Não vamos esquecer (We will not forget)

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Figure 1. “Assassinated for the cause of peace, science and liberty”: memorial stone to Aquino de Bragança and Ruth First, at the Centro de Estudos Africanos, Maputo, Mozambique. (Courtesy of Amélia Souto)

Figure 2. Ruth pensive.
EDITORIAL

Não vamos esquecer (We will not forget)

The assassination of Ruth First by letter bomb in Mozambique in 1982, through the agency of the South African apartheid state, sent shock waves of horror through the Left in both Africa and Europe. Ruth had been a political worker since her early years, a communist active in the struggles to overthrow apartheid and capitalism in South Africa, imprisoned by the regime and forced into exile. She was particularly important to the Review of African Political Economy (ROAPE) as she had been one of the founder members of the journal back in 1973, during her exile from her homeland. Fearless, passionate and always politically engaged, she took up a post on an interim basis in 1977 at the Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo during its heady post-independence days under FRELIMO (the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique). There she set about strengthening the Centre for African Studies/Centro de Estudos Africanos (CEA), creating a space for critical and radical research which was always politically grounded and not always fully in tune with FRELIMO policies. In 1982, ROAPE produced a sorrowful obituary for the premature death of this brave and innovative activist for socialism, followed by a commemorative issue (Vol. 9, Issue 25). In 2012, the thirtieth anniversary of her tragic death was commemorated through the establishment of a project to digitise Ruth’s papers at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies (www.ruthfirstpapers.org.uk). A symposium was held in London, bringing together many of those who worked closely with her in the final days. This Special Issue is mainly based on papers from that symposium. It includes personal memories, photographs and archival material, appreciation of her work and evaluation of its character and outcomes from today’s perspectives.

In this editorial, we begin by looking at Ruth’s role in the formation of ROAPE and move on to assess her contribution to critical research and leadership, particularly in Mozambique. But Ruth had also worked as an investigative journalist in South Africa, and later as an academic at Manchester and Durham before she moved to Maputo. Her intellectual reach and commentary extended to the whole of Africa, raising searching questions about the direction of political and economic development. Several of the contributions to this Issue explore that wider context.

Ruth First and ROAPE

Ruth was very active in setting up the Review. She was one of the Editorial Working Group from the first issue in August–November 1974, until the eleventh, and after that an Overseas Editor from Maputo. The Review was initiated at a meeting in Rottingdean, Sussex, on 18 July 1972 of Lionel Cliffe, Peter Lawrence, and Katherine Lévine (later Salahi). It ‘originated with a group ... who had been stimulated by the experience of working in Tanzania to confront issues that orthodox western scholarship seldom raised’ (Minutes 7.8.1973). They immediately broadened their membership by recruiting Ruth and Chris Allen to join them. The planned Journal of Development and Underdevelopment intended to respond to ‘a need ... for a cold hard look at the internal structures and the external forces ... for a more thorough understanding of the historical dynamics and the
contemporary nature of African domination by imperialism and the prospects for total lib-
eration’ (Minutes 4/5.11.1972 and 6.3.1973). By 7 August 1973, the journal had decided to
adopt and publicise its present name, the *Review of African Political Economy* (Minutes

Ruth attended the third meeting on 4/5 November 1972 and a meeting on 6 March 1973,
which laid out planning for financing, typesetting, format, and prospective themes, authors
and contributions. Amidst her many commitments, and despite a weekly ‘shuttle’ after she
was appointed as a Lecturer in Sociology in Durham in October 1973, Ruth attended
ROAPE meetings consistently until she went to Maputo on a long-term basis in 1979.

The editors worked collectively and in effect made it up as they went along. Editorial
policies were thrashed out at ‘prolonged’ and ‘sporadic meetings’, discussing prospective
issues and possible articles, as well as problems of layout, style sheets, and reviewing pro-
cedures (Minutes 15.9.1974). Ruth was the only editor who had direct experience of getting
a regular publication out. In South Africa, she had edited a succession of newspapers
(*Guardian, New Age*) and written many of the articles. At the same time, she had edited
*Fighting Talk*, the political and literary magazine of the Springbok Legion. Despite her
experience, she was loyal to ROAPE, however much the other editors’ procedures some-
times frustrated her. In early 1974, the year when the first issue of ROAPE appeared, she
‘emphasized the need for continual financial flow if [ROAPE was] not to fold after
second or 3rd issue’. More pointedly, in a ROAPE editorial meeting, ‘Ruth expressed
anxiety over our lackadaisical approach, threatening the viability of the journal’ – a
view which gained ‘General agreement!’ (Minutes 5.1.1974). Three years later, from
Maputo, she noted that the ‘last Minutes sound pretty disastrous. If our business affairs
are in such a state after handling by an organized office – Onyx [Press] – how will they
improve back in our amateur hands?’ (Letter, Ruth First [RF] to Gavin Williams [GW],
8.7.1977).

Ruth always looked for ways of reconciling analytic differences – of race and nation-
ality/ class; workers/ peasants; national/ international. She wanted to do so in real, political
contexts rather than through abstract formulations. An early priority for the *Review* was the
question of class. Ruth co-wrote the (unsigned) editorial for Issue 3 (First 1975) on ‘Classes
in Africa’, proclaiming that: ‘Governments and politicians, bureaucrats and academics . . .
have] officially declared African societies to be classless,’ thereby allowing African
regimes to claim to represent all the people and to suppress those who brought this into
question. Conventional social scientists emasculated the concept of class and ‘put the
study of Marxist method beyond bounds’. On the other hand, ‘All too often, Marxist ana-
lyses . . . mechanically transposed to African societies schema of the class relations charac-
teristic of western capitalism.’ It was therefore ‘essential to consider social classes in a
specific society or social formation at a distinct juncture in time’ (First 1975: 1–2).

The articles in Issue 3 produced politically significant class analyses of specific situations
by means of careful empirical research. The most significant, perhaps, were two incisive
critiques of ‘Ujamaa and rural socialism’ by Phil Raikes (1975), and ‘Peasants and bureau-
crats’ (in Tanzania) by Andrew Coulson (1975). The implementation of socialist policies
in Tanzania had taken a coercive turn in the early seventies. As the editorial pointed out,
‘Ujamaa policy is in danger of building up rural opposition . . . bureaucratic enforcement
will act as a barrier to the release of people’s productive abilities . . . ’ These lessons would
be relevant, if not willingly heeded, by socialist governments (e.g. FRELIMO in Mozambi-
que) or political dictatorships (e.g. the Rwanda Patriotic Front in Rwanda).

Ruth was a communist, but she was never unquestioning and did not always toe the
party line. For example, she made a break with the South African Communist Party
(SACP) line on Eritrea, based on a visit there, claiming it as a genuinely national liberation movement, whereas the SACP denounced Eritrea as secessionist (Robin Cohen, personal communication 1 August 2013). In her role as a member of ROAPE’s editorial team she endorsed the view that the journal should be based on collective work, and take a liberatory and anti-imperialist stance. It should be accessible rather than academic and dedicated to the struggle of Africans themselves for socialist transformation. However, its politics were of the broad Left, and indeed it was agreed that it should ‘avoid all suspicions of sectarian commitment’ (notes of discussion between Chris Allen, Ruth First and Gavin Williams, 19 May 1974). ‘We could not get involved in any political censorship and should be open to all tendencies on the left’ (Minutes 22.5.1976; see also Editorial of ROAPE Issue 11 by Innes and Flegg 1978). As Robin Cohen commented (email to Janet Bujra, 1 August 2013), Ruth’s stance was “open – radical, left, feminist, democratic – and there were only one or two occasions when it was clear that she came from a more disciplined communist tradition.” This was more evident when there were fierce divisions of opinion among the editorial group on matters such as Cuba’s role in Angola and the standing of the MPLA (People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola), or in the conflict over Archie Mafeje’s article on Soweto (see below).

Ruth kept up her correspondence with the editors when she spent a term at the University of Dar es Salaam in 1975. She reported that Issue 2 (April 1975) had been sold out in the University bookshop and people were ‘all agog’ for the third. In the same letter (RF to GW, 16.4.1975), she drew on her understanding of politics in Nigeria to send the editors an incisive critique of a ‘Briefing’ on the 1975 coup d’état in Nigeria by P. Collins, ‘M. Dixon’ (T. Turner), and G. Williams, which appeared in Issue 4 (Collins et al. 1975). Unfortunately it arrived too late to be taken into account.

‘Though I survive [on letters]’, Ruth wrote, ‘they are time-consuming to keep cycling’ (RF to GW, 29.8.1977). During Ruth’s first period in Maputo, she commented on minutes and submissions to the Review (RF to GW, 24.2.1977; 7.4.1977). She wrote observantly about current developments in Zimbabwe, and from Tanzania, where ‘the news is of a steady slide into the mire... The Univ. Left is expecting to be massacred by the new V-C...’ (24.2.1977) – which they duly were. She continued to comment on a variety of articles on different subjects submitted or put forward by editors, and to suggest other possibilities. For example, she insisted in letters to Gavin Williams that one piece on Mozambique, a ‘perennial, though it makes its appearance from time to time in different forms and guises’ must be rejected for its analytic and historical failings (RF to GW 10.8.1977).

Ruth’s most controversial contribution to the Review was her insistence, at an editorial meeting in London, that the Review publish her critical response to Archie Mafeje’s article (Mafeje 1978) on ‘Soweto and its aftermath’ in the same issue as his article – Issue no. 11 (First 1978). Wieder suggests this may have been an ‘intellectual ambush’ (Wieder 2013: 214). Archie, himself a Contributing Editor of ROAPE, not surprisingly objected. Ruth and the editors had some justification in including the response in an issue devoted almost entirely to South Africa and Zimbabwe, and following on from the exclusively South African Issue No. 7 (Sep–Dec, 1976). It is important that the two pieces be read together, and that Ruth’s criticisms are not taken out of their polemical and political context.1

Both Archie and Ruth had important things to say about the impact of the Soweto uprising of 1976, which began with African students protesting against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools, but turned into a more general conflagration. Mafeje began with an explicit and forceful critique of political exiles: ‘Revolution is an ambiguous thing. It is a symbol of a new justice and yet not infrequently, it is accompanied by prejudice, fear, self-interest and petty jealousies.’ Having originally been taken by surprise,
‘certain South African movements abroad [read the African National Congress/ANC] became extremely defensive and started claiming responsibility for the uprising’ (Mafeje 1978: 17). Mafeje’s most important contribution, however, was his account of the retaliation by Zulu migrant workers against township dwellers, while police stood by in the face of student attacks and burning of the migrant hostels. He acknowledges the tensions between migrant workers and permanent city dwellers. Making sense of this division amongst oppressed black people was a challenge. Ruth’s reply to Mafeje is incisive on many points, but on this key question, her response is inadequate: ‘Migrant workers . . . were enrolled as strikebreakers in Soweto.’ However, she goes on to lay bare the underlying causes of the involvement of migrant workers:

There is no question that the driving historical force is one of proletari[ani]sation, which had produced a workforce confined to the rural areas, and with differing access to the means of production . . . the migrant’s consciousness has been shaped by his peasant but also by his proletarian consciousness . . . (First 1978: 96)

These relations came to be central to the research she carried out with her colleagues at the CEA in Maputo, published as Black Gold: The Mozambican Miner (1983), which produced a more rounded conception of what it meant, to Mozambicans, to be both workers and peasants.

Of particular political significance in Ruth’s polemic with Mafeje is her statement, contrary to SACP orthodoxy, then as now, that:

I agree with those who argue against the conception of a revolution having to pass through a national democratic stage before passing through a socialist stage. This is because I do not see any such thing as ‘pure’ national or ‘pure’ class oppression/exploitation. The national and the class are not part of some natural order of succession, but take place coterminaly. (First 1978: 98)

Notably she shared this position with Archie. Subsequently, Archie wrote to the Editorial Group that he had expected South African movements to respond to his piece, not to Ruth’s. The liberation movement in South Africa was fiercely divided at this time, with the ANC (to which Ruth’s SACP was aligned) in intense opposition to the Unity Movement of South Africa, to which Archie was committed. Archie also claimed that Ruth and he were ‘not talking about the same South Africa’. In general, he comments that in South Africa there was ‘expropriation of blacks by whites, even of the left’. Ruth responded in a letter to Gavin: ‘As for Mafeje’s letter... telling me I’m too white to write about his article, I hope ROAPE will print it, in fact they are bound to do so’ (RF to GW, 18.7.1979). Mafeje’s letter was not printed.

Around March 1976, Ruth drew up detailed plans for a special issue of ROAPE on Mozambique. The plans included a proposal for Aquino de Bragança to become a member of the Editorial Working Group. One article by Aquino was to be based on an interview with President Samora Machel; others would focus on the economic aspects of independence, the decolonisation process, labour, migration, cashew nuts, aid and international organisations. Unfortunately the issue never materialised.

Following Ruth’s horrifying death in 1982, ROAPE’s 25th issue was a tribute to her work. It reprinted her article on ‘The Gold of Migrant Labour’ (1961), followed by extracts from Black Gold (1983). Two other important documents, to which Ruth contributed, were included: ‘The Right of Eritrea to Self-Determination’ (International League for the Rights
to Liberation of Peoples 1980), and the 1982 document, ‘Strategies of Social Research in Mozambique’ (CEA 1982), produced by Ruth and her colleagues at the CEA.

Ruth at the CEA

Ruth was Research Director of the CEA from 1979 until her death. During this short period she faced huge organisational and intellectual challenges and achieved remarkable and far-reaching results. Even before taking up the post she had to deal with University bureaucracy. In letters to Gavin she wrote that ‘The Portuguese legacy is pervasive . . . tho less in the Centro where I will teach. It includes a basic unfamiliarity with the democratic process (what is the meeting FOR? I must say it reminds me of ROAPE sometimes)...[There is] a tight proprietary grip on the archaic disciplinary divisions; a vested interest in refusing to co-operate across courses . . . ’ (RF to GW, 24.2.1977).

As Research Director, much of Ruth’s time was taken up by administration, raising money for the Centre, initiating new research projects and designing an innovative ‘Development Course’ (see O’Laughlin and Braganc¸a 1984 and articles in this Issue). The teaching on the course embraced not only Southern Africa and Mozambique, but also included lectures on the wider African experience, drawing on Ruth’s own work. For example, there was teaching on Nigeria and indirect rule, as opposed to the more direct forms of French and Portuguese colonial rule, and discussion of the ways in which different colonial powers learned from and copied successful colonial practice outside their own respective jurisdictions. This clearly reflected Ruth’s extensive work as an Africanist in the widest sense, as discussed later in this editorial. She also directed the Mozambican miner research project with students and colleagues, and prepared the text of Black Gold for publication. Ruth and Aquino de Braganc¸a founded the journal Estudos Moçambicanos (1980 ff), of which Ruth was an editor for the first three issues. Ruth was keen for ROAPE to publish research from the CEA, but the editors at that time failed to make translations of any of its path-breaking articles.

The Development Course was not the only source of research activity at the CEA. As well as the work of the Southern Africa group (whose work was taught on the Course) and that of Alpheus Manghezi and Salamão Zandamela on the Sabie River area, there was a research project on Southern Africa’s transport system. At the time, Mozambique held the transport portfolio for the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC). The project was intrinsically important to Mozambique, since about half of national income came from ports and rail traffic. Maureen Mackintosh produced a lengthy report on this issue that formed the basis of a later (1986) article in Estudos Moçambicanos. Students and staff on the Development Course carried out fieldwork in 1982 in the port of Maputo, and in Angonia District, Tete Province near the Malawi border. The latter project explored the relationship between peasant agriculture and state farming. It was the last project undertaken while Ruth was alive and was written up after her death. In addition, Marc Wuyts published his own invaluable work on the rural economy and on finance and banking.

On top of all this, there was the ongoing research work directed by Aquino de Bragança. This included extensive field research on the history of FRELIMO in Cabo Delgado, involving among others Anna Maria Gentili, Jacques Depelchin, Yussuf Adam, and latterly Gary Littlejohn. In addition, there was the History Workshop/Oficina de Historia. This included Jacques Depelchin, João Paulo Borges Coelho, Zegui Negrão, Paulo Soares, Yussuf Adam, Colin Darch and Gary Littlejohn. It published Não vamos esquecer/We will not forget (CEA 1983–1987), which used oral history in an attempt to popularise Mozambican
history and was also intended to provide reading material to newly literate adults to maintain their skill.

However, the Development Course, with its timely reports resulting from field research, had the highest research profile nationally, and almost certainly had the greatest political impact. The details of Ruth’s involvement are described in some of the contributions to this Special Issue, including her struggle for it to have de facto postgraduate status when many of its students did not have first degrees. Her influence on the Development Course was enormous, even though most decisions were taken after group discussions or other consultation. Clearly she led from the front.

Some found her style intimidating. The perception of Dan O’Meara, then a researcher in the Southern Africa office (Nucleo de Africa Austral) in the CEA, is notable:

In these pre-feminist decades, she adopted a confrontational political and personal style that was frequently hectoring and sometimes bullying. It was perhaps the only way for a woman to make her mark in that context. But for those comrades who dared to oppose or contradict her, being subjected to the Ruth First treatment was an unnerving experience. She would denounce rather than debate, express contempt rather than disagreement. And given that she was close to the ANC leadership and everyone knew who her husband was, in the context of a disciplined underground movement, her style on internal discussion could be highly intimidating. (O’Meara, email to Gary Littlejohn, 8.7.2013).

He continues:

Ruth had none of the easy humanism and humour of her life partner, Joe Slovo. Her growing criticism of the Soviet international line from the 1960s onwards did not always translate into a personal anti-Stalinist politics. Her leadership of the Centre of African Studies in Maputo indeed created a remarkable research and teaching institution, but it also created deep divisions amongst its members, frequently wasted the resources recruited by Ruth herself, and aligned almost all of the ANC members at the Centre firmly against her. She held the place together through the immense respect all had for her and the sheer force of her personality. However, following Ruth’s brutal murder, so deep were the divisions created by her leadership style that the Centre’s various factions were completely unable to agree on who was to replace her, and much of her legacy died with her. (Ibid., 8.7.2013)

Of course, O’Meara here refers only to Ruth First’s legacy of leadership within the CEA. For Gary Littlejohn, coming from a UK university department without effective leadership in terms of strategy or implementation, the experience of having a Research Director who consulted, actually took decisions and implemented them seemed like a major improvement in working conditions. Nor does he recall organised factions.

If university bureaucracy proved an obstacle to the work of the CEA, state ideology and practice also constituted a challenge, despite Ruth’s commitment to socialist transition. FRELIMO had declared itself to be ‘a M-L [Marxist–Leninist] vanguard party . . . though’, she added, in a letter to Gavin, ‘socialism has always proved a more difficult problem’ (RF to GW 24.2.1977). She had, she wrote, yet to ‘fathom the key documents of the 3rd Congress, esp. the 1 hr. one by Machel’. In a rather schematic piece that Ruth wrote for the New African Yearbook 1981/82 (First 1981), she cites Machel’s speech and FRELIMO’s conception of itself as a vanguard party, whose role was ‘to forge an alliance of workers and peasants, . . . classes [which] became revolutionary through their experience of changed forms of political practice in production . . . ’ There was, she warned, ‘a danger of substitutionism, of FRELIMO acting as a party for or on behalf of the masses’ (First 1981: 203).
Research as politics

At the heart of this Special Issue lies the work on the Mozambican migrant labour system that Ruth committed herself to with such passion in Mozambique, and which was eventually published posthumously as *Black Gold* (1983). Articles by Marc Wuyts, Alpheus Manghezi and Bridget O’Laughlin offer vivid insights into the innovative process of collective research on which it is based. They themselves were parties to this endeavour, which involved extensive fieldwork by students and staff at the CEA and direct engagement with miners in their families and communities. Thanks to the collective effort, 330 miners and more than that number of peasant households were interviewed in six different areas.

The research employed an amalgam of quantitative and qualitative methods. Two features distinguished it. First was its commitment to collective endeavour on a large scale, extending from data collection to interpreting results and writing up, and, second, its political positioning. This is clear from the account by Ruth and her colleagues at the CEA in Mozambique (in *ROAPE* no. 25, 1982):

To understand the place of research in Mozambique today, one must begin with its context: Mozambique is a socialist state, with a Marxist–Leninist party, engaged in a struggle which encompasses many fronts to build a socialist society... (CEA 1982: 29)

... the aim of the CEA has ...been to make social research an acceptable step in the formulation and implementation of policy. (*Ibid.*: 35).

Describing their ‘activist conception of research’ (*Ibid.*: 35), they emphasise their political unity with the FRELIMO government, as Marxists committed to socialist transformation. But this was not a slavish adherence to the state or to ‘rote and dogmas’. Quite the contrary; they saw themselves questioning FRELIMO on political strategy and tactics and were ready to challenge its positioning on contentious issues such as the role of cooperatives and their relationship to state farms. Indeed, one later outcome of their research was the abandonment of state farms at the Party’s Fourth Congress in 1983. Ultimately, however, they were even proposing ‘the reconstruction of the revolutionary state’ and its relations with the people (CEA 1982: 34). It is evident from the articles we include here that Ruth saw her role as one of asserting some autonomy for researchers at the CEA, with the right to take a critical and questioning view of the state, and that this would put her in the dangerous position of all who ‘speak truth to power’. It needed all her powers of diplomacy and leadership to traverse this difficult landscape. If Ruth was seen by some as autocratic, this needs to be set against this political background. A degree of toughness was also necessitated by the pressure of work and the need to show results, especially in relation to organising the complexities of collective research and publication of results. That this was always mediated by her charismatic charm and remarkable motivational skills is attested to by most of those who witnessed her revolutionary work at the CEA.

The radical Africanist

In the introduction to her book *The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d’Etat* (1970), Ruth acknowledged that:

Harsh judgements are made in this book of Africa’s independence leaderships. Yet this book is primarily directed not to the criticism, but to the liberation of Africa, for I count myself an African, and there is no cause I hold dearer. (First 1970: 10)
After she left South Africa in 1964 for exile in the UK, Ruth had to find a new way of making a living. It was no longer possible to work as a journalist, the profession to which she had dedicated herself since she graduated from university in 1946. So began a period of intense research, writing and teaching.

In this incredibly productive period in her life, Ruth wrote, co-authored and edited a number of extraordinary books, each aimed at facilitating ‘the liberation of Africa’. Her range of topics was broad. They included Namibia, the South African writer Olive Schreiner, investment in South Africa and the nature of Gaddafi’s ‘revolution’. She threw herself into gruelling research trips across the continent for her books and in each country she interrogated the new regimes, most of which had emerged from recent national liberation movements. Each of her projects was committed to understanding the whole continent. Ruth saw developments in North Africa as an inseparable part of continental liberation. If Libya declared its (green) revolution in 1969, then it was the responsibility of activists to understand and unpick those claims. Academic parochialism was anathema to Ruth; her work as an activist and scholar was as broad and sweeping as the continent that was her home.

Ruth First wrote about neo-colonialism, the limitations (and the potentialities) of independence. Her towering contribution was her 1970 book *The Barrel of a Gun*. Based on extensive fieldwork in Nigeria, Ghana and Sudan, and extending its analysis across Africa. Ruth examined how African independence ‘has been held to ransom by the emergence of a new, privileged African class’ (First 1970: 10). She became the foremost scholarly critic of the failures of national liberation, linking them to the role of the national bourgeoisie and the military. The book was a radical departure from fashionable ‘Nkrumah-type’ studies on neo-colonialism that looked at the power exerted over Africa; instead she focused on the nature of power inside the new states. What was the character of these regimes and the politics and projects that had emerged from independence? In her work on *Libya: The Elusive Revolution* (1974), First wanted to understand Colonel Gaddafi’s 1969 ‘revolution’ and the potential for radical reforms emerging from a progressive coup. This was her contribution to the problem of the specificity of national liberation movements as they encounter a general model of transformation from above. The book provided an extremely perceptive and detailed understanding of Gaddafi and the social stratification of Libya.

Ruth’s enthusiasm for socialist transformation in Mozambique and Angola came from a desire to develop real alternative models. She sought to understand the historical specificity of Portugal’s colonies, but also the potential, in the struggles for national liberation, that a more radical social transformation could emerge (see her book *Portugal’s Wars in Africa*, 1971). Even if she displayed a certain ambiguity on questions of revolutionary agency, she raised vital and important issues. In many ways the celebrated book *Black Gold* was the continuation of her ‘Africanist’ work. She sought to understand labour migration and mining in Southern Africa history, helping to transform contemporary understanding on labour, mining and class formation in Africa. She wanted to understand the dynamics of class in the context of migrant labour, asking how class identities were shaped by mining capital in predominantly rural economies.

Despite the extraordinary breadth of research and writing, the great majority of Ruth’s books have been out of print for many years. The Ruth First Papers Project and ROAPE have digitised her acclaimed *The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d’État* (published in the US edition as *Power in Africa*) and *Libya: the Elusive Revolution*, making these books available online to a new generation. We hope to reprint her co-authored biography of *Olive Schreiner* (First and Scott 1980) and the book, co-authored
with Jonathan Steele and Christabel Gurney, on Western investment in apartheid, *The South African Connection: Western Investment in Apartheid* (First et al. 1972).

Ruth’s work on Africa is still of vital importance today. Her questioning of democratic and revolutionary change, the role of nationalism in social movements and the failure of earlier experiments in development and radical change (in some of which she directly participated) are also our questions. We would benefit enormously from returning to Ruth’s extraordinary work and research on the Southern African working class and the development of capitalism and the state in Africa. Like Ruth we need to examine alternative paths to radical and pro-poor transformation in Africa from the devastation and debris of neoliberalism, austerity and crisis. We shall not forget her.

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**Notes**

1. There is a further response to both articles by Mqotsi in Vol. 6, Issue no. 14 (Jan–Apr 1979).
2. In addition, an American transport expert, Kurt Karl, was brought in for a semi-clandestine research project within South Africa, entering from a country other than Mozambique. This project was stymied by South African action.
3. On the development of the financial (banking system) in Mozambique during colonial times and after independence, see Wuyts, M. 1983: “A organizacão das finanças e o desenvolvimento economico em Moçambique.” Maputo: CEA.
4. At the Dollar Brand concert in Maputo after Ruth’s death, Dollar Brand (Abdullah Ibrahim) sang a new little song he had composed for the concert, ‘Hit and Run, Hit and Run, Hit and Run: Freedom Comes from the Barrel of a Gun.’
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Minutes

Journals


Correspondence


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