approaching police to ask why they were in their community with Nyalas and guns. They soon started organising food by asking the people in the community for donations, mostly the Somali traders, and began to take food to the mountain daily. This food and support enabled the men to stay on the mountain in counsel together and to remain defiant.

² Many of the women who I spoke to also spoke about the money-lending schemes and the outrageous amount of interest one had to pay to loan-sharks every month. Often mineworkers wages are not enough to sustain the home and they take loans to subsidise their wages, during the massacre this increased exponentially since many of the women had to take loans because the men were not being paid and they had to find money to take care of the home, children and wounded men.

After 44 mineworkers were murdered and 78 injured by the 16th of August, the women suffered a further blow with the subsequent arrest of 270 of the striking miners, 150 of who said they were subject to police brutality in prison (Lantier, 2012). During this dark period in Marikana, many women had to face harsh conditions in the community while their husbands, brothers, sons, lovers and friends were dead, in hospital, arrested or traumatised from the events of the days leading up to the massacre.

Most of the women joined *Sikhala Sonke* because it was a time of a crisis; they needed to support the men on the mountain but they also felt the extreme pressure of not having an income during the strike and they all bore the brunt of police brutality. They began organising outside of the worker committees in their own spaces since they were not allowed to go to the mountain. Chingono (2013: 24) also acknowledges the mountain as having traditional Xhosa symbolism attached to it, he notes, “In Xhosa culture when there are problems in the family that need to be resolved the men converge at the kraal and the women are excluded as this is a gendered space. This symbolism is important given that many of the workers who converged at the koppie were from a Xhosa ethnic group with a strong attachment to their traditional beliefs.”

In fact, many women responded in the same way to the mountain and the meetings held there. They often spoke as if it were something I should be aware of, especially the fact that they were not allowed at the mountain. Here again there seemed to be an allusion to the generational links between the Mpondo Revolts and Marikana. Others too recalled the massacre and the images it invoked of Ngquza Hill, whether memories of a time of revolt or oral history passed on to them (see Tolsi, 2013, Figlan, 2013, Gasa (2013:pers. comm). Although they would send messages back and forth and take them food, consistent with how women supported the mountain committees of the Mpondo Revolts, women did not attend. In an interview with an Mpondo woman, whose great grandfather was an Mpondo Chief in Port St Johns, she reiterated that in Mpondoland men and women practice politics separately and independently. Remembering stories of the Mpondo revolts, she said we must not mistake women’s absence at mountain committee meetings for lack of politics, because politics were never discussed in the home. The men went to the mountain and

the women met separately, and that is how things are done. Often men used medicines and *muti* that women were not allowed to use and vice-versa.

Many women in *Sikhala Sonke* confirmed that the reason women did not go to mountain was because the men were using *muti* they were not allowed to use. Therefore, they “agreed with them” and decided to form their own organisation. Often the representation of *muti* in academia and in elite public spaces comes from a colonial conception of Africans who make and use their own medication as ‘backward’ or is often placed as the antithesis to western modernity, science, and rationality.

For example, in their article on the *Movements, Protests and a Massacre in South Africa*, Patrick Bond and Shauna Mottier (2013: 297) condescendingly mention “dysfunctional spiritual suspicions (e.g. the use of *muti*/traditional medicine against bullets which allegedly wears off in the presence of women).” Of course, while it is true that strikers were blessed by a traditional healer, a similar practice in almost every religion in the world where people seek comfort and counsel in prayer and religious practice when they are about to enter into a situation with uncertain outcomes, there is no reason to suggest that saying “*muti* will protect me against bullets” is any different from a Christian declaring “God will protect me” before he/she goes to war. Any interpretation of the use of *muti* as backward, tribal, savage, like Bond and Mottier (2013: 287) have done, echoes what Michel Trouillot (2003) has described as ‘The Savage Slot’ and is nothing less than the use of colonial language and the re-inscribing of colonial categories and must be firmly rejected.

Therefore, in keeping with the traditional and cultural ways in which men and women discussed politics and made political decisions, including sometimes meeting separately, the women of Marikana formed a crisis organisation. They organised shelter and food at first. Then, when the police began entering the community, breaking down doors and shooting through people’s shacks, they decided to organise a march against police brutality³. They were denied a permit for the march they had

³ Things became extremely tense after the NUM shot at their own members, and that is when a large number of men, who were not RDOs and others who were not even employed by Lonmin decided to join the strike and for some this was linked explicitly to the fact that they formed a community. One

initially planned but eventually it went ahead on the 29th of September 2012. It was again through the support of the women in Johannesburg that they were able to go ahead with the march even though they were denied the opportunity to deliver a memorandum, which they had initially planned to do.

The march, initially due to be held on the 22nd of September 2013, was twice banned by the Rustenburg and Madibeng municipalities. The reasons offered were unconstitutional, and the women of Marikana took both municipalities to the North West High Court for denying them the right to protest. The first refusal was communicated via sms on the 20th of September. It stated they had not met the requirement of a seven-day notice period and therefore their march could not go ahead. This was a false accusation. The Rustenburg local municipality then communicated in writing that the “purpose of the march does not meet the requirements of the Gatherings Act.” However, it is illegal for the authorities to regulate protests based on their purpose, as the Act does not allow for this. This appeared to be pure censorship and an attempt to impose a blanket ban any political marches in the platinum belt. In 2013, Jane Duncan and Andrea Royeppen reported that the right to protest was not respected by the Rustenburg district municipality who routinely denied people approval for protests based on arbitrary reasons. The Rustenburg municipality began to create their own list of criteria which protestors had to comply with that were not listed in the Regulation of Gatherings Act (RGA) in order to limit the amount of protests occurring in the region, particularly around the platinum belt (Duncan and Royeppen 2013). Rather than seeing protest as democratic expression of dissent and dissatisfaction, the municipality has responded with threats and attempts to undermine democratic participation.

This is not a new form of repression under Jacob Zuma’s government either. The ANC-led government has increasingly begun to deny people the right to protest and

person who spoke to Chingono (2013: 27), said, “As a community when we saw the police pass through our settlement we could see they were prepared to use force...we all resolved that we have to be involved for this was no longer just a workers’ issue but a community struggle.” For another worker, “At first it was an RDO issue but as the strike progressed they demanded everyone to support them...even those passing by on the road they would call them to come and support them. For a Zimbabwean informal trader, he was at the Koppie out of fear rather than solidarity: “We had no choice but to be at the koppie and show them our support. It was either you are on their side or they would see you as the enemy. They have to force everyone to see their logic for the strike” (Chingono, 2013: 27).

has often responded with violence when protestors hold government responsible for lack of public services and accountability. Most notably, the shack dwellers' movement in Durban, *Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM)*, has been involved in an ongoing battle against the state for land and housing and for respect and dignity to be able to choose where and how people within the movement live. They have often been met with repression, authoritarianism and even claims of a 'third force'⁴ being behind the movement in South Africa. In a response to these accusations titled, *We are the Third Force*, Sbu Zikode, Chairperson of AbM, states: "The Third Force is all the pain and the suffering that the poor are subjected to every second in our lives. The shack dwellers have many things to say about the Third Force. It is time for us to speak out and to say this is who we are, this is where we are and this how we live. The life that we are living makes our communities the Third Force."

In a recent report, titled *Take Back the Streets: Repression and Criminalisation of Protest Around the World*, the International Network of Civil Liberties Organizations outlines a global crackdown on peaceful protests through excessive police force and the criminalization of dissent. The report highlights a growing tendency to perceive people exercising the right to protest, a fundamental democratic right, as a threat requiring use of force by the police. It details a 2005 report about the experiences of social movements *vis - a - vis* the implementation of the Regulation of Gatherings Act, in which "the FXI [Freedom of Expression Institute] identified a disturbing pattern where social movements and organizations stridently opposed to government policies were isolated and targeted by local authorities through an overly technical interpretation of the RGA, imposition of unreasonable conditions on protest marches and outright prohibitions of gatherings based on flimsy and unsupported reasons" (INCLO, 2013: 46).

Even when the illegality of state policy is revealed⁵, this often leads to further repression from the state. Still, many social movements and organisations utilise the

⁴ The third force is a term used to describe apartheid police personnel that covertly supported popular violence against the liberation movement.

⁵ In 2009, AbM was successful in over-turning the KwaZulu-Natal Elimination and Prevention of Re-emergence of Slums Act in the KwaZulu-Natal High Court, Durban where it was declared unconstitutional. Despite this legal victory they have continued to face repression from the state and in 2013, there have already been three political assassinations of AbM members in the Cato Crest Shack settlement. (see Pithouse, 2013)

state legal system, which they rely on to maintain democratic principles. This response highlights the inability of the South African state to take ‘those who do not count’ seriously as reasonable citizens who are capable of thinking for themselves. In fact, Trouillot’s banalisation category of silencing seems to echo through narratives of “service delivery protests” or ‘irrational’ mineworkers who broke with ‘hard-won’ bargaining structures. Implicit in these claims, is the unthinkable notion that people are able to organise outside of the state, and outside of the party or the unions to demand access to public goods and services to live a dignified life. Thus, they are denied claims to the political and are marginalised and repressed because of the threat they pose to the conception of the nation or democracy. Partha Chatterjee (2004: 47) makes a similar point about the way in which a “widening arena of political mobilisation” causes “much discomfort and apprehension in progressive elite circles” where the complaint from the political elite and middle-class society is that politics has been “taken over by mobs and criminals.”

Even when that same subaltern sphere of politics shows more reverence for due-process, consultation, negotiation and the praxis of democracy than the thug-like politics of Zuma’s ANC, the appearance of poor people in these elite spaces is often met with shock and disdain. For example, when AbM spokesperson Bandile Mdlalose was arrested on the 17th of September 2013 and detained for seven days before she was granted bail, for protesting against the murder of seventeen-year-old Nqobile Nzuza by the police, she said

“It was a way to silence me, it was a way to silence me and others who were protesting against the murder of Nqobile Nzuza. No one has been arrested for the murder of Nqobile, or the murder of Nkululeko Gwala or Thembinkosi Nyathi. And yet, people protesting against murder are beaten and I was arrested. I REFUSE to keep quiet and the sell the people who really fought hard for me to have a Constitutional Right of Freedom of Expression.”

When she appeared in court again in November, she was told by the magistrate that just because she was dressed smartly doesn’t mean they have to treat her differently. Implicit in this derogatory remark was that she did not belong in those clothes or in that space because the law was meant to protect proper citizens, a category which she

did not occupy.

Similarly, the women in Marikana displayed the same commitment to participatory democracy and belief in due legal process when they contested the Rustenburg and Madibeng municipalities, as well as the North West police force in the Rustenburg High Court and won the appeal. They did so despite threats and attempts to intimidate them because they were exercising their access to citizenship, something which government would rather deny poor people. Even though they had been repeatedly ignored and denied the right to march, they maintained a fidelity to democratic and political principles. In a statement released before the march on the 29th of September, they wrote:

SA: Statement by Wonderkop Community Women's Association, on North West High Court ruling that the Women of Marikana have the right to march (29/09/2012)

We, the women of Marikana, have won a decisive victory against the Rustenburg and Madibeng Municipalities, which have twice banned our planned peaceful march against the Marikana police station. The High Court has ruled in our favour, setting aside the prohibition by the municipalities and telling us that we have the right to march. Our march is to protest the police violence in Marikana, which has led to the death and injury of many dozens of members of our community. We feel unsafe and scared in our communities and this is because of the police, who have behaved like criminals.

Our first effort to march was on Saturday 22nd September, and following an unlawful prohibition by the Madibeng municipality, we notified to march on Saturday 29 September. The Madibeng and Rustenburg municipalities conspired, together with the Marikana Police Captain and North-West police, to prohibit our march for a second time. We had followed all legal requirements of the Gatherings Act, and had made every effort to cooperate with the authorities, but confronted bureaucratic confusion, obstruction and unlawful conduct by officials of the two municipalities and the police at every turn.

Following the second banning, we briefed our lawyers to take the matter for a review decision by the High Court. Following ten hours of legal argument, the Court vindicated us by overturning the unlawful prohibition of the march by the two municipalities. The Court has confirmed what we already know – that we have the right to march! We will continue with the march, along the route that we have planned, to the Marikana police station to protest police violence and brutality.

We are deeply disturbed by the authorities' interference with our right to assemble, by the unlawful decisions of the municipalities, by the attitude of officials and police to our right to assemble, and by the undue influence of the police in the notification procedures outlined in terms of the Gatherings Act.

We believe that the North West police have placed a blanket ban on all protests and marches in the wider Rustenburg area. The Judicial Commission begins its work on Tuesday 2nd October and it is important that it be conducted in a spirit that is open and which listens to our voices, if we are going to trust in its outcomes. We must have our right to assemble and express respected by the authorities and we call on the Commission to support the creation of this necessary climate.

We know that other communities across the country experience the same problems as us when it comes to our democratic and constitutionally protected rights to assemble and express. We condemn this regular prohibition and banning of our legitimate protests. This is not the democracy we all fought for!

We march for justice for the death of our husbands, fathers, sons and brothers at the hands of the police. We march for justice for the death of Paulina Masuthlo, our sister, who died on the 19th September, a few days after she was shot with rubber bullets by the police. We march for justice for the shooting of three other women with rubber bullets on Saturday 15th September.

We have had enough of the violence, and the fear and the criminality of the police. We want justice and we want to restore our community and our homes to places of safety. This can only happen when the police fully withdraw from Marikana, and when the police are held to account for their violent and unlawful actions.

WE MARCH TO CONDEMN BRUTALITY AND CALL FOR JUSTICE FOR MARIKANA!

In addition to highlighting the state's attempt to politically silence what was happening within the community of Marikana, the women of Marikana also link their repression to a broader struggle against state repression in South Africa, where those who don't count are constantly criminalised and excluded from civil society.

Although they won the right to march, which they did with 800 women from the community, they were also denied the opportunity to hand over a memorandum they had prepared. In this memorandum, they expressed their anger and disbelief at the shooting of three women in the community and the death of a councillor, activist and friend, Paulina Masuthlo.

Paulina Masuthlo was a PR Councillor for the ANC in Marikana. Nomzekhelo, who was a close friend of hers, describes her as

“a brave woman. She was the hero. She was supporting those strikers who were fighting for their demands, just money. Even on the memorial service for these 34 people on the mountain there, it was only Paulina, who were wearing the mining uniform which is white uniform with the gumboots, with the makaraba helmet. She was nice. She was showing everybody that she is supporting this.”

Most of the women who knew her testified to her brave character and her fierce loyalty to the community, and during the strikes, her support for the men on the mountain and their families. In many ways, she was the example of how people at

Marikana conceptualised local government, community leaders and the entrenchment of political principles and democratic practices rather than commitment to a party structure. Thumeka mentioned that even on the day of her funeral there were people who said some members of the community and within the ANC did not like her. Even though she was unpopular with the ANC for supporting the miners, Nomzekhelo captured her commitment well when she said,

“Hayi, it was her work, because when you are the councillor, you are standing for the people in everything, its bad or its right you must be with the people. You see? You mustn’t go away if something is bad for the community you must be there because you are voted, you see? You are working for them. Even at Karangua, at the court, everyday we were with Paulina there, she was trying even for food for the people, she was supporting even those guys who were in jail, trying to get food, trying to get water, everyday.

Paulina was shot on the 15th of September when police entered the Nkaneng community and started shooting at women and children with rubber bullets and using tear gas as they went through the settlement searching for weapons. While some reported that she was shot during a protest (see Nash, 2013) Nomzekhelo, who was with Paulina near the office waiting for other women to arrive for a meeting, remembers it vividly,

So they come with the hippos there, I didn’t see even the registration number for that hippo. They just come and shoot. So I didn’t run, even Paulina, because we were not expecting them to shoot, because we have done nothing, we hold nothing, because we are women you see? So they just come and they shoot. Even me, myself I don’t know how I survived at that time because I was next to Paulina. I just turn, looked on the side where the Hippo was coming, where the other women were running, and the others just turned, when it comes, when I heard the first shot, I just turned on my side like this and just closed my eyes, waiting for the bullets on my back but fortunately they didn’t. They shoot Paulina on this side, and they shoot the other two ladies on the other side...

Paulina was then taken then taken to the mine hospital with the help of someone with a vehicle in the community. From there, she was transferred to a hospital in Rustenburg for the bullet wound in her leg. On the following Monday she underwent an operation to have the bullet removed from her leg. On Tuesday, she called Nomzekhelo to say everything had gone well and that she would be discharged on Wednesday 19th September, 2012. When Nomzekhelo called the hospital on the Wednesday afternoon, they told her Paulina was dead. She, Paulina's sister and a few others who went to the hospital were in complete disbelief. For them, it is impossible that she would have died from a rubber bullet wound to the leg especially when she was fine after the operation. They were obviously devastated and received no proper explanation from the nurses who gave them the news. None of the people who were close to her believed that she died from the bullet wound and though they do not know what happened or who did it, many of the women I spoke to including Nomsekehlo, Thumeka, Wendy, Nomceka and Ncomeka's mother Florence Mbulawa believe she was poisoned⁶. Paulina's death was a huge blow to the community and to the already waning faith in the system and democracy.

It was also devastating for other reasons. Despite countless efforts to engage the councillor of the ward, SANCO and the women's group were repeatedly ignored. Nomzekhelo described SANCO, in a similar way in which she described the role of a councillor, which was based on the principles of transparency, common humanity and open democracy and here again, the stress on democratic consensus rather than representative democracy is apparent:

The aim of SANCO in the community is to develop the place, which we are living in. The duty of the SANCO it is for the whole community, never mind you depend on which organisation, you are ANC, you are UDM, you are DA, what what. As long as you are in South Africa and you are staying here on that place you are the SANCO, because you are the resident of that place. So SANCO it stand for helping all those communities who are staying there, such

⁶ There has been at least one other case of alleged poisoning of an activist in hospital. In 2012 Bhekimuzi Ndlovu, was visited in hospital in Durban by ANC members, after being shot by police during a protest. Shortly after they left his hospital room, he became violently ill and died. The cause of death was alleged to be poisoning (Pithouse, 2013)

as problems, assistance, everything you see, everything that is happening that is wrong, even the corruptions, we look after the corruption.

Nomzekhelo and Thumeka described the councillor who did not believe in the same values as SANCO, as being 'divisive' in the community. They had initially voted for him because he knew the problems of 'this side' (Nkaneng) but when he became councillor he continued to ignore them like the former councillor did. By refusing to recognise the existence of SANCO as well as taking no action after the massacre or during the strikes, the councillor has offered no support to the community.

In addition, many women said that they would not vote in the 2014 elections if Zuma was elected at Manguang. After the massacre, although many had not lost faith in the government's ability to positively change their situation, their main concern was that the municipality and the government were continually ignoring them. The fact that Zuma had not even come to Marikana during the strikes or after the massacre was a clear indication of his disinterest in them, and that he had failed them, especially when it came to the issue of land.

The Land on which Nkaneng is built

There are 38 shack settlements around the Rustenburg platinum belt, and in 2010 Lonmin estimated that "50% of the population who lived within a 15km radius from its mining operations lived in informal (sic) dwellings and lacked access to basic services (Chingono, 2013: 9). As a result, people in Nkaneng have had an on-going battle with the municipality over the issue of land and services. Although most people who live there acknowledge its temporary nature, because the Eastern Cape is still home, the conditions in which they are forced to live in return for their labour is unacceptable by any measure. Even today, ethnicity on the mine is still a contributing factor to broader and more generalised tensions between people. Since they do not have access to what is Tswana traditional land, they are all technically living in Nkaneng illegally and government and the mine have made no attempt to reckon with the new spatial configurations and consequently the community that has emerged, as a direct result of the 'living out wage' and persistent migrant labour system. They have also failed to provide proper services for their workers and their families. Aside from

basic services, there are no schools or crèches on the mine and the colonial mind-set of the mines to support the mineworker with only enough money to reproduce himself, ignores the growing poverty in rural areas as well as the very obvious new households on the mines.

The women of *Sikhala Sonke* say the land the shack settlement occupies, as well as the land Lonmin stands on belongs to the Tswana Chief Kgosi Bob Edward Mogale of the Bapo ba Mogale Royal Family. Mogale will not cede the land to them, so they cannot build formal housing. The formal housing (brick structures) that does exist belongs to Tswana people, who are allowed to get RDP housing in that area because of ethnic citizenship. Traditional authorities tell people like Nomzekhelo, they do not belong there and the land is not for Xhosas. The municipality is as unhelpful and Lonmin has taken no responsibility for housing the mineworkers and their families who have to face this reality.

The Bapo ba Mogale family are not happy with the shack settlement on what should be Batswana farming land and are demanding more money from Lonmin. Lonmin however has ignored the entire community there and refuses to help or to pay any money to the Bapo ba Mogale family who, according to women in *Sikhala Sonke*, regularly receives money from Lonmin and demands that their children and relatives receive jobs over isiXhosa people. They would like the government to buy the land for them so they are able to live and build on it. According to Nomzekhelo they,

“Want to stay here freely because now, its still an informal settlement and then we don’t have any services. But the problem now, if they want us to vote for them they are coming and mobilising on our side and we are voting for them because its our organisation which is ANC, and we like them. But now we are very very disappointed, because this democracy its long time its 18 years but nothing happened here at Wonderkop as you see. We don’t have roads, we don’t have water, we don’t have toilets, we don’t have houses, everything we don’t have. Although we are voting, although we are the ANC members you see.”

While many have suggested that the pervasion of ethnicity in people’s narratives

about life on the mines, is attributed solely to xenophobia and ethnicism or traditional patriarchy (Bond, 2013: 297; Cronin, 2012) this must also be seen in context. It is useful to consider what Stuart Hall, called the possibility of a Gramscian analysis of race and ethnicity. Gramsci referred to a “national specificity,” to describe the different levels in “in complexly structured societies composed of economic, political and ideological relations” in which according to Hall (1986), it was important to consider “the character of different types of political regimes, the importance of cultural and national-popular questions, and the role of civil society in shifting the balance of relations between different social forces in society” (Hall, S 1986, quoted in Goldberg, 2009: 514).

While it is true that under Zuma’s presidency, the emergence of an ethnic, patriarchal, homophobic and misogynist politics has proliferated South African state politics, ethnicity at Marikana is experienced in direct relation to people’s material existence and support networks, particularly during the strikes and the massacre. In fact, Nkaneng (made up predominantly of isiXhosa and then Sesotho speaking people) is now the majority community around Lonmin and Crispin Chingono (2013: 8) explains, “As a result the question of who is local and alien is often contested but quite crucial in understanding the socio-economic and political dynamics in those communities. Pillay (2013: 32) makes the important point that ‘cultural artefacts’ [sic] which workers bring with them into a strike “interrupts the desire in much of this scholarship (South African labour studies) for a revolutionary worker subject, that is fully universal without the particularities of race or ethnicity.” He adds that it is important for us to reckon with the migrant worker both as a product of capital but also as part of a history of in-direct rule and colonial governmentality (Pillay, 2013: 50).

Thus the frustration with being continually ignored by government and Lonmin based on their ethnicity must be taken seriously and not seen as the lack of a proper emancipatory process or historical project, which has its base in euro-centrism. It is on the basis of this exclusion that *Sikhala Sonke* has in some ways attempted to step in and take action to try to improve conditions in the community. This has not meant exclusion based on ethnicity or even vigilante violence as some have suggested (see Cronin, 2012). Rather, they have started through SANCO and now *Sikhala Sonke* to

offer people help with identity documents; complaints about the councillor; rape; domestic abuse; and other forms of social services, which their municipality has denied them. One of their main concerns now is a road.

In Nkaneng, there are no roads, and few cars struggle over the uneven muddy dirt roads that taxis refuse to drive on. Everyone must walk to the main road to get taxis. For many this is a very long distance, when it rains many cannot leave their homes. Few vehicles go in and out, mostly there are big trucks delivering goods to stores: every few days one is bound to see a huge *Carling Black Label* truck delivering more beer to the '*Never say Die Tavern*' next to 'the office'.

The roads are the pivot of a whole range of activities that are denied to the community as a result: for example not being able to buy large grocery items, or attend school or work when it rains heavily, which is extremely common in the summer. Most importantly, it is impossible for ambulances to reach sick or injured people inside Nkaneng because of the road, especially crucial during the strikes and the massacre. Although they do not have other services, the old part of the shack settlement has some form of electricity or pre-paid meters, and people in the new part illegally connect to electricity as well. Some also have taps in their yards and others are allowed to buy 20l of water for R2, which is what Ncomeka pays, still that is a struggle for some. There are also long-drop toilets that are not ideal but "at least something." Nomzekhelo, Thumeka and others in *Sikhala Sonke* feel if they are able to get a gravel road they would have made some positive contribution to life in Nkaneng. They have approached Lonmin many times for gravel; their response was that they do not have any trucks that can deliver the gravel to them. Nevertheless, Nomzekhelo says, "But it was long time ago when they said that. So if we can get help of the trucks and the permission to get that gravel, we as the women, we can do that ourselves. Not to ask somebody to help us on the road, we can do it by ourselves. If somebody, a man wants to help us, he can come and assist but we can do as *Sikhala Sonke* that road." What is clear however is that they can no longer wait around for government to help them and they must organise by themselves.

Organisation at Point Zero

For them it is incredibly important to link oppression in the home and the mines. When the men went on strike, they decided to start their own organisation not only because there was a crisis but also because they needed to contribute to improving the community, something that would strengthen the struggles of the men at that moment and in the future. The creation of *Sikhala Sonke* at this time of crisis is not an exception in the history of women who organise when their home space is threatened and when their children go hungry or when their political freedoms are curtailed.

For instance the women's anti-pass marches that took place from the early 1900s into the late 1950s in South Africa is testament to a tradition of women's political organisation against repressive state policy. Nomboniso Gasa (2008: 136) discusses how African women in 1913 were most affected by the new pass laws the state had begun implementing in May, in which "In that month alone, the arrests for pass infringement quadrupled." Many women were carrying up to 13 passes, which had direct economic and social consequences for the women who were supplementing their husbands already meagre salaries, and who had migrated from the Cape and other places to seek a better life (Gasa, 2008: 135). At first, they received little support, not only from the state, which they petitioned regularly, but also from within the national liberation movement. Many, including Sol Plaatjie and Dr Abdul Aburahman, thought the women acted out of turn and without consulting the leadership (Gasa, 2008: 135). On 28 May, 200 women marched to the center of Bloemfontein with placards and songs demanding an audience. On the 29th 80 women were arrested and all of them refused to pay their fines, filling the limited capacity gaols (Gasa, 2008:137). By the end of the women's marches on local government, many of the men were ready to concede that the women were far more militant, determined and not afraid to openly defy the white man, as Plaatjie reported in his newspaper, "We, the men who are supposed to be made of sterner stuff than the weaker sex, might well hide our faces in shame" (Gasa, 2008:137).

The militancy of migrant women did not end there. In Potchefstroom, women also protested against new pass laws, which would directly affect their livelihood in beer brewing and income from housing boarders from the mines (Gasa, 2008: 141). In

1956 again, 20 000 women marched to Pretoria to hand over a petition to J.G Strydom against pass laws. Some have argued that these marches were framed around women's traditional roles and therefore were not feminist, however Nomboniso Gasa (2008) has shown how women were politically organising as mothers and wives and how, as Federici (2012) argues, women's homes are both a space of oppression and the base from which to organise. There are definite points of connection to other struggles organised around the home, which speaks to certain universal principles of crisis and struggle.

For instance, Manuel Castells, describes the way in which people in Glasgow, Scotland had been opposing rent hikes and long contracts since 1886 and by 1913 the Social Democratic Federation and the Scottish Federation of Tenants Association were fighting against rent hikes and demanding state housing (Castells, 1983: 29). The major pre-war organisational effort however, was started by working class women who formed the Women's Housing Association in 1914 that was the driving force of the rent strike (Castells, 1983: 29). The grassroots organisations that formed the Women's Housing Association were as a result of women's initiatives, especially during WW1 when men were away at war and the men left behind were subject to war-time mandate and regulation which required them in the, mainly munitions, factories (Castells, 1983: 29). In fact by November the number of strikers had reached 20 000 and 49 people were arrested, the men working in the factories threatened to strike and to flout the wartime regulations, since "they would rather risk that than have the wives and children of soldiers out in the street" (Castells, 1983: 29). The joint effort of these two sectors of society is explained by Castells (1983: 30) as "the secret of Rent Strikes: not only was there a common identity between shipbuilding industries, engineering and munitions workers (often working for the same firm) but also between the point of production and the communities where the workers lived."

Spence and Stephenson (2007) make a similar claim about the women who were involved in the 1984-1985 UK miners' strike. The paper argues that "one depiction of women's engagement in the strike has been privileged above others: activist women were miners' wives who embarked on a linear passage from domesticity and political passivity into politicisation and then retreated from political engagement following the defeat". However they argue, this is based on a masculinist view which does not

recognise the emotional political work and small scale action and organisation which women in general, and not just women married to miners, undertook and continue to undertake in their communities. This is a crucial point since while it is evident that often moments of crisis lead to militant organisation, there is no quiet passage from a de-politicised space to a politicised one and often these moments are a culmination of individual battles waged in the everyday lived reality of people, which become a collective political project. The point of insurrection thus naturally follows from the everyday space, in the case of most women: the home.

Annelise Orleck, writing about Militant Housewives in America during the Great Depression, highlights the way in which poor women in America approached their traditional roles with heightened urgency, yet they did not suffer alone. In fact, “the crisis conditions created by the Depression of the 1930s moved working-class wives and mothers across the US to organise on a scale unprecedented in US history” (Orleck, 1993: 2). They staged food boycotts and anti-eviction demonstrations, created large-scale barter networks and lobbied for food and rent controls (Orleck, 1993: 1). Orleck (1993: 3), explains how even though the housewives demonstrations received wide-spread media attention, their position as housewives was nonetheless ridiculed by some. Not only were women who were forced into these traditional roles mocked when they highlighted how implicitly their lives were linked to the political and economic spheres, but often women who do not fall into these traditional roles are demonised and over-sexualised. Both of these tropes perform the task of de-politicising any intervention that women make based on their own gendered lives, in society. Often even when these interventions, made on the basis of women’s roles as wives and mothers, are so explicitly linked to the political, the way in which it remains outside of mainstream historical nationalist accounts can be seen as nothing else but a deliberate attempt to write women out of HIStory.

Take for instance, the famous narrative of the Paris Commune recorded by Karl Marx, then Castells and then Alain Badiou, amongst others. Even when Badiou (2003), mentions that in fact women were instrumental to the incitement of the revolt, the character and shape of the politics of the women, and then the other Parisians is not mentioned. When Karl Marx writes about the Paris Commune of 1871, it is reminiscent of a great surge of working class power directed towards the capturing of

a state and the overthrow of the capitalist class through dictatorship of the proletariat. The only real reference he makes to women being a part of the commune is when he writes, “In their stead, the real women of Paris showed again at the surface-heroic, noble, and devoted, like the women of antiquity. Working, thinking, fighting, bleeding Paris-almost forgetful in its incubation of a new society, of the cannibals at its’ gates -radiant in the enthusiasm of its historic initiative! (Marx, 1989: 88). Aside from the overly triumphalist tone taken by Marx here, in *The Commune of Paris, 1871*, Manuel Castells tells an entirely different story especially about the women whom Marx compares to “women of antiquity”.

Castells (1983: 19) tells us not only were the women “the most active element in the mobilisation of people, in the combat with the army, in the neighbourhood meetings, and in the street demonstrations,” but that:

The great majority of these women were of ‘common’ origin. Their family situations were generally ‘irregular’ – according to the bourgeois morality – most of them living unmarried with men, and many being separated from their husbands. The press and legal system were extremely harsh to these women, dubbed the petroleuses, because of the derogatory rumour according to which they carried bottles of petrol to start fires in the houses of bourgeois families. Many of the women that went on trial as communards had a criminal record – a fact that reveals the conditions in the nineteenth century cities where common women were often used as a source of pleasure by rich men and a source of profit by poor men. The world of lower class women was always on the edge of urban deviance.

This has particular resonance with the caricature of women on the mines in South African literature, where these women too always appear on the edge of urban deviance. They are at the mines as prostitutes, mistresses or beer-brewers, or they are common women whose contributions are only sexual. There is no doubt that it has historically been the case that migrant women often had to attach themselves to men in one way or another because of the conservative patriarchal structure of apartheid law in South African society. However, the depoliticisation of sex as work, whether one is a wife, girlfriend, or sex-worker, creates the image of urban women as cheap

and therefore operating outside of the realm of the political. Yet, it is also the case that many women in Marikana have come to seek work, or to be with husbands and boyfriends or fathers and brothers, and to carve out a small space for themselves within the community and to improve it.

The formation of the women's movement in a time of crisis not only brought the home space into contestation as well as made visible the invisible social reproductive labour of women and their contribution to the waged labour of men, but it also shattered the historical depictions of life on the mines and the roles women occupied vis-à-vis men. After the women's march it was impossible for the media not to make at least a sweeping reference to, and in some cases to publish in-depth stories, about the women of Marikana. Even if the coverage did not engage with the political sphere of women's organisation, they had successfully managed to insert themselves into the narrative and to establish their presence at the mines and their ability to speak about and organise around the crisis within their communities. Whether this will be included in labour studies and historiography in the future however, remains to be seen.

By the beginning of December 2012, there were approximately 50 women in *Sikhala Sonke* who attended meetings at regular intervals, and what had started out as crisis relief had now evolved to encompass other issues around the community. These included working with male members of SANCO to start a committee that would attend the Marikana Commission of Inquiry weekly at Rustenburg and report to others. The Farlam commission, set up by the South African state has offered little hope thus far for the people in Marikana, and their sentiments echoed those of people in Mpondoland when the apartheid state set up a commission of inquiry after the Ngquza Hill massacre. They felt that the commission, which should be listening to the people, was trying to criminalise the men rather than bringing justice. They felt that this was the only way to ensure that they knew what was really going because of the distrust they had for the media during the strikes and the massacre.

Most of the women complained that the television coverage of the strikes as well as reporting on it was inadequate and bias and they were interested in telling their own stories. Many of the women believed the coverage did not reveal many parts of what occurred on the mountain that day. For instance, that police hippos had driven over

people or that some of the dead mineworkers' skins were severely discoloured, which family members noticed during their burial. Thumeka and others believe they were injected with poison or some other medication, since they found the empty syringes on the mountain.

In 2013, Nomzekhelo wrote a play about the massacre and the role of women performed by 50 women from the community at the one-year commemoration of the massacre on 16 August 2013. The play plot was described in a *Daily Maverick* article a few days later:

A woman leaves her Eastern Cape village in August 2012. She has no TV to watch the news, but she hears two men have been killed in the platinum mining town of Marikana, where her son lives and works. She leaves for Marikana immediately. She meets the women of Marikana and persuades them to approach the management at the Lonmin mining company to persuade them to accede to workers' demands. The women, however, are too late. The 16 August massacre begins as they journey to see the mine bosses. (Nicolson et al, 2013).

The play is based on the real experiences of the women who planned to go to the Lonmin management to plead with them to end the strike, because they had heard about the NUM shooting at NUM members and they had seen a large number of police being deployed to Marikana on the television. For Nomzekhelo, they were not even thinking of negotiating and would take anything: "Never mind what kind of peace it is, and at least enough is enough now, and they are hungry the people at the mountain and we stay alone here you see?" However, they were too late, by the time they started heading towards Lonmin the killings had already begun.

They died like animals: Struggles for dignity in Nkaneng

Nomzekhelo echoed the sentiments of many, when she said the police killed the strikers on the koppie like animals. When one mineworker described the appearance of the barbed wire with which police started enclosing the strikers, he said, “We are not chickens or pigs that we should be in barbed wire.” This appeal to a common humanity, despite being treated like animals, living with animals, working like animals and living like animals is characterised by the violence inherent in being treated like ‘those who do not count’. Whether through the confined, hot, dark claustrophobic space one is forced to work in, or the reality that one will find no reprieve from these circumstances at home relays a story of struggle that has been centuries in the making.

For Jacques Depelchin, (pers. comm) it seems as if every time capitalism remakes itself, every time it modernises it also takes something away. It erodes the consciousness of people so that we do not know that we are losing something in the process. Slavery has been modernised to the point where we no longer question the way in which it functions, we do not realise what it means for the universal qualities of humanity and human dignity, or for the particular histories of colonialism and apartheid. Indeed in *The Black Jacobins*, CLR James’ (1963: 11), provides historically detailed and visceral depictions of black slaves who were taken from Africa to Haiti and into mines and onto plantations for hours, worked like animals and housed like them too,

The difficulty was that though one could trap them like animals, transport them in pens, work them alongside an ass or a horse and beat both with the same stick, stable them and starve them, they remained, despite their black skins and curly hair, quite invincibly human beings; with the intelligence and resentments of human beings. To cow them into the necessary docility and acceptance necessitated a regime of calculated brutality and terrorism...

The long passage of time that chronicles the regime of calculated brutality from colonial law to apartheid state law and brutality still finds continuity on the mines today. The need to live a life with dignity and respect is also intrinsically tied up to

the experiences of working at Lonmin and its treatment of its workers. It is not merely that people do not have access to land and live in shacks without any basic services, but that they are there as a direct result of the mines as people who are resigned to work at the mines earning money to send home and trying to live well. The support they offer the mines is met with the realisation that the mines still treat people as cheap black labour power.

Solisi Wanda, who was born in Nkaneng, has spent his whole life living there. He started working for Lonmin in 2004 and quit his job a year before the massacre in 2010. He was at a SANCO meeting when he starting speaking about his experiences at Lonmin, which he referred to as a “paternalistic company” where,

“the environment there, the workforce, the relationship between the employer and employees everything seems to be a mess. The work is strenuous, people don’t get trained. You can see for yourself, they don’t have even nice places to live. You can’t carry on working for a company like that, they only using you whereas you don’t benefit from them. And then, most important is time, because time is going also, so when you busy wasting yourself in a company whereas you don’t derive anything useful from them, to me it’s a problem. I mean I start to be stressed until you decide to quit the company, because you don’t see any future in that company.”

For Solisi, working at Lonmin was also profoundly linked to being black and seeing the favouritism, nepotism and racism on a daily basis, in which treatment inside the work space was directly linked to how one experiences their own lives outside of it. For him, “when you look at white people they are staying in nice places, living in nice houses, and when you look at the (black) people all of them, they are suffering, look at the place now?”

For many at Lonmin, these racialised zones of exclusion represent a colonial world which Frantz Fanon (1967: 39) described as a world cut in two compartments and inhabited by “two different species” in which, “The cause is the consequence: you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich.” What Fanon (1967:39) calls the ‘human realities’ can never be masked by economic inequality

because “what parcels the world out is to begin with the fact of belonging to or not belonging to a given race, a given species,” and it is life experienced as the ‘other’ species that comes to dominate narratives of working for Lonmin. This ‘other’ does not only function to de-legitimate claims of the universality of the working class subject, but it also undermines the post-apartheid rainbow nation citizen. Both discourses function to exclude the particularities of race and ethnicity and how it functions at capillary level in the lived experiences of South Africa. What both limited understanding of Marxism and Nationalism promote is the single-identity worker or citizen who is either subjectified by capital or the nation state. Thus, accounts of people’s everyday experiences of work and life in Marikana provide a living subaltern history excluded from the ‘official domain’ of politics and society alike.

For Silvia Tlkabane, one of the few employed women I spoke to, this is abundantly clear. Silvia grew up in Vryburg East and moved to Marikana West to find work at the mines in 2008. A few years ago, she moved to the RDP section of Marikana. She qualifies for RDP housing since she is from the area and she is Tswana. Silvia started working at Lonmin in 2008 as a construction helper underground; she was injured by a turn-style door at Lonmin and then sent to work on the surface while she re-covered. Her supervisors in the Human Resources (HR) department told her that it would be temporary and she would return to her job after some time. Although surface work is safer and usually better in terms of space and working conditions, people are paid more to work underground and the demotion to a surface cleaner meant a pay cut for Silvia. After a while, she was given the position permanently without consultation and a long battle with Lonmin ensued. Even though at the time of her injury in 2008 the mine ambulance collected her and took her to a mine clinic, Lonmin has since tried to claim that she was not injured at work and has evaded any responsibility for her injury, despite having had a medical examination to ensure she was in good health before starting work at the mine. Silvia has been fighting this case for the past four years and is still in the same position, after being expelled from the company once for what she describes as “exercising her rights,” she was reinstated in the same cleaning position after she consulted a lawyer. They still refuse to acknowledge her injury. She attributes to this to the work environment and the way people are treated in the workplace, in which consultation, respect, and formal structures are absent. After she

described her situation as well as her on-going intimidation by her supervisor she said,

“I’ve got so many (stories) to tell, because really I, if I talk about these issues, I feel like I can burst, because this company really it doesn’t treat us like human beings. We are nothing, especially we blacks, we are nothing. You’re compensated after you’ve taken some steps. But like just easy like that, it doesn’t do that. This company before it can do something for you have to act, if you don’t act nothing happens.”

In addition to all her supervisors and managers being white, Sylvia also has to contend with a hierarchy of toilets, which are reserved for some members of staff only. After reporting these issues to Human Resources and to her union, which was NUM at the time, she received no reprieve and her experiences supported what Buhlungu and Bezuidenhout (2008:270) described as the increasing gap between unions, their workers, and the serious tensions which racial discrimination creates between members and some shaft stewards.

In fact, the corruption, favouritism, bribes and ethnically constructed conflict within the mines which Buhlungu and Bezuidenhout (2008) describe at length is evidenced by Silvia’s experience of favouritism and nepotism on the part of management as well as people paying for promotions. For women bribes are an especially de-grading issue, while men can usually pay money for their positions, Sylvia says

“if you are a woman, you have to, to pay sexually, you have to sleep with him for the position and then after sleeping for the position, then you gonna get the position. So because me, I’m not doing that, I’m not sleeping with them, I’m not giving them briberies, that’s why I’m in the cleaning position. Because I am not exchanging anything for the position”.

This is again linked to many broader issues within the structure of the mines, like the assertion that “Women create difficulties for NUM and its members,” as well as some members capacities to turn a blind eye to sexual harassment and say “forgive those who put them under pressure” (Buhlungu and Bezuidenhout, 2008: 281). Buhlungu

and Bezuidenhout claim “What is remarkable about the NUM is the way in which they are able to accommodate various political traditions,” included in these are the BC movement, the charterist movement (ANC and SACP), the UDF and some left intellectuals. Yet, they have failed to incorporate any gender-based issues and women-specific needs into their organisation, or embrace them as political traditions.

Many women are changing their union affiliation from the NUM to the previously whites-only union because their women –specific issues like maternity leave, sexual harassment, housing and ablutions in the workplace are taken more seriously than they are in the NUM, or they do not join unions like the NUM at all because they feel they are underrepresented (Benya, 2013).

In many cases attempts to assert one’s dignity and exercise one’s rights, leads to intimidation which is further exacerbated by an abuse of power by supervisors and managers not monitored by shaft-stewards who are enjoying the new perks of their office jobs. The clear lines of patronage that exist on the mine are evidenced by the way Silvia was denied permission to attend her daughters graduation while others are allowed special favours, as well as other workers stories of having to pay for promotions.

Like Walter Diniso, who grew up in East London in the Eastern Cape and has been a general worker at Lonmin since 2008. Despite receiving training for various positions, he has never received a promotion, after each attempt, the company tells him the position is over-complemented, i.e. there are no positions available. For him, “they say it’s a democratic country, but when you see the progress, there’s no democracy, there’s apartheid. Most people in South Africa are greedy. When they are supposed to help you, they can’t do it for free. Even if you are in HR, and you know your job...but ey, this company, they want something.”

Another anonymous Lonmin employee experienced similar problems. He too is a general worker who receives R3000 a month. After attending various training exercises and receiving a section 3 qualification of engineering, as a boilermaker, he was never promoted. Yet, in his experience, there have been many white artisans with the same level of qualifications who are allowed to progress.

Both this worker and Silvia said it was clear that Lonmin did not want black people to progress, something that was echoed by many others. This is consistent with Buhlungu and Bezuidenhout's (2008: 272) research at Karee Mine, where many felt the workplace order was still partially like apartheid. For many, the experience of Lonmin as a workspace is fundamentally shaped by race, and the denial of their dignity at work has a direct connection with their material lives in the home and in their communities, Lewis, who did not give his full name, expressed this very clearly.

It was midday on a hot, dry, typically Highveld Sunday, and Lewis was washing his overalls in a bucket outside. He was in the company of a few men who were drinking beer and listening to music playing out of a car boot in the front yard of a group of connected tin shacks. Lewis called out to us, seeing the camera and throwing the overall out of the bucket and onto the floor, he started his monologue, with not even a question asked.

“How much can you pay me to wash your overall? 12.5%. I don't get it.” We were fighting for what? Why were we fighting? Why we were fighting? My wife is cross with me, she doesn't want me. But I'm working now, everyday I'm going at 3 o'clock. Get up and stand up and stand up and go to work. I'm working for what? Why am I working? For nothing, for this thing? Ai, fuck man. I'm tired. I want to resign. On January, I resign. No more, no more Lonmin, No more Lonmin. I want to stand up, and get up and think for my(self)...I want to leave this Lonmin alone. This Lonmin too, can leave me alone. Because it's like, look at there another guy. He looks at me, he says hey! Look at this guy Lewis, big man but he must do the washing. The boss on Monday, he wants to see the shesha bonakala [overall] for him. Skoon! [Clean] Who can help me? Ohh, I'm tired, I'm tired. I want to quit, because I quit. I quit. I quit. I'm not alone, all these guys want to go look for the box. 11.5 – Mahala. I'm right neh? Aii lady. Why do we want 11.5, for what? Why am I making this clean, for what? For nothing., he asks, who is very important, my family or this one (the overall)? My bosses say, why this sheesha bonakala and its not clean. How much he pay me to make clean my shesha bonakala? How much, and he say's, No man remember last of last

month, I pay you 200, and the first of this month I pay you another 200. Hey madoda. I'm gonna quit. I'm going to make clean this shesha bonakala for the boss on Monday. The first Monday January, I can make it iron, hey boss I quit. Take your shesha bonakala. Take it! I'm quitting now. No more on my hands, or my body this shesha bonakala, because you don't care for me. And I must care for the shesha bonakala, wash my shesha bonakala, make skoon my shesha bonakala. But what about my family huh? Look at this small boy, I can take him crèche now, But I got no money to take him to crèche. I'm quit, I'm quit. But I can make skoon the shesha bonakala for boss, that bass hey hey. That bass man! Because that boss...why my shesha bonakala is not skoon? On Monday, I'm going to shop, I'm coming, I can't buy a sweet for small boy. He's gonna cry to me, he's gonna say, yah tata, ungathi ungaluxoka ngoku. He gonna make the young generation, the respect, I deserve the respect. He deserves the respect. All these people, my family deserves the respect. Me also, I deserve the respect that's why I wash this shesha bonakala, what is the advantage for this one. Why? Why I can make every Monday skoon this thing. Look my shoes, they say, Lewis you will out me. Don't worry, because my boss he promised me, one day is one day and if my boss betaal me I can make it the big master.

Lewis did not say much else. He went into his room and came back with his pay slip, which had not changed since the strike. He was clearly traumatised by the events that took place, he repeatedly spoke about how he didn't want to fight and the strike was a "terrible time" in which it wasn't clear what they were fighting for because so many people had died already. He ended by saying, "A lot of people die from this, guys you see? Our brothers, my brother also too. I can show you the certificate for my brother. It better to leave this, you can come let me talk to them now, something has come on my mind" and walked away.

For Lewis and others, the feeling of disappointment and grief is an everyday experience, and they cannot understand how their own government could respond to them with such violence. It is certainly not the kind of triumphalism one sees celebrated in the work of Peter Alexander, et al. What is even more horrifying was how the NUM responded to its own members during that period. It was because of

that horror that mineworkers in Marikana decided to return to old cultural political practices of democracy and participation.

The NUM and the subaltern

By the end of November 2012, despite the fear of union rivalry and faction fights, many in Nkaneng had begun to wear AMCU t-shirts, and at the Farlam Commission in Rustenburg, the NUM “*Organise or DIE*” t-shirt bearers were mostly from outside Marikana. The once revolutionary slogan had taken on an entirely new meaning, as people dressed in “*Justice Now for Marikana Strikers!*” t-shirts wove in and out of the crowd gathered at the centre. Even though there were no longer people wearing the NUM’s t-shirt in Nkaneng, and the office they shared with the SACP and the ANC remained closed, everyone was extremely tense. There was a general feeling the NUM was now trustworthy, especially after reports of NUM officials shooting at their own members days before the massacre (see Sacks, 2013).

Most of the men on the mountain had been members of the NUM and there were splits in the community because of the decision to break with the hegemonic power of the NUM and for some, to join AMCU (Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union). Thumeka revealed how people who came from the same villages were not speaking to each other because of their differences over the unions.

For *Sikhala Sonke*, the choice was simple; they decided to support AMCU⁷, because they believed that if AMCU listened to the workers they could improve their situation and because they could not trust the NUM any longer. Although the strikes at Lonmin were organised outside of any union structures, after the massacre most workers quickly left the NUM and joined AMCU. By November 2012, it was estimated that AMCU had over 50% of the workforce as signed up members. By May, 2013, the estimated membership increased to 70% making them the majority union at Lonmin (Sobiso and de Wet, 2013).

⁷ Although AMCU was launched in South Africa in 2001, as a breakaway union from the NUM, it was only during the strikes on the platinum belt in the last two years that they gained a larger membership and won the rights of a bargaining structure.

The NUM earned its name as the ‘sweet heart union,’ because of the comfortable relationship it has shared with capital and the ruling ANC for years now. The union has become increasingly estranged from the initial mandate of dealing with ‘bread and butter issues’ (see Buhlungu, 2010, Buhlungu and Bezuidenhout, 2008, Buhlungu and Tshoaedi, 2012) yet; the massacre seems to have been the breaking point for many. The obvious narratives of bribery, corruption and collusion with capital explored above pales in comparison with the experience, like that of Tholakele, of having NUM officials and shop stewards open fire on their own members.

Tholakele ‘Bhele’ Dlunga, was born in East London in the Eastern Cape and is a Rock-drill Operator (RDO) at Karee Mine. He was also one of the organisers of the ad-hoc workers committee, elected by miners and constituted during the strike. When he explained the events leading up to the 16th of August 2012, he was still shocked and angry. There are detailed accounts of the events of 16th August (see Alexander et al, 2012), however the events leading up to the 16th when 10 people lost their lives at Marikana are still unclear, little proper investigation into them has taken place and no arrests have been made. Bhele (which is Tholakele’s clan-name and what he is called by friends and peers), relayed the events of the week from the 8th to the 16th of August, in which he says, all their attempts to meet with management and to talk about their demands were ignored.

Bhele explained how RDOs on strike tried to meet with management to speak with them directly, reassuring them that, “We are not fighting, we just want to talk. If you answer us, we can go back to work tomorrow.” However, that never happened, and on the 25th of October, he was arrested in his home and spent the next six days in jail where police repeatedly tortured him (see Marinovich, 2012). His was not an isolated experience, of the 270 mineworkers arrested on murder charges by the South African state under the apartheid Common Purpose Act, 150 reported that they were tortured in prison (Lantier, 2012).

The response of the state and the NUM, supposedly representing the majority of mineworkers at them time, with brute force, is a clear indication of the way in which the post-apartheid state under Jacob Zuma has become increasingly more violent and authoritarian. This realisation is not limited to the experience of workers during the

massacre. Before they officially declared the strike on the 8th of August, representatives from Eastern, Western and Karee mines, all three of which constitute Lonmin, had a meeting on the 6th of August to establish an informal workers committee (Alexander, et al, 2012: 21). This committee would organise a mass meeting of all Lonmin RDOs on the 9th of August at the Wonderkop stadium.

Bhele noted that once the NUM had shot at them on the 11th of August, it was clear using union structures was no longer an option. Even though, he admitted that perhaps they had made a mistake and should have consulted the union first, as management pointed out to them, they had little faith in the NUM and when they approached them to speak to them about their plans to strike, the bullets they were met with was evidence enough. Therefore, they had already started reverting to old channels of organisation and elected a workers committee, which was chosen representatives who would speak to management and convey the workers discontent. Chingono (2013: 20), points to two prevalent narratives about the worker's committees' elected at Implats and Lonmin mines, the first is that the committees were independent and not aligned to any unions, this is evidenced by the fact that the men on the mountain were from "across the workforce and the community." The second, in Chingono's (2013: 20) "strong view" is that the committees were not independent at all and that "some workers claimed this was a well-planned move and premeditated by AMCU." However, the evidence shows that most men on the mountain were in fact NUM members at the time; secondly, AMCU repeatedly stated that they were not involved in the strike action. In addition, most people in Marikana said they had only thought about joining AMCU after the strike as a result of how the NUM had treated them. While it is unclear why this is such a strong view, it must also be considered with caution. It is often the case that people thinking and acting on their own outside of official structures and procedures are threatening to many people, specifically academics, who prefer to see the world through particular lens in which action only occurs within specific frameworks (in the case of labour, a Marxist framework). This sometimes does the work of discounting workers' agency and attributing their actions to a more palatable source, like trade unions.

The workers' committee therefore, must be seen as elected and constituted by the workers themselves. While some of the men on the mountain were from Lesotho and

Swaziland, the majority were from the Eastern Cape and the elected workers committee was almost entirely constituted of RDOs who came from Mpondoland (Reddy, 2013: 3)⁸. In the extensive interviews available in Peter Alexander *et al*' *A View from the Mountain*, there is much evidence of the organising tools employed during the constitution of the worker committees along the lines of the old moral economy and by extension the pre-colonial cultural political tools used before and during the Mpondo revolts. In various interviews, people involved in the strike and those who were present on the mountain noted that,

The leaders were elected on the basis of their historical leadership in recreational spaces, the community and the workplace. Mambush, or 'the man in the green blanket', one of the leaders who was killed during the massacre, had obtained his nickname from a Sundowns' soccer player named 'Mambush Mudau'. He was chosen since he had organised soccer games and always resolved minor problems in the workplace. He was particularly well known for having a mild temperament and for his conflict-resolution skills both at the workplace and at his home in the Eastern Cape. (Alexander et al, 2012: 10)

In fact, in Chingono's own interviews, when speaking about the language they used during the strikes, the workers said they chose to use *fanakalo* (which is a truncated or mixture of language used by mine management to overcome language differences amongst workers, because they could not speak any African languages fluently). For the NUM officials (often more educated) the use of *fanakalo*, was racist and a marker of inferiority and poor education, but for the workers, who are mostly illiterate, "The committee used *fanakalo* because they are in touch with what's happening on the ground. Unlike NUM, they are in touch with reality. They know what is happening. The interim committee are people who are coming from within us...they are part of those doing the hard work...they know what is appropriate for the workers." This stress on electing people who were familiar with the workers and their way of doing

⁸ In fact, in one of my interviews with an anonymous member of the NUM, he blamed the massacre 'on counter-revolutionaries' who were trying to destroy the NUM and believed that the police were protecting themselves from the miners who had muti. When asked why, if the claims about muti being used to protect miners were true, were they killed by police, he replied, "Yes they died because that muti, is not strong. They use 9mm and not other guns, they use the short guns. I know muti because I come from there in the Eastern Cape. I know muti, these nyanga muti is coming coming from the Eastern Cape. Zabe Pondoland".

things, as well as the emphasis based on integrity and home –networks is extremely important in understanding how the subaltern sphere of politics functions at the mines. For one mineworker, “on the mountain, they had been eating together and making fire together, and it was like home” (Alexander et al, 2012: 33). Many said leaders were chosen because they had previously dealt with emergencies that occurred in their communities back home and took responsibility for things like informing family members of the death of mineworkers, ensuring that the body goes home and is transported to the funeral as well as collecting donations for the family of the deceased (Alexander, et al, 2012: 22).

In his research in Mpondoland in the Eastern Cape, Micah Reddy (2013: 31), recounts attending the funeral of Alton Joja, the traditional healer who allegedly gave muti to the men on the mountain and who was murdered in his home in Bizana, Mpondoland in March 2013 just before he was due to testify at the Farlam Commission (Sosibo, 2013b). The funeral was nationally documented and hundreds of people attended with the costs of the funeral borne by the migrant labourers. The men Reddy (2013: 31) accompanied claimed to have contributed R12 500 collected from their shaft alone. Reddy (2013: 31) notes that

“This sort of communal consumption has interesting parallels with beer drinking rituals among Gcaleka people of the Eastern Cape. McAllister has observed that these symbolic affairs play a crucial role in the process of labour migration. During these occasions, with their strong religious overtones and constant references to appeasing the ancestors, the migrant is reminded of his duties as a responsible man”

A further key responsibility of the worker committee (which was reconstituted a few times after people left, were intimidated, or murdered), was the ability of the elected representative to maintain peace and order and a commitment to the kind of leadership founded on the principles of negotiation and ‘keeping one’s cool’ (see Alexander et al, 2012: 2; 10; 11; 22; 104; 131). There are clear links here to the way in which chiefs chose their counsel in the 1800 – 1900s, to how mountain committees functioned during the Mpondo revolts and later how *mineworkers in the ethnically segregated hostels elected izibonga or room officials*. Furthermore, the stress on the

ability to maintain peace and order is consistent with Mbeki's stress on the ethical morality of mountain committees and their insistence on as little violence as possible (Drew, 2011: 79).

While the committees elected representatives of a certain caliber, the RDOs decided that they would approach management all together on the 11th of August to avoid intimidation and to protect each other and when it came time for negotiation, the elected officials would speak, since, as one person said, "We can all sing, but we can't all speak at once" (Alexander et al, 2012: 1). The representatives could also be rotated at any point, depending on their "negotiating capability and who they were speaking to" (Alexander, et al, 2012: 2).

The commitment to this style of engagement that prefaced the need for a flexible politics of inclusion and dynamism is reminiscent of the old moral economy rooted in a subaltern sphere of politics that allows for an open dialectic of experience where, people 'make the road by walking it'. The appearance of the *five madoda* (literally five men) at the mountain in Wonderkop is testament to this principle. While one person said that it was the police who asked for five elected representatives, the same person also remarks, "You see my brother, the *five madoda*, the word used by the police, they said they wanted the *five madoda*, that is the language they used. And that is the language we use in the mines (Alexander et al, 2012: 104). The *five madoda* were elected from the already existing committee, and could be rotated at any time, they were the negotiators and on the 14th of August they requested the employers come to the mountain to speak to them, but if necessary they would go to them (Alexander, et al, 2012: 31), this was never fulfilled⁹.

The mountain however, remained a [gendered] space for equality, negotiation, and consensus. Chingono (2013: 27) makes the point that the move to the koppie, in itself signaled a community in crisis, and all the men from the community, regardless of whether you were a mineworker or not were required to be there to show their solidarity. The outrage the men on the mountain expressed, when NUM National Chairperson, Senzeni Zokwana arrived in a police hippo and refused to get off and

⁹ The practice of rotational leadership during negotiation, as well as the stress on accountability and honour is also evident in urban struggles in South Africa, notably *Abahlali base Mjondolo* in Durban.

address the crowd, as an equal is reminiscent of the disgust people associated with Botha Sigcau in the helicopter during the Mpondo Revolts refusing to speak to the people to whom he was supposed to be accountable. The Hill committees, like the worker committee in Marikana and in earlier years on the gold mines, did not elect leaders but rather messengers and organisers, so they could avoid replicating the hierarchical structures of the chiefs (Wylie, 2011:203). The respect workers had for the *five madoda*, their counsel and elected representatives, is marked by workers kneeling 20metres in front of police vehicles as the five men went forward to negotiate on behalf of everyone, this has become a hallmark feature of the Marikana strikes.

The emblematic image of Mgcineni 'Mambush' Noki, standing above thousands of seated men with a raised fist above his signature green-blanket clad shoulders and a stick in his other hand, minutes before he spoke to police, demonstrates not only the reverence people had for him, but also the faith that, through days of counsel together, he would carry their demands to police and their employers so they could finally leave the mountain. Minutes after he spoke to police however he was killed in a shower of bullets that marked the beginning of the massacre. At the one-year commemoration held at the mountain this year, journalists Luke Sinwell and Simphiwe Mbatha (2013) recount how,

At about 3pm on 15 August 2013, 30 workers crouched down as if they were again under attack by the police. This time, however, they were not – and instead of carrying the machetes and spears that they gathered after being shot at last year by their own union, NUM, they now carried small sticks as symbols of their defence and resistance. The workers were attempting to connect to the spirit of the men who died on the mountain. At the centre of the workers' reflection was a man who has since become an icon of the struggle in Marikana and also a working class hero: Mgcineni Noki, 'The Man in the Green Blanket,' or 'Mambush' – as the workers affectionately call him.

The appearance of the *five madoda* at Impala Platinum mines in neighbouring Rustenburg, during a six-week strike in 2012, shows obvious links to other spaces of action. The worker's committee at Implats was part of a broad strike that quickly led

to the demise of the NUM at the mines. Here too, people had elected representatives to negotiate on behalf of them outside of union structures and the reverence workers showed for the *five madoda* at Marikana was clearly neither unique nor isolated. Journalist Kwanele Sosibo (2012) describes his own experience at the strikes: “The machismo with which the committee carries itself can be seen, for instance, in how workers caution me to approach it with respect as I head in the wrong direction in the vicinity of Number Eight hostel, where AMCU's southern branch office is situated”. It was the Implats strikes in February 2012, which was organised through independent worker committees led by the RDOs and the *five madoda* and not the unions, which started the action on the platinum belt. The news spread to Lonmin through home-networks, which people still sustained and it was these home-networks which brought the news of the fall of the NUM. A striking resonance with the way in which peasant insurgents called for corrupt chiefs huts to be burnt down during the Mpondo Revolts is visible also in the songs used by mineworkers at Implats. “*Watsh' umuzi ka Zokwana* ([NUM president Senzeni] Zokwana's house is burning)” is an example of a refrain used to denote the continued downward slide of the NUM at the mine” (Sosibo, 2013).

In fact, it was also in the homes of community members and others that the strikers at Marikana, like the Mpondo rebels, sought refuge and shelter. Bhele described how many of them fled the mountain on the day of the massacre and ran into the community, seeking protection. Women in the community cared for their wounds when they were too scared to go to the hospital for fear of being arrested as many others had been. In another interview with the *Daily Maverick*, Bhele recounts going to the shop after the massacre to buy some groceries and “The owner offered him the items for free, as he has been doing for affected miners throughout the strike. Dlunga refused, saying the Somali had a business to run, and paid for the bread, tea and eggs. Yet Dlunga was, as he put it, “Broke, broke, overbroke” (Marinovich, 2012). Yet, there are many instances where shop-owners gave food to mineworkers for free, during and after the strikes, and some traders and men who were not employed by Lonmin went to the mountain in solidarity with the strikers. One such person recalls, “All the men from the community were required to be at the mountain as a show of support. Every morning they would blow a whistle across the entire neighbourhood calling all men to be at the koppie. We had no choice we had to be there. They argued

that everything in this community is about mining so everyone has to support the strike and will benefit in some way..." (Chingono, 2013: 27).

The shared struggle and the shared grief that followed is part of the complex cultural and political milieu of the Marikana strikes and massacre. It has clear links to ongoing struggles for land, access to the city and the right to live with dignity in urban social movements in South Africa and the rest of the world. This is only part of an attempt to make sense of the events that took place before, and after, the Marikana massacre and to show the continuation of a people's politics rooted in the struggle of the everyday. What is certain, like Mbeki (1964:126) wrote in the early '60s is that the revolts were the local praxis of larger political implications. Alain Badiou (2012: 80) provides an important articulation of locality and the space in which politics takes place when he writes:

Courage is the name of something that cannot be reduced to either law or desire. It is the name of subjectivity irreducible to the dialectics of law and desire in its ordinary form. Now, today, the place of political action – not that of political theory, political conceptions or representations, but political action as such – is precisely something irreducible to either law or desire, which creates the place, the local place, for something like the generic will.

We know that the strikers at Marikana were not led by Marxist theory or a socialist ideal but the massacre did spark countrywide protest immediately, it also inspired people who have been struggling for access to land to name a land occupation in the Western Cape and two in Kwa Zulu Natal after Marikana, in both cases Mpondo people were prominent organisers. These acts of defiance form part of a larger on-going resistance to the corruption, greed, and nationalist politics of the ANC-led government. Within this resistance we find at every level the everyday politics of race, class, gender, dignity and respect which coalesce around life on the mines in South Africa.

It is because of the history of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa that Fanon's (1976: 39) warning, "Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem. Everything up to and including the very

nature of pre-capitalist society, so well explained by Marx, must be thought out again” becomes even more apparent. We must thus begin to re-think the frameworks used to speak about the massacre which do not deal with the points of connection between community politics and workers’ organisation and the political tools workers employ that do not find their articulation through class analysis. The subaltern sphere of politics which has persisted outside of the current state’s elite nationalist project calls for an openness to the way in which people actually organise and how conceptions and praxis of democracy within this sphere shape how people relate to formal structures like unions, the government and Lonmin.