

# History and Role of Social Movements<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction: Rural Movements and Land Reform

The paper attempts to answer a critical question which faces policy makers: whether the emergence of organised social movements is a pre-condition for land redistribution. Indeed, as we argue below in a number of situations, governments have pursued land redistribution more vigorously under the pressure of social movements in some cases, under the pressure of international governments in others, and/or under pressure from both.

If pressure from social movements is a critical factor in land reform, then the political and social rationale for land reforms assumes greater importance than has hitherto been acknowledged. Instead, an important body of the literature emphasizes the economic rationale of efficiency, inducing land reforms and related economic considerations arising from equity. Economic reasons also tend to be adduced to oppose land reform. This suggests that, since there is no need to wait for pressures for land reform from social movements, technocratic government

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and/or markets will themselves pursue land redistribution given the economic rationality implied. Moreover, it can be expected that in some situations, rural movements may even come to terms with governments to achieve a particular model of land reform involving both state and social movement actors, in varying ways and degrees.

Various cases are discussed to highlight the different circumstances under which state and social pressure interact, over land reform, in order to inform policy analysts of the options to consider in support of a more inclusive and participatory approach land reform.

To answer this question we look at the different and changing historical contexts within which land reforms have occurred (section 2), and then we examine some specific experiences that demonstrate the pressure of social movements (section 3). First, however we introduced the broad concepts, and Section 4 summarises the key insights gained. But first we elaborate here on some concepts and the context of contemporary land reforms.

## 1. Contemporary Context and Basis of Rural Movements

Economic liberalisation tended to remove state support for peasants in land reform and production, while market forces have tended to marginalise them, and transfer production to agribusiness, in new export domains and marginalised food security. Liberalisation establishes private property rights in land and accelerated land alienation in many countries. The creation and recreation of the peasantry occurs alongside exclusion from land and, in the process of their social differentiation and displacement by merchant and elite classes (see Moyo and Yeros, 2005a). This process does not necessarily lead to the proletarianisation or the transformation of

the peasant into capitalist class, resulting in the so-called disintegration of the peasantry (Lenin, 1985; Kautsky, 1986). It leads to the recreation of the peasantry in different forms, albeit in context of reduced incomes. Combined with experiences of declining real incomes in off-farm employment, trends in de-industrialisation, and all-around deterioration of living standards, structural adjustment has successfully deepened dependence and underdevelopment.

Land struggles have been central to many recent efforts to regain access and autonomous control over land (Moyo and Yeros, 2005a), and the emergence of organised rural social movements has been a critical force in many of the new waves of redistributive land reform in a number of countries. The peasantry which has not entirely 'disappeared' has tended to be joined by semi-proletarianised people to swell movements, alongside the landless and unemployed.

A diversity of rural movements exist, ranging from the more organised to the more spontaneous; using different modes of mobilization; and exhibiting notable divergences in ideology, strategy, and tactics. They are militant on land and agrarian reform, quite often employing the land occupation tactic, and in the most organised of cases, they have become the leading forces of opposition to neoliberalism and the neo-colonial state, at the same time as trade unionism has suffered disorganisation and cooptation.

What does this say about rural movements and land reform? The nineteenth-century classical assessment of the peasantry as isolate, conservative, and reactionary, is no longer accurate (Ibid). The countryside has in the twentieth century been fully integrated not only into the capitalist economy but also in the humanist dialectic of consciousness, through the nationalist and socialist mobilizations, to the feminist and environmentalist ones of the present. Contrary to 'localist' approaches to rural politics (Scott 1985), whether populist or relativist, the above modern moral

languages are global in reach, they infuse local notions of 'dignity' and 'reason', and have become a moral basis of social protest.

The rural poor engage in a variety of politics, both simultaneously and over time. They vote in local and national elections, engage in covert and unorganized acts of defiance (trespassing, squatting, poaching, and stealing), participate in overt and organised land occupations movements, and also enter trade unionism. They fight in rebellions and revolutions, as well as non-emancipatory wars. Their politics may be progressive or regressive; they may conform to the demands of civil society or they may confront them outright.

However, we must recognise the ambiguities of peasant-worker consciousness and the problems of political organisation that pertain to them. Semi-proletarianisation yields a workforce in motion, within the rural areas, across the rural-urban divide, and beyond international boundaries. This workforce is also poor and abundant, relatively unhealthy and illiterate, and devoid of bargaining power. Neither full peasants nor settled proletarians, semi-proletarians have grievances that arise from both the family farm (land shortage, insecurity of tenure) and the workplace (wages and conditions of employment). Their political languages are often 'ethnic' or 'national', and while these may contain democratic elements, and may be powerful sources of mobilisation, they are not in themselves adequate to the task of articulating wider class interests and defending them on a sustained basis.

Meanwhile, a plethora of organisations seeks to 'speak' for the rural poor, enlist them in their ranks, or otherwise secure their support: from NGOs and church organisations, to political parties, trade unions, farmers' unions, and landless peoples' movements. If the neoliberal theory of 'civil society' naturally gravitated to urban areas in the early 1990s, in practice development agencies and NGOs had long penetrated rural areas through the funding of 'projects'. This activity expanded under

structural adjustment, as the social responsibilities of states were renounced and global development agencies found new and willing partners in NGOs to take over from states. Political parties of the left have had ambiguous relations with the countryside, although by and large they have succumbed to the logic of capital, either to obtain state power or after obtaining it.

Contemporary rural movements tend to include those that are *organised* to various degrees, including those that are in the process of organising – as well as the less organised. Many have a *progressive* agrarian reform agenda, whose visibility and proliferation over the last two decades has varied. Their strategy in the Latin American context tends to be characterised by autonomy from political parties and the state, with limited pursuit of strategic alliances with trade unions, and other social movements. It is argued that since civil society organizations have not placed radical land and agrarian reform at the centre of the development agenda, new movements have been filling the neoliberal vacuum of the 1990s and that its stronghold has been the countryside (see Petras 1997; Petras and Veltmeyer ; 2001). In the African context, land and/or rural movement, while limited in scale and impact, have arisen in isolated spaces to fill this vacuum. Their *social base*, entails a rural-urban mix of small cultivators and proletarians, including urban retrenched and unemployed (Ramdhane and Moyo, 2002). However their leadership remains dominated by middle class urban based elites, and direct action, such as land occupations, has been overshadowed by indirect tactics such as resource poaching in private and public lands, while being overwhelmed by the welfarist projects of the NGO formation (Ibid).

## 2. Broad Role of Rural Movements in Land Reform

Historically rural social movements played a crucial role in the struggles for national independence and also against land expropriations in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Given the social significance of land to the lives of most of the rural and classes, its control is an important source of political power and a terrain for political contest between different social classes or groupings of people: landlords, peasants, bureaucrats, men and women, ethnic groups, racial groups and so many other social categories. The importance of land for the social reproduction of mainly peasant households, through subsistence from land and natural resources and related income generation, has both inter-generational and intra-generational implications.

The emergence in some countries of new social movements in the South (Brazil, Zimbabwe, India, China, Bolivia, Philippines etc) in relation to the evolution of struggles for land reforms, suggests the renewed political and social significance of popular social pressures for land reform. In a number of these countries peasants and landless workers were the major actors in stimulating the development of a comprehensive—albeit limited—agrarian reform programme even in cases of state-led reform (Veltmeyer, 2005).

In the 1960s and 1970s, most national governments in Latin America used the power of the state to alter the distribution of land for different categories of producers and households, and to redefine the right to land for those given access in the process. These reforms were state-led, regardless of the form of the state (authoritarian, military, liberal reformist, proto-revolutionary), but in all cases undertaken in response to mass peasant mobilisations and a general threat of ‘social revolution’. The key countries in Latin America included agrarian reforms in Bolivia in 1952; Cuba

1959; in Peru from 1958 to 1974, Brazil from 1962 to 1964, Chile from 1966 to 1973, Ecuador from 1964 to 1967, El Salvador from 1980 to 1985, Guatemala between 1952 and 1954; Honduras in 1873, and Nicaragua from 1979 to 1986 (Ibid).

In Africa rural based armed struggles were key to stimulating land redistribution in Algeria, Kenya, Angola, Mozambique and others. In Asia US policy on agrarian reform (Olson 1974), formed by the threat of proliferating revolutionism in the region, led by Chinese communists, encouraged the abolition of feudal relations. Thus, in the five years after the war, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan underwent large-scale land redistributions, combined with armed suppression of radical forces until the reforms (some of which had already been underway in liberated zones) were under control. In all cases, reform was instituted *without* the political marginalization of the landed oligarchies; most of these were compensated, induced towards industrial development, and transformed into a political class with allegiance to the United States. The Mexican Revolution of 1910 played an equally important role earlier, within this political context.

The same type of agrarian reform activism was not necessitated in the nearby Philippines, or in Guatemala soon after, where radical forces in each case were defeated by military means, and existing land reforms, in progress, were reversed (Olson 1974). In Bolivia in this same a popular revolt brought a radical nationalist government to power which set out on an extensive redistributive agenda. But, in this case, the political oligarchy was not effectively displaced and the direction of internal change was successfully streamlined in the medium term, not by military means, but through instruments of foreign aid.

The reforms carried out by the nationalist government in Egypt, ultimately led to reversals. In non-US spheres of influence, namely the colonial territories of Britain and France, reform experiences fit the

general pattern: in Kenya and Algeria, imperial armies were mobilised to crush rural-based anti-colonial revolts and eventually to negotiate neo-colonial transitions.

The Cuban Revolution fuelled a new wave of militancy in Latin America, and compelled the US government to act against feudal remnants on this continent as well. Under the banner of the Alliance for Progress launched in 1961, a series of redistribute land reforms were implemented, generally against the wishes of local ruling classes. Once again, however, the object was a controlled land reform strategy of cooptation, entailing the creation of a conservative agrarian petty-bourgeoisie, and repression against the excluded (de Janvry 1981, Petras and Veltmeyer 2000). By the mid-1960s, the new reformism was stalling, against proliferating militancy in the countryside and the closing of ranks between modernist and reactionary bourgeoisies. Under these circumstances, the US shifted agrarian policy away from land redistribution and towards social and technological modernisation of *latifundios*, combined with support for military dictatorships, as necessary. A series of *coup d'etats*, from Brazil in 1964 to Chile in 1973, provided the political framework for the reorganisation of Latin American agricultures, to modernise them with limited redistribution and mostly without displacement of national ruling classes, to integrate them to varying degrees into the US agro-industrial complex, and to maintain extroverted accumulation.

In South Asia, the same 'passive' reorganisation of agriculture was being launched at the same time, by means of the green revolution, especially in North India. Meanwhile, further east, in Vietnam, the US was escalating aggression against a potent national liberation movement, while in Africa a series of national liberation movements were launching armed struggles of their own against colonial rule and white supremacism – in Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and

South Africa (all except the latter being rural-based).

The period before liberalisation was as much the period of 'redistribution' as it was of 'nation-building'. While these were the prevailing developmental models, the determinant of change was class struggle within the centre-periphery structure under Cold War conditions. Therefore, firstly, rural-based social struggles have compelled the transition of agriculture to capitalism worldwide, characterised in the main by the transformation of large landownership to capitalist farming along with several other tendencies. Second, the whole experience of post-war reformism, rounded off in the 1970s by 'integrated rural development' programmes administered by global agencies, served as a minimum subsidy to the social reproduction of the rural proletariat and semi-proletariat on a global scale. Such policies put a break on more rapid proletarianisation, as well as more radical alternatives (de Janvry 1981, Harriss 1987). Thirdly, reformist measures that safeguarded the political and economic status of ruling classes and allowed them to steer the direction of reform back to extroverted accumulation, have generally failed. As Atilio Boron has put it, 'history teaches that, in Latin America, to make reforms you need revolutions' (2003: 205, our translation), and this can certainly be generalised. While revolutions may not be on the cards under the circumstances, the point to stress is that economic type approaches to agrarian reform (Bernstein 2002) will continue to suffer unless the political dimensions of reform are taken seriously.

The ensuing period of market-based development, roughly from the 1970s to the present, altered the model of agrarian reform away from redistribution. This period began with the *coup d'état* in Chile and reached its symbolic height in Latin America in 1992 with the amendment of Article 27 of the Mexican constitution which had been protecting communal/reformed land since 1917 (consequent upon the

Revolution of 1910–20). The growing influence of the neo-classical economic doctrine, called for both the restitution of land in reformed sectors to previous landowners and the establishment of individual title within the sectors that were communal/indigenous, collectivized, or state-owned. This policy framework spread throughout Latin America, Asia, and Africa under structural adjustment, and then on to Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet bloc (Szelenyi 2001). Although actual implementation has been uneven – more significant in tenure systems in Latin America and Eastern Europe than in Africa – the impact has been momentous.

This land reform policy framework was modified in the 1990s when land reform was brought back to the agenda, along with 'poverty', under the auspices of the World Bank (Binswanger, Deininger and Feder 1993), now combining neo-classical economic doctrine with a renewed small-farm populism (Bernstein 2002). The new agenda has sought to redistribute land by market means or otherwise provide 'access to land' in some other form (*e.g.*, rental markets) (see Borass 2003). This latest turn of events has wrongly been dignified as the 'third phase' of land reform in Latin America (de Janvry, Sadoulet, and Wolford 2001), for it does not constitute a break with the period that began with Pinochet.

Therefore, it has not only been the 'model' of agrarian reform that has driven the course of events, but class struggles in the closing years of the Cold War and in its wake. Thus, at the same time as Latin America was about to embark on structural adjustment, the Nicaraguan Sandinistas launched the last Cold War revolution in Latin America, with a radical agrarian agenda. This was fought bitterly by CIA-organised counter-revolutionary forces and ultimately undermined. A decade later, after the end of the Cold War, the Zapatistas launched armed struggle in southern Mexico to coincide with NAFTA, demanding land, indigenous autonomy, and national democracy. They received a combination of

military repression and unfulfilled promises by the Mexican state. Then, in Africa, Zimbabwe closed the century with a militant land occupation movement, led by veterans of the national liberation war, to bring about a radical redistribution of land.

### **3. Selected Experiences of Land Movements**

#### *The MST of Brazil*

The Movement of Landless Rural Workers of Brazil (MST) is one of the most important social movements in Latin America. It was developed under the influence of progressive sectors of different Christian currents – the most outstanding being the Catholic Church’s Pastoral of the Land – a few years after the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua and its multiplying effects on the continent’s revolutionary movement. After long years of military dictatorship, Brazil was enjoying new democratic breezes. Manifestations of popular dissatisfaction were on the upsurge, in particular important trade-union struggles on the outskirts of São Paulo. They were the original starting point for the Workers’ Party and later, the Single Workers’ Trade Union.

This situation arose, among other reasons from the incipient crisis in the economic model implemented by the military. As a result of this crisis, the peasants - driven from their lands by droughts and poverty in both the North and West-Central regions, as well as by capitalist modernization of the countryside in the Central and Southern part of the country - had increasingly fewer possibilities of finding work in the cities. On the other hand and for different reasons, emigration to the regions of agricultural colonization had not worked out as a solution. It became more and more evident that the only way out for the landless peasants was to look for different actions

that would allow them to procure land wherever they lived – especially taking into account that there was more than enough uncultivated land in all regions of the country.

The MST core membership comprises of unemployed and semi-employed urban peoples from various regions, including agricultural workers and landless peasants. These form the leaderships of local land occupation committees, which are combined at regional and national levels, through elected representatives.

The MST also has an elaborate secretariat of employees and volunteers, servicing a wide range of departments involved in land, production, social and international relations. Various NGOs also provide support to MST programmes, which include the training of its cadets.

The MST has played a crucial role in the agrarian and land reform processes in Brazil. Firstly through pressure on land acquisition and secondly through its engagement of the government in designing land and agrarian policies, of which included developing support facilities for resettled farmers; credit facilities; mechanisation; and the protection of poor farmers from exploitation by established large scale corporations, such as with uncompetitive lowly priced products. The successes of the MST have also led to the development of various smaller competing rural and urban land occupation movements. However, the other movement, the CONTAG has pressurised for land reform, focussing on market based land reform principles, (see Meszaros; 2000).

*Identification of vacant land, land occupation and farm development* - The basis for the land occupation tactic used by the MST in Brazil is the agrarian reform legislation that was established for the land reform programmes of the 1960s which is similar in form to the legislation established in the state-led land reform programmes of the 1970s. These allow for the expropriation of large landholdings which are deemed as

‘unproductive’ and as having no ‘social use’. In Brazil this law provides a legal basis for a programme of state-led legal expropriation and land redistribution. However, as noted by Thiesenhusen (1995) among others, by the 1990s, little land had actually been so transferred, leading the reorganised peasant movements to take action in diverse political and legal.

The MST in Brazil adopted the direct action tactic of land occupations in the context of a broader class struggle (Stédile 2000). In this context, the MST mobilised its membership to take direct action in the form of large-scale land occupations that typically mobilise from 1000 to 3000 families. Upon occupation of the land, the leadership of the movement on behalf of the encamped settlers immediately enters into negotiations with the government for legal title to the land, under the government’s own legal provisions for expropriation of landed properties that do not have ‘social use’.

This strategy and the associated tactic of land occupations has been so successful as to force the government to revive and step up its own land reform programme, including the implementation of a World Bank programme based on the ‘market mechanism’. This begun in 1995 as a pilot project called *Sao Jose* in the northeast of the country and extended nationwide under the name *Cédula da Terra*. In 1999, the Government of Brazil introduced another program called *Banco da Terra*, literally Land Bank. Some argue that the aim of these ‘market-supported’ land reform programs was to redistribute land not necessarily to the landless, but to ‘the most productive’ user. At the same time, there has been a lot of confusion between these different programs and is difficult to generalize. However, the actual acreage of land transferred via this mechanism under these programs has been relatively modest.

Today, after fifteen years of struggle and a revamped state-led land reform programme, three percent of the population

still own two-thirds of the country’s arable land, much of which continues to lie idle.

The rhythm of MST occupations evolved over fifteen years of struggle, averaging 345 occupations a year and resulting in the settlement of over half a million families (569,733) on about 50,000 hectares of land (Dataluta 2002). In just four months in 1999, at the height of its conflict with the Cardoso government and its alternative ‘official’ land reform programme, over 155 large estates were occupied by 22,000 families organised by the MST and the *Confederação Nacional de Trabalhadores na Agricultura* (CONTAG). By mid-1999, there were over 72,000 families – over 350,000 farm people – ‘encamped’ on land awaiting a response on the part of the government and action in the form of legalising the *de facto* ‘expropriation’ of the occupied land.

However, some families continued to live in the temporary settlements or camps for up to four years and more. It is suggested that by withholding federal funds, and launching a programme to offer loans to small farmers for the purchase of land, the Cardoso regime hoped – in vain – to discourage the land occupiers and to undermine public support for the MST (MST 2000; Fernandes and Mattei, in Moyo and Yeros, 2005a).

In the course of fifteen years of struggle, the MST has mobilised up to half a million families of rural and urban landless workers to occupy land, negotiate its legal expropriation, and put it into production. During its thirty years of existence, INCRA, the institution established by the government under the agrarian reform law has expropriated very few landholdings and settled fewer than seven percent of the landless rural families – some 330,000 out of four million. Thus, most land settlements were initiated by social movement occupations that were later legalised by INCRA (Ibid).

The MST’s autonomy has undergone changes overtime. In the ‘re-democratisation’ period, the MST had close

links with the Workers' Party (PT), but remained independent from it, and also had a strategic alliance with the trade union centre (CUT) (Ibid). However, throughout the 1990s, alliances with the CUT and PT weakened.

Since the electoral victory of PT, the MST has been working close with state structures, although the Lula government has not formulated an agrarian reform agenda that is significantly more substantial than before. The relationship faced contradictions as the MST intensified its land occupation campaign during the Lula era, leading to a new period of rural confrontation; including over control of the police and of the hired militias of the landowners – which are both fundamentally 'state' functions.

The Brazilian state has repressed the social movements on numerous occasions, in different historical contexts, to maintain the existing regime of property and the means of production. The judiciary played a constricting role in this regard, for example, in the trial and imprisonment of MST activists, while the violence of landowners, involving murder or massacre, has been met with legal impunity. The powerful links between the large proprietors and the judiciary is demonstrated by the fact that between 1985 and 1999 of the 1,158 rural activists assassinated in land disputes, only 56 gunmen were brought to trial and only 10 were convicted (MST, 2002). In 2003, repression of the MST when it refuses to toe the government line (to have patience and support the government's land reform programme) has continued under the PT (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*) government. What is more, the government has even sent in the military police to surround the MST headquarters and intimidate the leadership.

However, the MST has secured significant support and alliance (ideologically and materially) from numerous left oriented NGOs of a middle class leadership. Moreover, it has secured the support of international farmers' movements and the admiration of land movements in southern

Africa (South Africa and Zimbabwe). This has buttressed its strength and legitimacy globally.

### *The War Veterans, Land Occupations and the State*

Access to adequate land and natural resources contained therein while complemented by migration and remittances and off-farm activity and incomes is increasingly dominated by exchange incomes derived from agricultural production activities among most peasant households in Zimbabwe. Diminishing access to land in terms of land alienation, demographic pressures and failure of the technological base to improve productivity of the land and natural resources elicit peasant strategies to expand their access to new land and natural resources in competition with coterminous peasant communities, emerging agrarian capitalists and migrants. Women are the least resourced in these struggles.

Increasingly, contemporary structures of political and economic power relations in Zimbabwe significantly influenced by struggles over land concentration and popular efforts to restore or gain land rights. The *increased* the demand for land and its natural resources, is also a consequence of the generalized decline in sources of income (farm, off-farm, and non-farm). The context is characterized by 'the enforced extension of peasant survival strategies under pressure of impoverishment' (Raikes 2000: 68) – to such activities as petty-trading, craft-making, and gold-panning – alongside intensified struggle to access land illegally ('squatting') in both rural and urban areas, as well as an intensified political struggle to reclaim land. The most important case of re-peasantisation in Africa under neoliberalism has been that of Zimbabwe at the millennium (see Moyo and Yeros 2005b).

The politics over land reform in countries such as Kenya, Namibia and South Africa suggest the resurgence of liberation style politics, based on anti-colonial, anti-



imperialist and anti-minority dominance ideologies, in societies polarised on racial, ethno-regional and ideological lines. Emerging popular but sporadic and scattered land occupations for instance conjure the idea of seizing local power and local autonomy, although notions of land 'seizures' or 'grabs' have however, replaced the immediate post-colonial discourses of 'land nationalisation'. Land occupations have not been as widely pursued in most of these countries, although sporadic occupations have been witnessed.

The land occupation movements of Zimbabwe, in rural and urban areas, before and after the country's independence, has represent an unofficial or underground social pressure used to force land redistribution onto the policy agenda (Moyo 2001). The 2000-2001 occupations in Zimbabwe, mark the climax of a longer, less public, and dispersed struggle over land in that country, which intensified under adverse economic conditions that were exacerbated by the onset of liberal economic and political reform (Ibid). The dynamics of land reform in this and other contexts are complex and variegated, and can best be understood in political terms—that is, in terms of a protracted struggle of peasant, poor urban workers and other rural groups for access to land, and in terms of the reaction of the dominant landholding class to this struggle, as well as the responses of the state. Indeed one reaction of the state has been to occasionally coopt the occupation movements, and by 2000 to systematically support and control the movement.

The war veterans of the liberation struggle in the 1960 and 1970's, originate from its peasant base guerrilla bases and linkages in rural Zimbabwe, and as the integral military wing of Zanu PF and Zapu. After being demobilised during the 1980's, the war veterans re-organised themselves under an association with NGO registration (Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans Association) in the mid-1980s, and consolidated themselves independently by

1991. During 1995 and 1997, the war veterans staged a direct confrontation with Zanu PF over disability and pension allowances, demanding immediate payments, as well as demanding their promised 20% land quota and provoking this to be delivered through land expropriations. Noticing the failure of the 1997 efforts to expropriate 1,471 farms, they mobilised 30 land occupations throughout Zimbabwe in 1998, in alliance with traditional leaders and, weak and scattered local land occupation movements which had evolved since 1980. They also lobbied for the constitutional expropriation of land without compensation.

The rejection of the draft constitution that the government of Zimbabwe embarked upon in 2000 triggered renewed land occupations in Zimbabwe led by war veterans, and later supported by the government. Before the draft constitution was put to a referendum, the government introduced a number of changes to it, including clauses that reinforced the right to compulsory acquisition, and qualified the existing market criteria for compensation of the land, permitting it to pay only for any improvements to it. The National Constitutional Assembly formed to push for constitutional reform, the MDC, and the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU), campaigned heavily against the draft constitution, contributing to its defeat in the referendum.

The Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWA) then mobilised various peasant groups, traditional leaders, spirit mediums, former war collaborators and other middle class nationalists to join them in a wider campaign of land occupations, first as a way of demonstrating the need for land, and then as actual land seizures, and called for government to appropriate such land. When leaders of the war veterans association and the ruling party realised by the end of March 2000 that white farmers were actively campaigning for the MDC, and encouraging farm workers to do the same,

the farm occupations became more extensive and often violent, and were intertwined with the political campaign for the June 2000 parliamentary elections.

*The Characteristics: Social Base and Organization* - A perceived 'uncivil' character of the war veterans, whose influence derives from their military or guerrilla formation tends to overshadow their civil associational basis of organisational cohesion. Formed in April 1989 as a registered welfare organisation (as an NGO), the ZNLWVA aimed to improve the lives of 55,000 war veterans, economically and socially. ZNLWVA however directly represents a wider population of about 300,000 people, who include war collaborators and their families. These are dispersed geographically across the country and conduct their affairs through national, provincial and district level structures. But during the land occupations they led and represented thousands of landless peoples and others who joined their campaign.

Significantly the organisation represents war veterans of varied objective class origins and status (peasant based, working and middle classes, and elites) some employed and others not. Close to 20% of the core war veterans are employed in key positions in the state, and private sectors and security apparatus. Many of them are based in rural areas and others in urban areas. Some are senior veterans who have longer war veteran service than others, and so forth. Their social and class basis is varied, while their socio-economic structures and communities are also diverse. Their majority are however part of the rural and urban poor, as opposed to their more visible elite, who hold leadership positions in government and the military.

The latter tend to be identified mainly with the state (government and security) as functionaries and political leaders, although some are private employers and business people. Since independence, their 'demobilisation' and 'absorption' into societal economic and political structures

has been highly differentiated, yielding a complex hierarchy and power base. Their rural base, developed during the guerrilla war era and from their mainly rural origins and current residence, provided them with extensive links to the peasantry and other rural structures, during the land occupations. For this reason that war veterans operated from within and outside the state- some scholars (Hammer and Raftopolos 2003; Cousin, 2000) have tended to emphasize the importance of the state and the political survival of Zanu PF as shaping the land occupations of 2000.

However since independence, the war veterans have consistently led arguments that redistribution of land which was the core aim of the liberation war was overdue (Sadomba, 2005). From 1997, the ZNLWVA's focused on land redistribution through the occupation of commercial farms in 1998 and then in 2000, the government's "fast-track" approach to land reform. The reform was essentially led by war veterans, in a cause which Zanu PF and the state co-opted and gave direction, long after the elections of 2000 and 2002 had transpired. Therefore this is one important case, where a 'loosely organised' rural movement obtained extensive redistributive land reform, albeit with some inequalities, directly through the ruling party and the state. This appeared to be the only viable alternative to the closures of a civil society which was disengaged from land reform.

During the 1998 land occupations, which were recorded in 30 sites, Zimbabwe for the first time since independence experienced the emergence of a national land movement. Peasants on their own had only managed scattered, sporadic and local land occupations (Moyo, 2001; Alexander, 2006; Sadomba, 2005). Technically, as an NGO, ZNLWVA was the first CSO to truly build peasant capacity to demand land, while most NGO's had focused on micro-level welfarist and environmentalist land use interventions since 1980. Initially in 1998 war veterans joined the peasant occupation movements led by spirit mediums and

traditional leaders, with the support of their urban based offspring, notably in Svosve and Hwedza (Sadomba, 2005). War veterans independently of Zanu PF then mobilised similar peasant dominated land occupations across the country. This was followed in 2000, by the occupation of 1,000 properties in 2000, and then further Zanu PF constitutional reform, which now included a clause to expropriate with payment only for improvements. The nationwide occupations were led by war veterans initially and then copied by other actors, and then these supported by Zanu PF and the state. This process was later joined from 2001 by urban working class and elite occupiers, building a cross-class 'land movement' (Moyo, 2001).

This development pitted the MDC-ZCTU-NGO alliance against the Zanu PF—war veterans—nationalists alliance, in a realignment which significantly reshaped Zimbabwe's political and economic environment, especially by forcing change within government and Zanu PF and by radicalising its leadership towards a land expropriation programme. These at times violent occupations of commercial farms account for the recent attention directed towards war veterans, although the tactic of land occupation has been part of their arsenal, albeit in sporadic and isolated incidences, since the 1980s (Moyo, 2001; Sadomba, 2005; Tshuma, 1997).

Before these 'high profile' occupations however, the war veterans were fast becoming an influential political actor. Their formal organisation and power increased when they took a less entryist tactic and autonomous protest strategy during 1992-1999, such that in 1997 their high profile protest actions (street demonstrations, lock up of Zanu PF leaders, courtroom disruption, march on the State House, etc) resulted in unbudgeted monetary compensations for their service in the liberation war being paid to them, and their demand for land being met by the listing in 1997 of 1,471 farms for expropriation.

*Their relations with social actors* - Debates tend to conflate the ZNLWVA membership, which is organically born from Zanu PF membership, with Zanu PF organs and strategies as a party (see Moore, 2005 and Kriger, 2003), neglecting the evidence of the changing social and political relations of the two organisations, and the nuanced shifts in the alliance. A complex evolution of autonomy (full and/or partial) and cooptation or control of the ZNLWVA by Zanu PF and the state at its apex levels (national and provincial branches) is evident. This has entailed a multiplicity of locally independent actions, mostly by the middle class and poor war veterans, challenging the local and central state and Zanu PF structures. This pressure later initiated the key processes such as land expropriation in response to the occupations, while the former continued to expose land and agrarian corruption and to demand policies to enable their farming (e.g. agrarian equipment procurement and subsidies).

This organisational characteristic is combined with general loyalty towards Zanu PF, and their tendency to be subordinated by Zanu PF and the state shortly after 'rebellious' (Moyo, 2001; Sadomba, 2005). Opportunistic corrupt and pugilistic elements also exist amongst them, as in most segments of society, given their military experience. Some of these war veterans have undermined the fairness and consistency of the land reform. Moreover, their complex social linkages especially in rural structures of the peasants and urban working class and elite sections, suggests that their formation, combines a varied organisational and strategic framework of advocacy and alliance building.

The militant movement that broke with civil society, acted directly through the state, achieved radical land reform, but failed to sustain itself and defend its interests systematically (Moyo and Yeros, 2005b). The post-colonial period of Zimbabwe has been characterised by closure to rural demands both at the level of the state and

oppositional politics. It has also been characterised by unstructured and low-profile land occupations, which have expanded under structural adjustment. The trade union movement (ZCTU) was the main source of hope for a short period in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as it took a militant stance against neoliberalism and proclaimed the unification of peasant-workers as an organizational task.

However, by mid-decade the ZCTU had been co-opted into the civil domain by a combination of neoliberal economic compromise, state repression, and the patronage of international trade unionism. By decade's end, trade unions were operating within the internationally respectable framework of 'good governance', which in turn was impervious to the increasingly militant rural demands. It was at this time that the National Liberation War Veterans Association began to agitate within the framework of the ruling party to effect a re-radicalisation of nationalism and land reform. However, the movement has significantly been streamlined by the ruling party, as the indigenous bourgeoisie has been allowed to gain a sizeable foothold on the land, and the rural poor are now facing a new challenge without a tangible organisational structure of their own.

Yet the war veterans also attempted from late 2000 to organise urban land occupations, which the ruling party did not formally condone, but cajoled into a formal cooperative housing project. But by 2005, the state destroyed these urban structures, including those based on land occupations by war veterans, as part of the ruling party's goal to weakening the leadership of the war veterans, and co-opt its causes.

### *Landless People Movement of South Africa*

The Landless People's Movement (LPM) was formed in 2001 within a context of negative effects of fiscal policies on the poor and marginalisation of the majority following the adoption of the neo-liberal

Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macroeconomic strategy in 1996 (Eveleth and Mngxitama, 2003; Greenberg, 2004). In 1994 the ANC had promised to distribute 30% of agricultural land to the majority poor within 5 years of democracy. However, ten years later the government only managed to redistribute about 3 per cent of the white lands. The whites who constituted 5% of the population continued to hold about 85% of land while about 12 million Africans inhabited the remainder 17.1 million hectares of land and no more than 15 per cent of this land was potentially arable (Moyo 2005; Wildschut and Hulbert, 1998). Thus whites own six times more land in terms of the quantity of land available and its quality (Wildschut and Hulbert, 1998). The majority of the black population remained poor and tenure insecure.

Four factors can thus be isolated regarding the emergence of the LPM, with the failure of the post-apartheid land reform programme being the most obvious. The other are (Mngxitama, 2002 cited by Eveleth and Mngxitama, 2003): the ANC led government's abandonment of its social democratic project in favour of neo-liberal policies, marked notably by the 1996 adoption of the growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy; the "Zimbabwe factor" also played an important role, giving both example and confidence to land hungry South Africans, primarily by proving that it is possible for property to be alienated from the settler colonialists; the rise of the anti-globalisation movement and the resulting links made, particularly with Brazil' Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST), have inspired South African land less people and NGO activist working with them. Not only has it become possible to envisage a movement for land reform based on landless people's participation in and ownership of their struggle, but the politics of anti-globalisation demands the active involvement of the landless, and not just the NGOs and other activists claiming on their behalf (Mngxitama, 2002 cited Eveleth and Mngxitama, 2003; Greenberg, 2004)

However it is critical to note that the LPM was nurtured by elements within the network of land NGOs called the National Land Committee (NLC), whose history dates back to the 1980s, as well as left intellectuals associated with this and other civil society organisations.

Since the LPM was connected to the NLC the membership and organisation base of the NLC are critical to understanding the social base and organisation of LPM. The NLC however provides an example of the contradictions inherent in civil society institutions, given the neo-liberal terrain that has governed civil society. On the one hand, the NGO network was instrumental in the formation of the LPM (Eveleth and Mngxitama, 2003; Greenberg, 2004). But once the LPM began to transcend the NLC and begun to move outside its control to pose a potentially greater challenge to the state (even if this was merely nascent) the NLC reasserted its control over the movement, and defended the integrity of the state (Ibid). This reassertion of control over the movement of the landless by the NLC is said to have revealed the strength of post-apartheid hegemony on the terrain of civil society (Ibid).

Some LPM members question the leadership role played by a few left leaning NGO groups, which supported the formation of the Landless People's Movement (LPM), although the contradictions of white middle class intellectual leadership of the black people's landless structure, given also the trans-class and nationalist nature of the interests in land which have become evident in the slow maturation of a nation-wide radical land reform advocacy agenda (Moyo, 2005; Mngxitama, 2004).

The LPM demand quick and wide scale redistribution of land to the landless, and secure tenure for all. It sees a failure in government's willing seller, willing buyer' model of land reform, and calls its review and its replacement with a new and more

pro-active process, on the market. The LPM also calls for an end to evictions on farms (labour tenants and farm dwellers), in informal and other settlements, while threatening land occupations as a tactic of redistributing land through the self activity of the landless.

The LPM used various tactics and campaigns to highlight its demands for a radical redistribution of land and secure tenure. Most notable of these is the movement's support for Zimbabwe's land expropriation programme and its own land occupations campaign. Prior to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002, the LPM requested Mugabe to come and speak to its member in South Africa. Perhaps the LPM support to ZANU PF's land expropriation programme had tactical value, since the Zimbabwean land expropriation programme had an element of dissidence to neo-liberalism and its market driven economic reforms, and an implicit recognition of the propaganda role afforded by aligning with this, added weight to its own threats to occupy land, if South African government did not carry out land redistribution (Greenberg, 2004; Eveleth and Mngxitama, 2003).

The LPM also targeted un- or underused land and abandoned farms, indicating its willingness, initially to accommodate landowners and commercial agriculture. But it has also directly called for expropriation or occupation of farms owned by abusive farmers, questioning the role of 'super-exploited' farm labour, in constructing commercial agriculture and, making demands for reparations, which transcend the official land reform and human rights agendas (Greenberg, 2004).

Specifically, the success of the LPM was its mobilisation of landless, during the United Nations World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in 2001, which placed movement into public light, leading to its recognition as a national stakeholder in the land debate, which could not be ignored by government (Greenberg, 2004). The LPM posed little numeric threat to the state in its

mobilisations, especially around the elections of April 2004 as it mobilised only 1500 protesters in a march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria in November 2003. Moreover only a few small and unsuccessful attempts to occupy land or government offices in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng were attempted.

The LPM focused on their ability to mobilize many people in the streets to force the government to address the various problems faced by labour tenants, farm dwellers, informal settlers etc. For example, in 2002 during the UN's World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the various NGOs mobilized resources again, to bring the constituent parts of the LPM together for the second Landless People's Assembly (Ibid). These representatives discussed issues and organized a march of 25,000 people, under the banner of the Social Movements Indaba (SMI) against the neo-liberalism of sustainable development (Ibid).

This mobilization of radical expression of land reform brought to a head simmering tensions between different political trajectories in the NGOs and in the LPM, especially the attitude of the movement towards government (Ibid). Some NGOs and a portion of the movement sought a continuation of a relationship of critical engagement. This has meant the pursuit of claims for land restitution and redistribution within the government's official land reform framework, rather than the use of direct action (e.g. land occupations; demonstrations etc). Critical engagement meant demanding the removal of perceived obstacles by government for the implementation of the land reform programme, because many believed that a constitutional basis for extensive redistribution existed and since government had the capacity to carry out the substantial transfer of land to the landless but had chosen not to, given its political and economic path (Ibid). Pressure from below was seen as critical to shift the government from its political and economic trajectory.

*Their relations with social actors* - The LPM, by receiving significant funds from donors in the UK and Belgium, that were managed by the NLC on behalf of the movement, was tied into complex local and international NGO alliances. Funds were also provided for a number of campaigns, including the Take Back the Land Campaign and the No Land, No Vote Campaign.

The LPM, alongside other land NGO's whose work it gave 'radical' expression, influenced the thinking on land reform in South Africa. The state responded with a mixture of reform and repression, such that elements of the hegemonic bloc have engaged in more vocal debates on land redistribution (Greenberg, 2004). Grassroots constituencies and the national articulation of demand for land by the LPM, and other land networks placed land redistribution on the national agenda.

For instance, business leaders, media and political parties have called for speedier land reform programme, while the largest national farmers union (Agri-SA) works closely with government to design a plan for commercial agriculture that incorporates land reform as a component (NDA 2001). A survey (Markinor in 2004) found that 75% of white farmers canvassed felt land reform was inevitable, while 54% were willing to sell their land to advance the process (Ibid). These ideological movements suggest a confrontation linkage to the growing pressures for land reform, particularly for the landless, as influenced by the LPM.

The state's coercive tactics with the LPM suggested that the latter has a perceived power base, as the LPM's No Land, No Vote campaign in 2004 national elections revealed (Ibid). Mobilising the constituencies historically marginalised within nationalist discourse, as threatened by the LPM could challenge the ANC's electoral base and its construct of 'the nation', thus opening up new areas for political contestation (Ibid). However, the LPM's various contradictory alliances and dependences, as well as the countervailing influences of the state, led to its collapse.

The land movement in South Africa is now relatively weak, in the face of an obviously slow and ineffective land redistribution process.

### *Philippines Case: the 'bimbingka strategy'<sup>2</sup>*

Peasant based revolutions in the Philippines were common because of widespread rural poverty and unequal landownership. But radical peasant mobilizations and collective action in some regions of the country emerged in the 1980s, with the support of the entire National Democratic (ND) movement, leading to a revival of the land question in Philippine politics (Ibid). By the time the Aquino government came to power, land reform had become one of the more pressing issues that demanded immediate state action. The Aquino administration was compelled to pursue land reform immediately, to restore and maintain political stability in the countryside, after the EDSA uprising. With the national democratic movement gaining ground both in the cities and in the countryside, land reform was perceived not only as an instrument that could unleash the productive capacities of the countryside (Hayami *et al.* 1990), but also as a socio-political measure that could strengthen the Aquino administration's legitimacy among the landless rural poor. Apart from the fact that land reform constituted an important aspect of Aquino's presidential campaign in 1986, it was also perceived as an extremely important reform measure for any government in quelling the rural insurgency.

In the Philippines, direct action on land was combined with co-opting reformist elements within the state – the dual '*bimbingka strategy*' to propel a substantial land redistribution 1990s (Borras 1998, Feranil, 2005). Thus the objective of state power in

the ruling political party was pursued in alliance with grassroots organizational power, around the land question.

The KMP pressed for agrarian reform working largely outside the system, some of them seized opportunities for land reform in CARP official programme, and engaged the state in its implementation. Here, the reform initiatives of government, non-government organizations (NGOs), and people's organizations (POs) were mobilised to converge toward a common direction. This convergence initiatives among different reform-oriented groups was facilitated by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), under the administration of Ernesto Garilao, to harness the wider participation of civil society organizations in CARP implementation (Ibid). These initiatives later translated into a policy whereby Tripartite Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (TriPARRD) projects were implemented in selected parts of the country. The impact created by TriPARRD, especially in moving contentious private landholdings and in propelling autonomous mobilizations from below, raised doubts among civil society organizations, although the strategy served the purpose of harnessing civil society participation in the state's reform programmes and in enlarging the political space available for subaltern groups in the Philippine countryside.

From the early 1990s, autonomous peasant organizations, previously associated with the CPP-led Left, used a variety of tactics to keep the pressure on CARP implementation, including mass demonstrations, pickets, and land occupations (Ibid). These actions succeeded because the new political context characterised by the existence of reform-oriented individuals strategically located within the state bureaucracy exerted pressure on the state. This created parallel pressures from state reformists and by peasants from below, within a correlation of forces (later termed the *bimbingka strategy*) whereby the interaction of initiatives 'from below' and 'from above' tilted the balance of

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<sup>2</sup> This section is mostly summarized from Feranil, 2005 in Moyo and Yeros, 2005). Bimbingka Strategy is a term coined by Borras' (2001; Development and Change)

forces in favour of agrarian reform (Borras 1998).

Reform initiatives from above were a crucial factor in the CARP implementation process, since these perceived reform openings in the DAR changed the strategic complexion of NGOs and Pos, and opened the way for engagement with the state on land reform. In the process, formal and informal alliances between civil society organizations and reformists at the DAR created a national momentum which, in turn, put pressure on local-level DAR officials to respond more favourably toward land reform, against the local-level obstacles (Ibid)

Despite reformist pressure from above, however, local autonomous peasant organizations continued to face resistance from landowners during CARP implementation. Thus local autonomous organizations went beyond the local confines of their mobilizations and build national level federations and organizations that constructed broad alliances among pro-reform actors across state and civil society. The *Pambansang Ugnayan ng mga Nagsasariling Organisasyon sa Kanayunan* (UNORKA or the National Coordination of Autonomous Rural Organizations), was one among other initiatives of the landless to build national organizations.

Land occupations have been seen as symptomatic of the Philippine crisis (Putzel and Cunnington 1989), since genuine and redistributive agrarian reform, would require land occupations. The Aquino government continued to be dominated by the landowning class (Borras 1998), whose interests prevailed in state-legislated land reform program. Thus political transition in 1987 did not address the land question nor restructure Philippine society, as Aquino remained captive to these interests. Land occupations became necessary political tactics, expressing the demands of landless peasants for land reform with or without the state's intervention (Ibid).

Simultaneous with campaigns for a genuine agrarian reform, popular initiatives and massive land takeovers on the ground were launched by local KMP chapters (sometimes backed by the NPA) in different parts of the country (Kerkvliet 1993). KMP members occupied idle public lands and took over those that were either abandoned by Marcos' cronies or foreclosed by banks in various parts of the country. In Negros Occidental, in the Western part of the island of Visayas, the efforts of KMP to intensify land occupations reached approximately 75,000 hectares of agricultural lands and benefited some 50,000 landless households. The breath and scale of these occupations far surpassed previous occupations by the National Federation of Sugar Workers, who had attempted to take over lands left idle and abandoned by the sugar planters at the height of the crisis in the sugar industry in the mid-1980s.

Land occupations were however stalled by the Aquino government, through its *Total War* policy against the CPP-NPA and its continuing armed struggle. The resurgence of authoritarian tendencies in the Aquino government led landowners to regain idle and abandoned lands occupied by landless peasants of KMP. Borras (1998) points out that while land takeovers in the second half of the 1980s contributed in keeping land reform on the national agenda, it failed as an alternative land reform programme implemented outside the state.

The radical rural movements of the 1980s, which had close links to the Communist Party and its armed wing, were defeated and dispersed by the 'total war' campaign of the Aquino government. The succeeding period of the 1990s saw the reconfiguration of rural movements, the renunciation of armed struggle, and the pursuit of alliance-building within the constitutional framework, although on its 'edges'. The difference here has been the qualified success of the '*bibingka* strategy', a dual approach of implanting reformist elements within the state while persisting with land occupations and campaigns. The *bibingka* strategy



obtained substantial land reform in the 1990s. When the correlation of forces later changed, reformers were displaced, and the *bibingka* strategy became obsolete. In turn, rural movements have been searching for a new strategy, while this is increasingly inclining to the use of ‘human rights’ language, rather than that of social transformation (Ibid).

## Key Issues on Rural Land Movements and Reform

A few elements and issues define rural movements which have impacted on land reform in the above and other cases, as has been articulated elsewhere (see also Moyo and Yeros, 2005a). Current policy approaches seeking inclusive or “participatory” land reforms, and the nature of “stakeholders” analyses that this is based upon, need to take note the key issues.

The social base of the rural movements is relatively similar throughout the periphery and comprises of semi-proletarians and unemployed rural and urban proletarians, both men and women, straddling the rural-urban divide. Contemporary rural movements worldwide are becoming an organising centre for the marginalised masses of rural poor.

The lack of recognition of the semi-proletarianised specificity of peripheral capitalism, has tended either to ‘urbanise’ social protest in the familiar way and efface the agrarian question (Bond 2002c), or to ‘ruralise’ protest, by lumping semi-proletarians into a ‘farmer’ category that applies universally, to France and the USA, to Zimbabwe, the Philippines, and Brazil. Economic and political realities suggests that organizational priority is being given by the movements to the unification of peasant-workers across the rural-urban divide, in order to demand agrarian reforms, which not only seek to redistribute

land, but which also seek but articulated development.

The leadership of rural movements tends to be grounded within the organisations’, mainly from among the movements members, which have proclaimed autonomy from political parties and their associated intellectuals. The rural movements have cultivated durable local and wider national structures on their own, setting in motion an independent process of conscientisation.

By contrast, in Zimbabwe, where mobilisation occurred largely within the ruling party, leadership has been provided by the National Liberation War Veterans Association, its local branches, and its cadres within the state; while many war vets themselves have been among the rural poor. The failure to generalize this process beyond land access, to create durable, democratic structures, with systematic political education, has been a weakness in this case.

However, even among politically autonomous movements, middle class intellectuals can also occupy the top positions, as the case of the MST demonstrate. Moreover, these features are likely to be unstable and generally under threat, as movements evolve, interact with states and international actors and produce a ‘hierarchy’ of intellectuals. Maintaining a commitment to the spirit of independent leadership is an ongoing challenge.

The tactics of many rural land movements are increasingly imbued various forms of direct action on the land, with land occupations being one significant development. It is partly associated with the rift of alliances with the state and political parties. But as the case of Zimbabwe again shows, both of the unstructured, low-profile, may be sporadically organized in tacit and/or direct consent with the state or some ruling party officials. The organised rural movements are discussed have consciously placed land occupation at the centre of their arsenal of political tactics, and more specifically, through occupations they have confronted market-based land

reforms head on, either compelling them to work more effectively or displacing them entirely. The organised use of land occupations in Brazil, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, India, and Zimbabwe, among other countries has had a significant effect on land reforms in general.

There are also some important exceptions to the narrow use of land occupations, among the rural movements that opted for armed struggle, such as the Zapatistas in Mexico (Bartra and Otero, 2005) and the FARC in Colombia (Ampuero and Brittain, 2005).

The strategy of rural movements to maintain independence from political parties and the state, or the issue of 'autonomy' in its more holistic sense, has not been conceptualised adequately, nor is the record clear. For breaking with the state has meant that rural movements have had to enter the realm of NGOs, trade unions, and churches where no less intense and systematic forces of cooptation operate.

By contrast, the movement that has eschewed civil society and pursued direct action through the ruling party and the state is that of Zimbabwe. Even there, divergent views obtain over whether the state led the occupation for its electoral survival or whether it co-opted the movement for similar reasons. Meanwhile the war-veterans-led movement in Zimbabwe had broken with civil society and operated within the vacillating bourgeois/petty-bourgeois parameters of Zimbabwe's nationalist movement. Although nationalism has always contained mobilisational and emancipatory potential and nurtured the possibility of a national democratic revolution, it has not, in itself, sufficed for the longer-term interests of the working class.

The literature also reveals other positive signs on the ideological basis and objectives of rural movements (see Moyo and Yeros, 2005a), although our cases here did not delve into these. In Latin America are the new ecological sensitivity and recognition of patriarchy as a fundamental problem

(Petras 1997, Deere and León 2001). Gender sensitivity is perhaps most evident in Brazil (Deere 2003) and Mexico (Stephen 1996), where rural movements in the late 1990s have adopted a conscious politics of gender equity. This has had wider effects in terms of mobilisation and internal democratisation, as well as in terms of lobbying effectively against the state for the inclusion of gender-specific legislation in the agrarian reform process. In Zimbabwe, by contrast, the land occupation movement has fallen far short of a gender sensitive politics, despite the fact that women have participated in the occupations in large numbers. In this case, the strong patriarchal currents of the nationalist movement in alliance with traditional leaders remain dominant.

## Conclusions

The fundamental issue of concern for policy makers in this forum therefore is: whether the strategies of emerging African social movements which demand land reform have the potential to substantially influence redistributive land reform or not? This raises the further question of whether land reform policies and strategies, to be effective, should not seek to balance the political, social and economic rationale and objectives of land reforms, in relation to the nature of organised demands within southern Africa. Furthermore, the classical basis of land as an element of the agrarian question, still relevant or should our focus remain narrowly placed on particular notions of poverty eradication.

A more structural, political-economic framework of analysis, rather than an eclectic analysis, of the evolution of social movements around the land question in southern Africa, is required to inform policy how to manage state-society interactions on land reform. A clear understanding of the social and class origins, strategies and impacts of scattered rural movements in Africa (Rahmato, 1991; Veltmeyer, 1997; Moyo, 2005) is essential to the shaping of

policy and its implementation in a participatory way. Various studies on whether African struggles for land reflect a systematic mobilisation of incipient social movements (see Moyo and Yeros, 2005a), or whether they merely exhibit defensive and reactive tactics of the “politics of everyday life” (see Scott, 1985) are fortunately emerging in the literature. New perspectives on ‘beneficiary led’ land reform processes in relation to state responses need to be developed from the wider empirical experience.

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