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TRANSFORMATION

critical perspectives on Southern Africa

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Editorial
*Adam Habib discusses the purpose behind, and contents of, this special issue to coincide with South Africa's second democratic election.*

Articles

**Hegemonism, Dominance or Weak Opposition? The Partisan Situation on the Eve of South Africa's Second Election Campaign**

*Robert Mattes, Cherrel Africa and Helen Taylor analyse a series of post-1994 election public opinion surveys to assess the electorate's views on the ANC's performance in government.*


*Franco Barchiesi analyses COSATU's response to the challenges of the post-apartheid era and their implications for the labour movement in the period ahead.*

**Magical Market Realism and the South African Transition**

*John Saul examines the neo-liberal economic logic which has informed the ANC government's economic policies in the post-1994 period, its impact on the tripartite alliance and the possibilities for more radical economic trajectories in the period ahead.*
COSATU, the ANC and the Election: Whither the Alliance?  
Roger Southall and Geoff Wood explore COSATU’s political strategies in the context of surveys which highlight the membership’s attitudes towards the ANC’s performance in government.

Towards an Analysis of the South African Media in the Transformation, 1994-99

Guy Berger looks at the performance of the media in the post-1994 era in the context of four major theoretical perspectives on the role of the media in South Africa’s new democratic dispensation.
Editorial

This edition of Transformation comes soon after post-apartheid South Africa’s second general elections. Political analysts often see second elections as distinct points in democratic trajectories, marking the shift from transition to consolidation. It thus seems an appropriate time to review the character of South Africa’s democratic transition and assess its potential for addressing the popular concerns that inspired the anti-apartheid struggle. Sufficient time has of course not yet elapsed to enable definitive judgements to be made on the sustainability of the country’s democratic experiment. Nevertheless, the conclusion of the ANC’s first term in office does provide an opportunity for analysts at least to identify the key characteristics of the transition, and to assess their political implications for the consolidation of democracy.

All the contributors to this edition do this in various ways. Robert Mattes, Helen Taylor and Cherrel Africa analyse a series of post-1994 public opinion surveys to illustrate the electorate’s changing views on the ANC’s performance in government and how this impacts on their voting intentions. Franco Barchiesi analyses COSATU’s responses to the challenges of the post-apartheid era, and its implications for the labour movement in the new millennium. John Saul identifies the neo-liberal economic logic that underlies government policies and programs in the post-1994 period, explores the shifting relations within the tripartite alliance, and the possibilities that are opening for more radical alternative economic trajectories. Roger Southall and Geoff Wood critically explore the political strategies currently available to COSATU and empirically ground this in an analysis of surveys that illustrate COSATU members’ views on the ANC’s performance in government and its strategic alliance with the labour federation. Finally, Guy Berger assesses the performance of the media in the post-1994 era through a critical analysis of the four major theoretical perspectives on the role of the media in South Africa’s democracy.

The five contributions to this edition do not in any way share a unanimity on the trajectory and future of South Africa’s transition. Indeed, their
analyses and the solutions they offer differ in fairly important ways. And they should. For ultimately these contributions are offered as sources of debate. It has often been commented that the political transition sapped South African academia of its greatest strength, namely the critical discourse and analysis that graced the pages of academic and political journals at the height of the struggle against apartheid. The editorial board believes that such discourse and debate is crucial if a vibrant democracy that meets the needs of its citizens is to be sustained. Towards that goal, the editorial board offer this edition and the pages of future editions of *Transformation*.

Adam Habib
for the Editorial Board