

Politics at a Distance from the State

Radical and African Perspectives

Kirk Helliker and Lucien van der Walt

Preface by John Holloway

For decades, most anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist movements identified radical change with capturing state power. The collapse of statist projects from the 1970s fostered both neo-liberalism and a global crisis of left and working-class politics. But it also opened space for rediscovering democratic, society-centered and anti-capitalist modes of bottom-up change, operating at a distance from the state. This resurgent alternative has influenced the Zapatistas in Mexico, Rojava in Syria, Occupy, and independent unions and struggles worldwide around austerity, land, and the city. Its lineages include anarchism, syndicalism, autonomist Marxism, philosophers like Alain Badiou, and popular praxis.

This pathbreaking volume helps recover this once sidelined politics, with a focus on South Africa and Zimbabwe. It includes a dossier of texts from a century of anarchists, syndicalists, radical unionists, and anti-apartheid activists in South Africa. Originating in an African summit of scholars, social movements, and anti-apartheid veterans, this book also features a preface from John Holloway.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Kirk Helliker is a research professor in the Department of Sociology at Rhodes University, South Africa, and founder and director of the Unit of Zimbabwean Studies. He was deported by the apartheid regime in the 1980s. His books include the edited *The Political Economy of Livelihoods in Contemporary Zimbabwe* (2018) and *Everyday Crisis: Living in Contemporary Zimbabwe* (2021), and the authored *Fast Track Land Occupations in Zimbabwe in the Context of the Zvimurenga* (2021), all in collaboration with Sandra Bhatasara and Manase Kudzai Chiweshe.

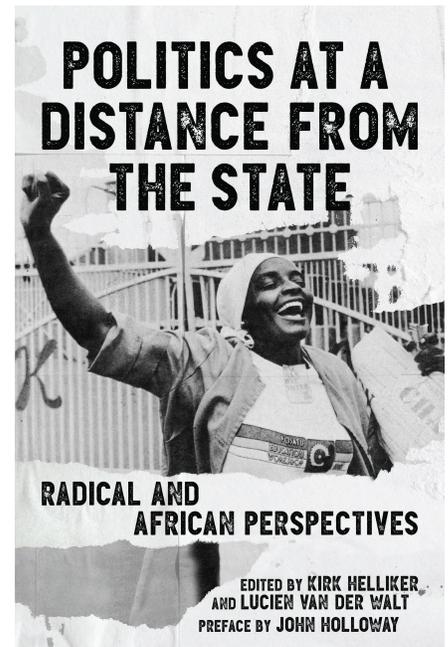
Lucien van der Walt is a South African sociologist and labour educator. His areas of research are anarchism/ syndicalism, working-class and left theory and history, and the political economy of neo-liberalism. He has been involved in workers' education since the 1990s, including for the DITSELA Workers Institute, the Global Labour University, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa and other unions, the Vuyisile Mini Workers School, the Workers Library & Museum, the Unemployed Peoples' Movement and the Red & Black Forums. He has spoken and published widely.

John Holloway is a professor of sociology at the Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades in the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Mexico. He has published widely on Marxist theory, on the Zapatista movement and on the new forms of anticapitalist struggle. His book *Change the World Without Taking Power* has been translated into eleven languages and has stirred an international debate. His book *Crack Capitalism* takes the argument further, suggesting that the only way in which we can think of revolution today is as the creation, expansion, multiplication, and confluence of cracks in capitalist domination.

ACCOLADES

"Yes, universities may produce assemblies which serve the people. So, in 2012 at Grahamstown, South Africa, did Rhodes University (despite the name), and in that service produced a people's knowledge to transform the economic, material, social, family, political, educational, and spiritual institutions of capitalism at their core, without hierarchy, racism, oppression, or chauvinism of any kind. With sober care, practical acumen, and passionate eloquence the knowledge from that assembly is presented here. Absorb this knowledge and sense the future!"

—Peter Linebaugh, co-author of *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (with Marcus Rediker)



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