



ASPECTS OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP SERIES

Civil Society Leadership

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Presentations¹:

Paul Graham

I know that you have invited me to Cape Town to answer three questions: How can civil society influence political leadership? How can we strengthen the leadership role of civil society players? And how do we ensure that the experience and values of civil society are taken seriously by political authorities who tend to have a short-term focus? – And I will do my best briefly to answer them.

But I actually want to take this opportunity to ask, and make a stab at answering, a different question. I hope you will excuse me but I do think that the question is important, not just to me - but indeed for thinking about the politics of leadership and the manner in which leadership is exercised. It is a question to which I do not yet have a coherent answer, as most of us just muddle through as best we can.

Every person is born to lead and has an obligation to exercise leadership where they find themselves in society and to the best of their ability. As one of the good books says, "To whom much has been given, much will be required." I believe in this – that all people can and should exercise leadership, and that everyone has a personal obligation to lead.

¹ Please note that some of the presentations are a report on what presenters said and are not their verbatim presentations.

So the question is this: How does a white, English speaking, South African man, who has benefited from privilege (even if that privilege was not sought or welcomed) and has, through that privilege and the construction of society acquired power of a variety of sorts, exercise their personal obligation to lead to the best of their ability?

In the weeks that I have been involved in not writing this speech, my twitter feed has alerted me to the possibility that a debate about being white in South Africa may have started again. It has been difficult enough to make sense of what I might think and then to explain it honestly – given that few of us want to think that hard about ourselves and even fewer can then articulate those thoughts clearly (I still have not worked out where to put full stops or what comes after the great lead sentence) – so I have avoided these debates. My apologies if what I say has been better said by others recently and my even more sincere apologies if I just add to the general confusion in which we find ourselves in as South Africans. Fortunately I am not the only speaker and there is time for discussion.

This is not a theoretical question, obviously, but I hope it is also not an entirely subjective question applying only to a particular contextual minority. Many people are given positions of power and privilege in an unequal world, and my reflections may have some consequence for them as well.

Firstly, it is not enough to abdicate. Too many people have done this, and are doing it today. I can think of occasions when abdication may be the only course to take – I know that it has recently been suggested quite vociferously; but then please abdicate in silence rather than sitting on the side-lines kibitzing. But if everyone has both an obligation and a right to exercise leadership, withdrawal and isolation are selfish and self-interested acts which undermine the society into which one is born and in which one must contribute for the maintenance of that society and the progress of humanity.

Secondly, it is not enough to pretend that all are equal, that your privilege has been wiped away by Mandela's reconciliation, the TRC and the new constitution. Leadership exercised without consciousness or concern for the disparities of power merely oppress – and worst of

all, you do not see the oppression because you are the cause. Occasionally this type of leader may notice the consequences of blissful ignorance – but these are often dismissed as the fault of those around him. Accusations of arrogance are brushed off as impotence, silence is seen as envy or lack of skill or education, disempowerment or ‘frozenness’ is seen as laziness. If leadership is about providing direction, creating power and distributing that power, the unconsciously privileged leader is far more likely to be limited in vision about direction, absorbing of what power exists and capable of only distributing it to those who are most like him and who have not been wilted in his presence.

Some of you here may be from amongst a particularly privileged group of people – those for whom South Africa has always been a more equitable, more non-racial, rights based society in which issues of race, class and gender have taken on a different texture. While I agree with you that I am a creature of a past you have not known and am therefore arguing for a set of means and mechanisms for redress and transformation which seems alien to you and might end up discriminating against those of you who, while being white and male, have not had privilege imposed on you. But let me just say that even amongst the young, you are still the privileged few, not just in South Africa, but globally. To be educated, English speaking, male, and wealthy in a world which is largely poor is to have been privileged by accident of birth – you are not to blame for it, but you cannot escape it.

So, if abdication is not an option except in specific circumstances, and if a pretence that the world is normal is dysfunctional, are there options open to someone who understands that they have a responsibility to exercise leadership functions according to their ability.

This does of course raise a theoretical question about leadership and leadership functions, which I suspect have been either implicit or explicit through the first four rounds of this series. I suppose that I have tended towards a working definition of leadership which enables me to carry on this conversation – that good leadership involves creative and implementable decisions in which a group, or community, defines a task and works to achieve it. Good groups and effective communities get this right more times than not by having at their disposal individuals or sets of individuals who provide information, establish direction, keep people

energised, clarify what has to be done and how, and communicate well, extend participation, solve problems and maintain good morale. In other words, leadership can be and is regularly learned by individuals within groups. Of course this is much easier to achieve when the task is planning a good night out than when it requires figuring out what to do with an unemployment rate of 25 % or more, depending.

Someone else will have to spend more time than I have available unpacking this theoretical basis but I believe that leadership is actually a communal activity in which individual agency and community consent interact with one another for the public good. Of course we as people are captivated by other forms of leadership which may have less to do with the public good and more to do with self and group interest; and we often value those which seem to derive from individual charisma, inherent character and a survival instinct. Perhaps that is why we are alternatively over enthusiastic and then morbidly depressed by individuals on who the spotlight has temporarily fallen.

So I am just going to start with some of the options that might be available to white males (and others who find themselves in this similar paradox):

- One can become a thought leader – having individual opinions of a brave and eccentric nature and expressing these to any who might listen.
- One can make use of struggle credentials and a celebrity status of sorts to escape from one's whiteness and maleness – unfortunately this option is only open to a limited number of people.
- One can become a CWM – or competent white male – in whose quiet and unassuming hands various important tasks can be left in the assurance that they will be done without fanfare and without calling attention to oneself.

The first generates an increasing eccentricity and requires a willingness to be an 'expert that I won't adopt because it suggests a level of certainty that a person standing in only one set of shoes should probably not claim; the second requires an increasingly boring repetition of one's claim to fame; and the third, while a niche into which many have snuggled, has the potential for cynicism and hollowness. I know people who play these roles with integrity so do not want to

disrespect them, but I am not sure that they are sufficient to change an unjust world for the better.

Still, there is absolutely no reason why a person who has been the recipient of power and privilege should be cosseted and feted when we are trying to change the world. We do what we can, where we can.

I have two principles that seem to me equally important – no-one, and especially a person in my position, can or should take a leadership role for granted; and secondly, that one's identity and position in society do and should inhibit one from accepting certain roles and adopting certain modes of behaviour, even if these appear to be natural or inevitable. Having been brought up to take initiative, offer opinions, determine direction, "take the lead" does not mean that one should automatically and without reflection take the lead. Any leader's actions have to be tempered by an understanding of the need for transformation and the importance of becoming part of a transformative project.

Individuals emerge as leaders in groups and communities, and receive the contingent consent of these groups and communities, whether implicitly or through some formal process. That consent provides us with any legitimacy that we might have, and it enables us to speak and act with authenticity.

It is not surprising to me that early on in the Zuma presidency a group of civil society organisation leaders was almost entirely pessimistic about their role and influence. The outliers were the people present from Solidarity and AfriForum, both of which had met the President and were at that time confident about his attention to their issues. Both they and the President recognised that they were representing a constituency and speaking out of that constituency. Of course, times have changed, leaders regularly lose their constituencies through absent mindedness or a belief that they are self-made people; organisations have not discovered their role in building a society reflective of the constitution. Personally, I find ethnic mobilisation for the purpose of multi-racial segregation repugnant. (As an erstwhile member of a white

consciousness programme I do not exclude the necessity for organising within a single constituency, ethnic or class or anything else –I do hope that I am not the only person here from the late seventies and early eighties). I also find the use of ethnic brokers by our present political leadership for expedient purposes a blight on our aspirations to non-racialism.

Nevertheless, what these new civil society formations had understood, and which social movements and unions understand is that without legitimacy and authenticity, we are merely chattering fools – well meaning, intelligent, even far seeing fools, but still as useful as court jesters. (Which is not to say that jesters are unimportant – but then they must accept the occasional whipping!)?

Unless one is able to carve out a role in a group or community where the shape and colour of one's skin is not a signifier of unfair power – and I can think of some such groups, it is therefore difficult in practice and fraught with complexities to accept a leadership role, whether proffered or seized. In my own case, I am loathe to step forward even if encouraged to do so by election or acclamation. There must be alternatives, based on a better understanding of the context and the criteria necessary for effective leadership.

Even if ultimately justified by the group or community, this does not overcome the barriers I identified initially – it merely insists upon a more strategic approach by the leader in and with the community. Collective leadership is not merely a good thing to have; in the South African context and indeed any context of inequality and structural injustice, it is essential. Within such a collective there can be a division of labour, a continuous honing of skills, and the necessary criticism required to keep everyone honest. With good fortune and effort such a collective leadership may even find it possible to establish a different paradigm of leadership – a valuing of different gifts and graces, an honouring of a wider repertoire of skills and intentions, and a commitment to a non-racial, non-sexist, non-discriminatory ideal.

Leadership requires a mastery of oneself and a de-mastery of one's power as the well-known saying makes clear:

"When the Master governs, the people are hardly aware that he exists.

Next best is a leader who is loved.

Next; one who is feared.

The worst is one who is despised.

If you don't trust the people, you make them untrustworthy.

The Master doesn't talk, he acts.

When his work is done, the people say, "Amazing: we did it, all by ourselves!"

[*Tao Te Ching* - by Lao-tzu. From a translation by S. Mitchell, 2009]

Some forms of collective leadership do seem to me to have missed this ideal and become merely fronts to obscure white dominance or male dominance. I am pretty sure that fronts will fall out, either because of the resistance of those being used or because of the dissonance that is built up inside the group, but they subvert true transformation. I am also sure that if a white male has to perform certain more public functions of leadership, then they should do these to the best of their ability – if I have to make a media statement, or make a presentation which requires me, I will do it, even if my race and gender stick out awkwardly. I don't think that I can hide under a bush; but I hope that I also will not rush to perform those tasks which are self-aggrandising at the expense of transformation.

White men can exercise leadership and have an obligation as humans to do so. But the manner in which they do must be constrained in order to ensure legitimacy, authenticity, collective action and transformation.

I do not see what difference there is between answering this particular dilemma and answering the questions posed by this round table. Civil society organisations are obviously very diverse, but for those at the male – structurally and inherently powerful because of the privileges granted by a particular societal milieu – and white – because of a particular history, attitude and distance from the sweat of struggle – part of the spectrum, legitimacy, authenticity, collective action and transformation are things that they will have to consider quite carefully.

Of course, the present South African dilemma expressed in the questions of the roundtable is that even legitimate, authentic and collective leadership perceives itself to be ignored or at the very least low on the pecking order. Sometimes this may be true.

However, having spent the major part of my speech arguing against the use of power, I must now point out, as others have done, that civil society leaders and organisations in South Africa have to figure out how to create and wield power. In many, if not most, cases this comes from acting autonomously rather than as a suppliant or hand servant of government. There are of course times when veto power must be mobilised, but there are perhaps more times when civil society can and does determine an agenda and course of action to which government becomes a collaborator. Given that knowledge, money and force are at the base of power and that the latter two are less available – although not out of the reach of civil society – we should spend some time thinking about the different ways in which knowledge is constructed, acquired, applied. That requires another different speech, but perhaps I should at the very least encourage civil society leaders to spend much more time than they presently do on studying the balance of forces, and seeking ways to disrupt these.

There is no God given right that civil society organisations have to be heard in the political debate – the only rights South Africa provides are those given to citizens: to speak freely, to associate with one another, to seek knowledge, to organise. And those with power will deal with those who have figured out how to build their own power and have distributed it in such a way that legitimate, authentic, collaborative leadership (in which even a middle aged, middle class, white male has a place) can make a difference in the world .

AMELIA JONES

Thank you to CPLO for inviting me to speak today. I left the Community Chest at the end of March. I come from the [Steve] Biko era and much of what I have learned is from that time. There is no way I can be negative or lamenting about civil society. I have been very privileged at the Chest, where for 20 years I had access to 500 NGOs. I am also privileged to have spent 50% of my time in civil society before democracy and the other half [of that time] in democracy

I will share what I know from a practical perspective. A director of a smallish NGO (a shelter for abused and homeless women in Cape Town) recently said: "What I know for sure is that, in spite of economic challenges, if our hearts are connected, we can overcome all adversities. Corporates, patrons and individuals all find creative ways to support our organisation." Another leader of an NGO told me: "Stressful is an understatement. The main cause of our organization facing closure is that we have had no significant funding for two years. For an organisation that has been operating since the early 1980s this is a major blow." This paints a picture of flow of NGOs – one of extremes. But the organisation did not close.

I have been asked to share some thoughts regarding lessons learnt, experiences, challenges and a little bit of vision - based on the fact that I have spent 45 years in the social development sector. The last Chest Board Chairman I worked with, Prof Brian O'Connell was passionate about reminding us that "those of us who, we were here in 1994 are the first true, new South Africans and therefore carry immense responsibilities – but also positive considering the challenges." These included is to make our country a better place.

Second, he was always reminding us of the fact that we had "many revolutions happening at the same time" - economy, climate, environment, resources, food security, poverty, health, education and more. What he was saying is that civil society today is no less turbulent, challenging and complex, than it was pre-apartheid.

That said, the context has changed. We are fortunate to have an active civil society. There are 112 904 registered Non Profits and growing. Just a few years ago there were only 50,000 registered. There are a further 700 being registered as we speak. It only takes 22 days to register an NGO in South Africa.

Are we using this new context? The Context of Democracy or what I call the “Context of Possibility”? In my time, if we did many of the activities of NGOs, we would have been arrested. And we would not have got out the same day!

Are we as a civil society a collective? Are we consciously applying our true capacity? Or are we holding back and why? Is it because we are afraid? Don't know how? Don't have resources?

The success of civil society organizations lies in how we are able to mobilize every sector of society - Government , Business , the public and the civil society sector (in all its diversity) as a whole. All these sectors are challenged as inter- connected facets. No one of these can solve all issues or address all needs. As South Africa has become part of a big world, it is not only a local but also a global question. The sooner we all acknowledge that we are inter-connected, the sooner we can acknowledge that we are all learning. We need to communicate in an inter-connected manner; all these sectors will move much faster and what we need to address will happen in a quicker and more efficient manner.

One example is that of service delivery: In a similar initiative as Business against Crime for local government capacity building. The money is there but those business people who have put the money together are being held back by government.

SOME LESSONS LEARNT (I will use examples I am familiar with as a practitioner)

It was always important to know that we are rendering a good service that we are working hard. Many civil society organisations have realised that it is no longer in their interests to be only good service providers. Systemic change cannot be achieved through service delivery alone. Some organisations have learnt how to add advocacy, equally. We have seen how through advocacy we are able to access more resources, able to influence legislation and able to change nature of relationships with government and communities. One has to be very well connected to community and other NGOs in order to advocate.

Some examples include SANGOCO, the establishment of a coalition. Its very first workshop was on how to lobby and how to do advocacy. There is still a need for this education. Civil society has not built our own capacity to its maximum (in terms of advocacy and lobbying). We were taught to find out where politicians have breakfast – and listen to what they are talking about!

One day two learners in uniform, very confident, walked into my office. They said they were not here to ask for money, but to ask whether the organisation will support their cause – for a protest march. This was in support of Equal Education. I was so impressed; I was learning from these 18-year-olds about advocacy and lobbying!

All of the women's shelters have realised that they have to add advocacy to what they do. They have just formed a national coalition and are speaking to government (housing sector) as to what "shelter" means. It surprised them that by coming together as an organised collective they were able to achieve so much so quickly.

We tend to be very inward as civil society, but one can achieve much more by nurturing large networks. We should not be afraid of collaboration. Connection with government is achieved much faster when one is in a network (as opposed to an individual organisation). *For the past five years at Community Chest, a strategic decision was made that there is no point in trying to build a coalition if there is competition.* There are presently four networks and there is funding for a person to manage the networks. A network can fall flat if there is not responsibility for managing meetings, communications, etc.

Building movements means building entire fields (as opposed to individual NGOs) and is far more effective and will help to get ear of government policy and change the way companies do business (which equals greater impact). Expand the Boundaries. The impact is much more than our size and structure = mobilizing millions of volunteers = helping to change public attitudes and behaviours. Impact is more than about money; it makes huge intangible contributions, human agency, leveraging relationships and educating people.

The whole relationship of civil society with the business sector is a weak partnership. Corporates through BEE legislation allow for lots of money to be made available. Proper systems must be put in place and money must go for its purpose. Often the business sector tends to ignore the wisdom and first-hand knowledge that civil society brings – those is our product that we put on the table. We cannot only be identifying the sweet spots that business identifies for us; we cannot only be implementers. We are not doing enough to say that we are equal partners to one goal (a better world) i.e. interconnectedness. In a business context, civil society is selling social value.

We need to nurture highly engaged staff and Boards. Leaders in civil society dealing with stress need a very high level of emotional intelligence. EQ would be a two-day workshop. Self-belief and knowledge is very important. Communities can see if one is not for real. A leader must know one's own values and be strategic. A leader must have the ability to share power with staff in order to be a stronger force for good. They must have ability to nurture enduring people – not clock watchers or those who throw their hands up.

CONCLUSION

We must never forget the roots of civil society - where we come from. Civil society came about because small groups of individuals came together to fight injustice. In all cases, they were empowered by hope. It is the civil society organisations that are listening and carrying forward that hope. It is the biggest intangible of all. We have to support so many grassroots organisations coming forward recently. We must support that. We must never lose the values of civil society – the compassion and caring for your neighbours unconditionally. CDRA did not close but reduced staff by 80% (to three or four). Historically, our faith-based organisations took responsibility for taking care of many of our most vulnerable needs. I know that the churches are getting ready to take forward the challenges, as they did many years ago.

We speak of “engagement” and “inclusion” in terms of diversity. What are we doing to include people in civil society? We must redefine what is possible (the gift of democracy), see a vision of a new world and be willing to undertake, step by step, what is necessary in concrete terms to achieve it – the sooner the better. This will include scaling up, becoming aware of new initiatives (like this conversation), support (e.g. go to AGMs of colleagues, attend conversations of this nature), and connect (it is about the survival of not only the poor and the vulnerable, but of all of us). We all make up the community.

ZACKIE ACHMAT

I would like to pay tribute to leaders who built me as a young person:

- Jean Naidoo

- Theresa Solomon
- Amelia Jones (who I learned of in 1977 when husband was detained with Biko)
- Lettie Melindie (one of the most formidable leaders, who ensured that thousands of women arrested under pass laws had access to legal counsel)
- Norma Gabriel (was an ANC councillor – very disillusioned) _
- Molly Martelo
- Noel Rohm

I took away passion, persistence and possibility from these persons. Creating new possibilities is always essential within leadership. Paul Graham really touched on what leadership and those of us with privilege are about (and all of us at the conference are privileged).

Corporate lawlessness – affecting environment, labour issues e.g. Bangladesh - is the most important issue facing South Africa. In SA, the two most extreme examples were Marikana i.e. divisions of labour of companies that use resources of communities for enrichment of 1-2% of the world population. It is our duty to understand and study systems; it is not enough to denounce them. The second example is Fidentia. That money comes from mine workers from all over sub-Saharan Africa, many of whom have HIV and TB. Here we have stealing from widows and orphans. No-one has gone to jail for that. Building and cement cartels have stolen from the state - which means stealing from community.

The second question – the biggest tragedy to face the ANC – is the condition of the state. Yes, there is civil society but most of us have lost the memory, history and hard work that went into the Struggle. The very important leaders from unions, churches and opposition were drawn into the state – a monster of colonialism and apartheid. All that happened was that our comrades cemented the apartheid state.

In Khayelitsha, police tell us that due to pressure of TAC and SJC, most detainees are detained for more than 48 hours and discharged without crime. Most are detained for pocket knives. In the meantime, crime rises and dockets get lost. The task team showed that there were more disciplinary offences than there are police.

Black police management is another issue. Although racial demography is not enough, we must accept that black people must transform themselves. Richard Mdluli, who was head of

Crime Intelligence, was up for murder, corruption and kidnapping but had charges dropped. Homeland policemen and generals were advanced because they were black. Today, that criminal apartheid apparatus are in charge of our force. Between 8,000 and 12,000 are suspended for rape, murder and corruption misconduct – equal to 5% of the entire force. R400,000 for a firearms register that is missing and still not complete has gone missing. Who has gone to jail for this?

The state that the ANC took over – irrespective of the people who took over – was made bad because they cemented a state that is against the people. (There are many people in government that are good e.g. the current Minister of Health.) In the Western Cape local government, we took over the old apartheid civil service. They have exactly the same attitude towards poor, working class and African people as those serving under apartheid. The SJC started its campaign against toilets because in informal settlements the greatest danger people have is to walk to a toilet. Walking can take 5-10 minutes; they are closed between 7pm and 5pm, and people have to go to the bush. The Democratic Alliance (DA) has not developed a plan for 220 settlements; they have employed janitors only at the push of the SJC. Many do not have gloves, and are not inoculated against TB and other diseases. For six months, they were given a rake only as equipment! Now imagine the level of administration of my street cleaning – by [name] from Khayelitsha. He is there every day for 8 hours. He has gloves, yellow overalls, surveillance cameras, CCID, police and Metro Police and a walkie-talkie for security and to report problems.

Patriarchy is related to violence against women, children and men. Black men kill other black men in alarming numbers. There is a revolution in gender relations [under way]. There are more women than ever being educated, working and heading households. That means that chiefs in rural areas can mobilise discontent among young men and revive power through the Traditional Courts Bill. It is vital that we study patriarchy so that we can disrupt forced or fields of struggle. If we construct the field of struggle (and not leave it to state and business), it is a very different matter.

What I have learned from many leaders:

Our struggle is about the rights of people and principles. Leadership must be located in values and principles.

Second, evidence. We must create at our community level a democratic apparatus that is both ethical and democratic but has a research capacity to understand how government or corporate works.

Third, self- education is vital. The groups of leader that we educate and the way we educate our communities e.g. song, fact sheets and policy documents. TAC's greatest achievement was for the poorest – women living with HIV in townships – to understand science.

Building a movement based on education is not a task of one day. Alliance and network building is indispensable. Nothing can succeed without coalitions. We went to Mannenberg to listen, but the biggest problem is the divisions of race in the province. Alliance building is about connecting people. The power of the most vulnerable must be given leadership and voice.

Flexibility in strategy and tactics: do not shout when you can write or speak. Do not picket when you can write. Do not march when your picket has been unsuccessful. Go to court when your pickets have been unsuccessful.

Patient building by leaders with evidence, education, democratic apparatus, strategy and tactics, and alliance are all essential to rebuild and re-energise.

We need youth and experience. Everyone over age 40 must take a step back. Our job is simple: we need to transfer skills. SA's median age is 26, Uganda is 15, but we are ruled by old people. Our job is to simply pass on skills. We need a second revolution – one that is peaceful as far as possible – that transforms our state and deals with corporate lawlessness and patriarchy.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is the biggest challenge facing civil society organisation in SA and what can we do to become more resilient?

Amelia Jones (AJ): We talk about capacity enhancement and building as if it is for the poor or grassroots NGOs. Building skills becoming a learning sector needs to be acknowledged. This is a big part of building resilience. The biggest challenge is leadership. Something that addresses, enhances and supports leadership in civil society must be built. One does not just know how to become a leader. The Community Chest established a capacity building programme 20 years ago: 1,000 attend this programme every year. The next level was to address leadership but this has not been reached yet.

Zackie Achmat (ZA):

Leadership education is the biggest issue facing civil society. What is the evidence? It is first about people's experience and expertise. The second level is more detailed research. Division is mostly a bad thing. The way to overcome it is two-fold: a common programme that we all agree on, and to accept plurality and difference. And the conscious stepping back of people like me: I should go get arrested but not to get my name in the press. Our generation has to step back.

Civil society requires a greater understanding of serious political independence. I would like a new social political party to emerge, but I do not want any of the organisations that I work with to be weakened like the UDF. They must retain their independence so that they can struggle.

Paul Graham (PG): It is new times, formations, financing. Sometimes the young teach the old, and the old must sit in organisations with young people so that the learning goes both ways. I'm amazed at how excited people get about leadership education, but the excitement does not get translated into programmatic influence. My baby children had the biggest influence on me: they cried a lot and had a big survival influence.

Why is civil society fragmented?

ZA: This is due to a different approach to power and politics amongst organisations. We understand power differently. Evidence-based is critical but division often comes from not understanding politics. There is different currency and understandings [in civil society]. Certain leaders have access to people and knowledge that other civil society organisations do not

have. Movement building is building new currency and should not be dependent on old currency.

AJ: Sometimes we were asked if two people from the same organisation could attend trainings. The reason for this request was that one could listen, read and write; the other could read and write. When they went home, the illiterate one would repeat the training to people in the community, and thus they were not excluded. This was such an amazing learning for me in terms of inclusion and exclusion. Diversity and inclusion can help one to become more resilient, but one has to consciously acknowledge it. There is a whole series of knowledge about diversity and inclusivity. It is a consistent process; it is not about just the numbers. One has to ask what they are bringing to the table. But diversity does assist with resilience.

There is also an issue of civic education. Most South Africans do not know what tools are at our disposal.

PG: We need to think about praxis, knowledge creation, and common knowledge a bit more. Sam Fleming wrote a paper on research advocacy: the most influence was made on civil servants *before* policy was made. Of course, to do this one must know the civil servants. We need to think harder about how we deal with policy and advocacy.

These three speakers' presentations show just how many organisations have been worked on! After 1994, we expected free education but not what kind of education. That is the biggest reason for so many protests e.g. throwing pooh at airports. What will be the impact of protests on children? In terms of leadership, it does not matter who leads – whether the DA, ANC or PAC. What is important are the people you are leading. One can feed education to people that can take them anyway they want. If children are given good education, the leadership cannot fool them. But they feed us poor education so that we are stuck.

No matter colour or nationality, how do we make sure that we do not see strikes, pickets, organisations, that Zackie does not have to open another organisation [laughter], that a black child from Khayelitsha has the same education as a child from Sea Point? I joined the SJC to make a change in people's lives, because people are dying every day in Khayelitsha. How do we make sure that these issues do not continue?

PG: Levels of anger and dissatisfaction with the status quo is fantastic – without it, it is hard to move forward. The comparison with revolutions of North Africa is a useful one if only to

understand how far we have come in SA and how much we get right. From experiences in Syria, Tunisia, Bahrain, people are struggling to consolidate whatever gains made from these revolutions. They have also done many things wrong. Be prepared to see many more struggles ahead. The trick is to how to build yourselves and organisations to face those struggles. It would be very nice to be able to put some to bed, but we have failed on the education front. In the first government, we appointed an education minister from the IFP in order to deal with nation building. This was done for a reason (concern over secession) but the cost was for young people: an entire team of education experts was dispersed.

It is interesting that movements – not NGOs, companies, individuals – are the ones that have made impacts recently. An example of what should not be happening: the critical state of health in the Eastern Cape. The report by TAC and Equal Education is a great initiative. How do we get to point where we begin to make reality diversity and inclusion, to help people understand that only when they stand together that real change will occur? How do we work together to bring about the change we want despite the fact that we have different ways to address them?

PG: Joint goals are worth re-thinking. One learns by doing. We have not developed a common cause of social justice – each is in one's own corner. The UDF did not take away one's corner but was linked to a larger struggle. The most important power people have in a democracy is their vote. One does not have to vote for same party every time. There is a serious challenge on us as individuals to make choices on our electoral power.

AJ: Part of advocacy is speaking up, speaking the truth. It is very important that these participants have voiced the issues so passionately. Where will we as civil society leadership speak? The participants chose to speak here – in civil society. The old struggle was fearless and selfless – and the new struggle needs to be exactly that. None of us thought that 1994 would come in our time – but it came very quickly. Do what you can where you find yourself in this moment. Do not be deterred or give up.

ZA: Every meeting I close with “Forward to Socialism”. On a daily basis, there are many small revolutions. The question is how to make a bigger one. That is for generations – your children and grandchildren. How do we build a knowledge base that takes the revolution through the

generations? I learn every day from people. One cannot teach without learning every day. The younger generation needs to take this to heart.

Marikana has woken up the country and will not be suppressed. The impact is vital for all of us to look at our how our police and security services are working. We are too Bolshevik to go back to past in terms of repression but the attempts at trying to repress are very serious and we mustn't underestimate them.

TAC had very successful marches across the country yesterday but they were not reported. There is a need for service delivery NGOs and there is a need for movements of the most vulnerable in different contexts e.g. aged, children, and women. The job of NGOs and even service delivery organisations is to understand how they support each other's work.

How can society be cured from NIMBY (Not in my Back Yard) disease? Injustices still benefit the minority so it is hard to build a future. A democracy that has no economic power has no freedom.

PG: Organising means organising those around you – not escaping those around you in order to escape those around you! Some organising of the middle class needs to happen. Revolutions that transform look quick but are not: they need to be built, have alliances and strategies. The ones that happen quickly burn fast. Voting is not the be all and end all and many societies are constructed in ways that people do not think the vote is efficacious but we fought and bled for the vote and should not dismiss it so easily. Do not throw it away. We must work in between elections, of course, but we must really use the vote.

DISCUSSION, ARRANGED THEMATICALLY WITH SPEAKER INPUTS

The role of civil society in bringing about revolutions

What are we doing wrong that we cannot bring about regime change in SA? The Arab states are continuously in a revolutionary atmosphere. Every time I read about Marikana it is silenced. Some say the CIA will not allow this country to be destabilised. We see what is happening in

Syria and Egypt; they get the army to do the dirty work. We as civil society will continue on and talk but we need to do something different to get the response we want.

Civil society must take responsibility for the situation in SA. Egypt is the culmination and result of civil society not understanding what is required to bring about progressive change in society, resulting in the transfer of [rule of the] country to its military. We have to be careful.

To young people: If we can't provide first-class leadership, then Egypt and current SA will be the result. The vote is not the alpha and the omega of democracy; in some ways, it is the deterrent. We have abdicated our responsibility to a group of people whom we thought had our interests at heart. Our current leadership has allowed state sanctioned corporate [evil]. We are growing up and seeing this.

ZA: These are important questions. I believe that revolutions can be peaceful. The Iranian revolutions of 1979 forced the most powerful military in the Middle East to collapse. If leadership suggests violence we will see the likes of Syria and Egypt, etc. In Khayelitsha a few months ago, there were calls for burning tyres. Who suffered? Not those with privilege: a baby got killed. Who suffered? Not the privileged, but the leaders of those movements. It is easy to set up a barricade in Khayelitsha - there are no police in Khayelitsha - but not in Constantia. People who romanticise violence do not understand that we need to understand the violence in ourselves. That internal violence is what we need to address before we call for a violent revolution.

PG: Do you really want to fight the next war with the weapons of the last war? You have many new weapons in the Constitutional democracy. The repertoire of tools available has become much broader. Read the latest works concerning China during Mao's revolution and civil war. Do take seriously the different ways you can achieve change in civil society.

The role of 'white people' in making positive change

We cannot equate crimes of victims with the crimes of perpetrators. Race-based intervention may happen in SA given, at times, that whites were the ruling class but we cannot blame all whites for what is happening in SA. Those whites who were responsible for our degradation and exploitation are still sitting in positions of degradation and exploitation and have co-opted some plantation managers.

Steve Biko spoke of this. Before 1994, white roles were teachers and communities were perpetual learners. That has not changed in Weston Cape and there is something disturbing about that. Blacks are also responsible for that – not stepping forward, standing on touchlines of game we should be playing in. The Black middle class is today living the American dream – cars, wealth, and white privilege. We are still waking up.

If there are any whites in this country, they must stand up and say ‘I am against white privilege; because we know it is a result of plunder and apartheid.’ White privilege was protected by CODESA. I have yet to see a revolution that is painless. The state will respond with violence to the Secrecy Bill protests. The state responded violently to Marikana and workers were not even asking for shares! The state will not provide us with flowers. We need to intervene as we did in 1994. The state will not just give into us.

AJ: There is a huge need in the psychological field and we don’t have resources to deal with it. I was asked how I managed to keep white people involved at the Community Chest. This is obviously an issue for this NGO manager [the one asking]. She sees the white people as bringing something very important to their work and did not want to lose it. Did I have a strategy? I remained welcoming. I minimised no-one. I treated everyone warmly. I got asked very difficult questions e.g. “I do not want my money to go to black people.” Those very people became the biggest supporters. EQ plays a very big role in leadership. Understanding oneself and loving oneself first plays a very big role.

ZA: This is a vital question. SA has been very generous to white people and it is important that privilege be acknowledged. It is also important for us to pull white people along. Often it is fear (that stops them from progressing), but mostly it is privilege. It is vital that we are welcoming but not subservient.

Mixed messaging of civil society

Given the climate within public sector, the media inspires us to be angry about it when we hear millions of Rands are missing and politicians are good at blaming others. This leads to substantial confusion. Civil society must take a stance against corruption, maladministration.

What happens when civil society gets confused? We tie civil society activists to political affiliation e.g. pooh – flinging? How do we separate that and should we separate that?

How do we change the status quo? We should cut the crap as South Africans. We love party allegiance. We scream 'Amandla Abuntu' because our family screamed it. We need to vote on merit, not on allegiance. I can't be the primaballerina just because my family can. Vote for me based on merit – don't let me stand on stage and make a fool of myself!

Globalisation of civil society

Civil society does not live in a vacuum. Power has congealed and is a global power. Are our structures integrated into global structures? South Africans operate in silos and we need to have a united front. The biggest fight is about class, not race.

AJ: There are many NGOs part of a global movement, including some very big ones. It is also very challenging to be globally connected because you must be clear as to how much you are willing to be assimilated, how much you are willing to give up of your indigenous practices to participate in the global context. The positives include that one gets to see best practice of other organisations. South Africans make as big a contribution as other NGOs globally.

Transference of knowledge over generations

Ignorance serves people who have privilege. Liberal rhetoric serves privilege. One must first overcome unfair structural issues before I can become. Violence should not be a first resort but is understandable; we cannot start our struggle where the older generation has failed. How do I pick up the struggle?

Education for change

During the Struggle, one participant who worked as an educator was faced with a question: Do I continue with the Teachers' League or join the struggle as a fighter? The advice I got was to stay in there and influence matters. I came across a book called "Teaching as a Subversive Activity" that pushed educators to encourage students to ask the difficult questions and let's grapple with them! Literacy is about learning, unlearning and re-learning! Literacy is about

dismantling the old. How do I prepare as a citizen for the elections? What questions do we ask people who want to be put in power?

AJ: There are different ways and different tools, but do we know how to act? Education is vital. We also had education in the Struggle. You don't have to hide your books today i.e. it is easier to become educated than in the Struggle! The fact that you are here today and that you can articulate says something about your generation – and gives me hope that there is another layer present.

ZA: Forcing ARV prices down could not happen without global battles. Linking the poorest person on the ground with global practices requires an understanding of mechanisms in power. 10-12 million people in Africa on ARV medication would not have happened if we did not understand patent law. We studied mechanisms of contemporary power, not Mao. It is vital for us to remember that young people study what is happening internationally because the struggle is so different today from the 1920s, 1930s, and Mao, especially from an environmental perspective.

Types of leadership in civil society

There are two types of leadership in social movements and NGOs – and also those that do not want to hear anything. It would have been better to bring about all kinds of leaders – including “radicals”. Leadership is born every day – it does not sit only in older ones [leaders].

I have concerns about leadership in communities that has become diluted over political affiliations. It would be best to switch allegiance from affiliation (as one tends to focus on party power raising and not on issues). People tend to believe those who talk a lot. Around election time, leaders are active; around other times they are resting. We need to change the mind-sets of people that leadership is about the ability to deliver. A stumbling block for service delivery is how people choose leaders.

Non-cooperation between civil society groups has both positives and negatives. On the positive side, older persons regularly describe newly started NGOs. Knowing one's community is a positive but can also lead to personal fiefdoms (“this is my society”). Trying to cooperate too

much is also not ideal; there are times when one knows one's space and this work can be diluted if you get too general and too cooperative.

Accountability of community organisations

There is something wrong with many of the community organisations; they are not reporting to others. When are we going to take our role and ask for a report back?

Mind-sets for change

Many young people say that one must be prepared for revolution. But what will be the collateral damage? Will I be part of that? What will I lose? How do we engage young people with all our experience?

Evaluating our mind before changing our community is essential. The vast majority are suffering and a minority is benefitting. How can we address the injustice of the past? What is the role of violence in the struggle?

On Tuesday a community based organisation had a meeting with MECs; again we had the mind-set of 'us and you'. Because we are keeping distance between us, our people keep on suffering. Why don't we protest in Mannenberg and not in Cape Town? I want to take them out of their luxury. We must shake our government as a collective. We don't just give them our vote.

CLOSING SPEAKER COMMENTS

PG: We complain about public service with good reason but we need to look at the data on the number of vacancies. Two difficulties exist: one is mechanics and the other is the number of available recruits. We need to take it seriously as to whether it is easier to be in civil society than in the trenches. Public service has missed a beat in recruiting good, young people.

ZA: There is no thought [difference] between the one party and the other. There is no real engagement with the problems of the country and the world. How do we provide health care in the Eastern Cape? Is nationalisation going to solve it? No. What is democracy? Deliberation is most important element i.e. educating, speaking particularly at community level, especially the voice of the most powerless. The second element is participation, meaning being prepared to use your body and your voice on a daily basis not just on elections e.g. ensuring your football club has boots, elderly get pensions, workers of Marikana get justice.

Rights are the first element. Rights precede Constitution writing. The right to life is something we all have come to accept. But it existed before a Constitution. Thou shall not kill was written down.

Representation, which includes voting, is also a very important element. But representation should not be seen as meaning Parliament only. It is also School Governing Bodies. If we say educating our children is so important, communities taking power at school level is essential to young children building their minds and to what we want to achieve i.e. equality and justice.

END