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Zuma's Own Goal

Losing South Africa's
'War on Poverty'

Afterword:

World Cup™ profits defeat the poor

Patrick Bond, Ashwin Desai and Brij Maharaj

Introduction

Sport, once viewed as a form of entertainment, has now emerged as an important political, social and economic force (Cochrane et al., 1996; Hillier, 2000; Smith, 2005; O'Brien, 2006). South Africa's sacrifices to host the 2010 Soccer World Cup™ - and possibly the 2020 Olympic Games - are illustrative. What can we learn from the 2010 experience? Was it a roaring success, or instead, yet another example of Jacob Zuma's own-goal approach to poverty and inequality, i.e. squandering a golden opportunity and instead making matters worse through careless regression backwards on the field?

We begin the review of South Africa's experience in June-July 2010 by providing context. We tend to view soccer within the parameters set by neoliberal globalisation, which first and foremost requires countries and cities around the world to compete for illusory direct foreign investments and portfolio capital flows. Prominent promotional strategies include stimulating investment in businesses through the provision of incentives and marketing the country and city as a tourist and sporting destination. For the latter, which we experienced intensely in Durban, the consensus seems to be that major sporting events offer the "possibility of 'fast track' urban regeneration, a stimulus to economic growth, improved transport and cultural facilities, and enhanced global recognition and prestige," as Chalkley and Essex (1999) argue. Although such events do produce benefits, the international experience suggests that the privileged tend to benefit at the expense of the poor, and that socio-economic inequalities tend to be exacerbated (Andranovich et al., 2001; Rutheiser, 1996; Owen, 2002). These concerns were borne out when South Africa hosted the 2010 World Cup.

Peter Alegi (2010: 128) argues that in South Africa, the

social and political significance of rugby and soccer ... entrenched a desire among increasingly self-confident ... leaders to host sporting megaevents for the purpose of bolstering the quest for national unity and triggering faster economic growth.

The government committed itself to spending R40 billion from the public purse to prepare the country for the 2010 Fifa World Cup™, largely in constructing/upgrading 10 stadiums, fast-tracking a fast-train from OR

Tambo Airport to Sandton and a new airport outside Durban, improving roads and building associated infrastructure. The obvious question, in the wake of the discussion in previous pages, is, can SA afford such expenditure against the competing demands of housing/services, health care, welfare and education?

This Afterword raises the following concerns relating to the hosting of the 2010 mega event in South Africa: Fifa super-profits and political corruption; dubious priorities and overspending; repatriation of profits; suspension of democratic freedoms and sovereignty; protest and defiance; and xenophobia. Until very recently, Fifa was relatively unknown in the SA public domain, and the organisation was implicitly presented as a benign, if not philanthropic, organisation. That changed in mid-2010.

Fifa mafia, dubious priorities and overspending

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (Fifa) was established in Paris on 21 May 1904. Initial membership comprised countries from Western Europe. Present membership comprises football associations from 208 countries, exceeding that of the UN (192 members). In its quest to increase membership, Fifa often turned a blind eye to the undermining of democracy and the violation of human rights in member states, on grounds that sports and politics should not intermingle. There were allegations that senior Fifa officials were close to corrupt governments and ignored the influence of drug cartels on the game in Latin America.

But politics and sport do mix. In the early 1960s, Fifa implicitly espoused apartheid when its British president Sir Stanley Rous supported the Football Association of South Africa and its racially segregated teams and matches. It was only in 1976 that the apartheid team was thrown out, thanks to lobbying led by the late Dennis Brutus. During this period, there was another dramatic turn as the commercial/business arm of Fifa grew exponentially, ostensibly in response to the development needs of football in Africa, Asia and Latin America. However, there were concerns that Fifa had become part of the 'capitalist entertainment business'; that it had turned football into a 'millionaire's gambling casino'; and that there was a lack of transparency and accountability about how its funds were spent; and especially payments made to senior officials. There have also been controversies and allegations of corruption relating to how Fifa sells its TV rights, elects its President and chooses the hosts for the World Cup™. Before a ball was kicked, Fifa already earned R25 billion from TV broadcast rights for 2010.

World Cup™ visitors did not fail to comment upon degenerate conditions in the Cape Flats and the Soweto shacklands, while in contrast, the new R4.5 billion Green Point stadium in Cape Town and R2.3 billion refurbished Soccer City in Johannesburg received vast subsidies thanks to rulers from both the white-liberal-dominated Democratic Alliance and the black-nationalist African National Congress, respectively. Cape Town's is especially obnoxious given that an upgrade of the Newlands rugby pitch (in a white suburb) or of Athlone's stadium (in a black neighbourhood) would have been far cheaper. The latter was reportedly rejected, according to a representative of Fifa, because "A billion television viewers don't want to see shacks and poverty on this scale."¹

The second-largest city, Durban, boasts the most memorable new sports facility (R3.1 billion worth, overrun from an original R1.8 billion budget), as well as the country's highest-profile municipal sleaze and chutzpah, exuding from a city manager, Mike Sutcliffe, who tried – but failed – to gentrify a century-old Indian/African market for Fifa's sake, and who regularly bans non-violent demonstrations. Durban's 70,000-seater Moses Mabhida stadium is delightful to view, so long as we keep out of sight and mind the city's vast backlogs of housing, water/sanitation, electricity, clinics, schools and roads, and the absurd cost escalation. Harder to keep from view is next-door neighbour Absa Stadium, home of Sharks rugby, which seats 52,000 and which easily could have been extended. The Sharks have said they cannot afford to make the move to Mabhida because of high rental costs, and a titanic battle lies ahead over destruction of the older stadium to force the issue. Trevor Phillips, former director of the South African Premier Soccer League, asks,

What the hell are we going to do with a 70,000-seater football stadium in Durban once the World Cup is over? Durban has two football teams which attract crowds of only a few thousand. It would have been more sensible to have built smaller stadiums nearer the football-loving heartlands and used the surplus funds to have constructed training facilities in the townships.²

The local winners in the process are not footballers nor even rugby teams that municipal officials fruitlessly hope will one day fill the white-elephant stadia. They are the large corporations and politically-

1. 'Table Mountain or Bust'. *The Antidote*, 18 January 2007.

<http://theantidote.wordpress.com/2007/01/18/fifa-table-mountain-or-bust/>.

2. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2007/jun/03/newsstory>

connected black 'tenderpreneurs' (who win state tenders thanks to affirmative action, if linked to established white firms) especially in the construction sector. Asking if Mabhida's legacy is an 'arch of hope' or instead a 'yoke of debt', journalist Sam Sole named Durban's beneficiaries: primary contractor Ibholo Lethu supported Craig Simmer (whose previous employers were the crashed bus privatiser, Remnant Alton and Point development flop, Dolphin Whispers); the Broederbond firm Bruinette Kruger Stoffberg; and Group 5/WBHO with Tokyo Sexwale's and Bulelani Ngcuka's Mvelaphanda group subcontracting a major electricity deal to Vivian Reddy's Edison Power (Sole, 2010). This tenderpreneurship strategy was profoundly corrupt, according to Moeletsi Mbeki, brother of former president Thabo: "It was a matter of co-option, to co-opt the African nationalist leaders by enriching them privately."³

The macro-implications will be felt over many years, because the World Cup™ has worsened South Africa's world-leading income inequality and set the stage for future economic calamities once debt payments become due. The overspending on new stadiums (in Durban, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Nelspruit and Polokwane) plus extravagant refurbishment expenses for Soccer City brought the state subsidy to over R25 billion, not to mention spending on associated infrastructure. It will be exceedingly hard for nearly all the stadiums to even cover their operating expenses after the final World Cup™ game.

An excess portion of the stadium bill came from unnecessary imports, at a time the SA foreign debt rose from the \$24 billion Nelson Mandela inherited from apartheid to more than \$85 billion today. Paying interest on the debt plus dividends to the huge, formerly South African, but now overseas-based multinational corporations – Anglo American, BHP Billiton, DeBeers, Old Mutual, SAB-Miller beer, Liberty Life, Didata, Investec Bank – pushed the country to the very bottom of the emerging markets rankings. South Africa's sixth post-apartheid currency crash (of more than 15 per cent over a month's time) will occur sooner than later, as a result.

Other indirect costs to the economy are also important to count. The World Cup™ was partly responsible for the country's construction bubble, which drove the economy at 5 per cent GDP increase per year from 2004-08, just as happened in the US prior to its crash. With the World Cup™ as justification, the state's investment in new luxury transport infrastructure soared. The R25 billion Gautrain rapid rail costs riders five times more than previously advertised, gambles on shifting rich people's behaviour away from private cars, but it probably won't

3. <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,4434689,00.html>

dislodge Johannesburg-Pretoria commuters, thanks to traffic jams and parking shortages at the new stations. As labour leader Zwelinzima Vavi, put it, Gautrain “does nothing for those who really suffer from transport problems – above all, commuters from places like Soweto and Diepsloot. Instead, it takes away resources that could improve the lives of millions of commuters.”⁴

And was a new R8 billion King Shaka International Airport wise for Durban, given that the old one had excess capacity until 2017, and given the doubling of distance and taxi fares from central Durban? The closure of Durban International prematurely proved the single biggest embarrassment for Local Organising Committee leadership and the Airports Company of South Africa, when King Shaka could not cope with VIP private jets that jammed the airport on July 7, the day of the semi-final, leaving more than 1000 furious soccer fans in planes that had to be rerouted.

At least one auditing firm, Grant Thornton, disagrees, arguing that more than R50 billion in spin-offs can be expected, including 415 400 jobs, with tourists spending about R.5 billion.⁵ But this appears to be pie-in-the-sky, as government’s statistics office reported the first quarter of 2010’s losses of 71 000 jobs, with no prospect for improvement in sight, bringing to nearly a million those shed since the world crisis hit hard in 2008. In this context of economic contraction, another dose of xenophobia is feared, from both the state and society, as noted at the end. But the state’s own power to regulate multinational capital itself came into question during the World Cup™.

Loss of sovereignty and democratic rights

British sports journalist Andrew Jennings, author of *Foul!* has documented in painful detail Fifa’s abuse of host countries. According to Jennings (2006) a third of Fifa’s executive “are involved in bribery and corruption, ticket rackets and diversion of funds.” No one has uncovered explicit fraud in South Africa, in spite of a combination of a corruption-riddled Fifa and a corruption-riddled government. To illustrate, during the World Cup,™ South Africa’s leading police official of the 2000s (at the same time he was serving as president of Interpol), Jackie Selebi, was judged guilty of sufficient fraud to warrant a 15-year jail sentence. Suspicions of Zuma’s personal and family corruption also continued

4.<http://amadlandawonye.wikispaces.com/COSATU+GS+Z+Vavi,+Input+to+Red+October+Transport+Campaign>

5. <http://www.gt.co.za/News/Press-releases/Strategic-solutions/2010/2010eia.asp>

through mid-2010, as did concerns about the ruling party's youth leader, Julius Malema. The man Zuma chose as ambassador to the US, Ebrahim Rasool, was unveiled in July 2010 by a Cape Town journalist as a politician who spent cash to buy favourable newspaper coverage, and yet the appointment went ahead unhindered.

But setting aside deals – or the awarding of huge cost escalations on construction contracts – that might have been lubricated with backhanders, the most pernicious corruption associated with the World Cup was actually above board, in formal legal contracts that were kept secret until a judge ordered them opened to public scrutiny in June 2010. As Jennings concluded, “South Africa bent over and let Fifa have their way. Officials and the government have sold South Africa down the river: ‘Bye Africa, bye suckers!’”⁶

There are many ways in which South African sovereignty was violated by those contracts. Major geographical spaces, especially those around which the poor engage in the informal economy, have been legislated as local business Exclusion Zones (or Fifa zones), in which the South African Constitution would be temporarily suspended. Instead, the South African Government was obliged to enforce Fifa's laws, including the curtailing of democratic rights such as peaceful marches and protests. The national security apparatus told Parliament it would throw a 10km ‘cordon’ around the stadia, replete with “air sweeps by fighter jets, joint border patrols with neighbouring countries, police escorts for cruise ships and teams of security guards with ‘diplomat’ training.” The aim, according to safety and security Minister Nathi Mthethwa, was to “prevent domestic extremism, strike action and service delivery protests.”⁷

To serve Fifa, Durban gave up a great deal of its own power as well as common sense. To illustrate, a few dozen metres away from where poor people were denied their source of fishing and income, expensive imported (German) marquee tents apparently required erection by a German construction company. And Fifa took sole occupation of Moses Mabhida Stadium, even on the 75 percent of days that soccer wasn't played over the month, keeping the facility off-limits to visitors. According to Wits journalism professor Anton Harber, this was part of a general takeover: “Fifa has banished those people who try to make a living around the stadiums, they have made us divert development

6. <http://www.timeslive.co.za/opinion/article461110.ece/The-underbelly-of-world-football>

7. <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Police-unveil-SWC-security-plan-20100507>

money into fancy stadiums, and we have had to give up all sorts of rights for the month they will be in control of our cities.”⁸

Most chilling is that not only did Fifa get full indemnity “against all proceedings, claims and related costs (including professional adviser fees) which may be incurred or suffered by or threatened by others.” In addition, confirmed one official agreement, SA will provide police specifically “to enforce the protection of the marketing rights, broadcast rights, marks and other intellectual property rights of Fifa and its commercial partners.”⁹ (One author, Bond, learned this first hand on July 2 when he was detained by police for circulating an anti-xenophobia flier at the Fan Fest.)¹⁰

Journalists getting Fifa accreditation also pledged not to throw the World Cup™ ‘into disrepute’ while reporting, at the risk of being banned. Hence, press freedom was compromised. With such pressure, no wonder that the superb documentary film *Fahrenheit 2010* was turned down by the three major SA television networks in the period before the World Cup. Refusing to screen it, SA Broadcasting Corporation spokesperson, Kaiser Kganyago, confirmed: “Our job is obviously to promote the World Cup and flighting anything that can be perceived as negative is not in our interest.”

Rhodes media professor Guy Berger called Fifa’s power an “artificial and autocratic fiat. It is simply stupid to regulate for information scarcity in an age that has unprecedented information potential -- potential even for Fifa itself. Such authoritarian backwardness is hardly surprising, however. It comes from a body that in 2010 is still forcing journalists to agree not to bring it into disrepute as a condition for getting accreditation.”¹¹ Fifa’s definition of “disrepute” is writing anything that “negatively affects the public standing of the Local Organising Committee or Fifa.”¹²

Fifa also received special judicial treatment, with 24/7 prosecution of several dozen criminal incidents, including a three-year jail term for a man whose only crime was holding 30 Fifa game tickets ‘without explanation’, as Fifa tried to cut down on the black market. Two Dutch ‘ambush marketers’ were arrested as 36 women wore orange dresses, representing Bavaria brewery, to the Holland-Denmark game, though the firm’s logo was tiny.

8.<http://www.timeslive.co.za/specialreports/Our2010/article524269.ece/Blatter-threatens-to-gag-FIFA-reporters>

9. <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2010-06-04-fifa-called-the-shots-and-we-said-yes>

10. <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/65597>

11.<http://www.mg.co.za/printformat/single/2010-05-14-no-one-wants-to-air-2010-documentary>

12. <http://www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/147/44260.html>

Cases of this sort made Fifa seem extremist. The loss of state sovereignty to Fifa surprised observers, given the enormous experience that former president Thabo Mbeki and his negotiating team amassed in world economic policy negotiations since apartheid ended in 1994. Yet Mbeki allowed Fifa and multinational corporate sponsors full access to 'exclusion zones' with no taxes, no exchange controls and no security worries.

Trickle-down promises broken

Other logistical support, access control, and protection were provided to Fifa's corporate partners (Adidas, Sony, Visa, Emirates, Coca Cola, Hyundai-Kia, McDonalds, local phone giants Telkom and MTN, First National Bank, Continental Tyres, Castrol, McDonalds, and Indian IT company, Satyam). Only Fifa-endorsed items were advertised within a one kilometre radius of the stadium and along major roads.

Little money trickled down and most evaporated. Crafts, tourism and township soccer facilities were all meant to benefit. But as SA Football Association Western Cape provincial president, Norman Arendse, confessed, Fifa's 'fatal' top-down approach left grassroots soccer with merely 'crumbs'.¹³ Aside from ear-splitting vuvuzela plastic trumpets, the much-vaunted 'African' feel to the World Cup™ will be muted, as women who typically sell 'pap' (corn meal) and 'vleis' (inexpensive meat) just outside soccer stadiums will be shunted off at least a kilometre away. According to leading researcher, Udesch Pillay of the SA Human Sciences Research Council, in 2005, one in three South Africans hoped to personally benefit from the World Cup™, but this fell to one in five in 2009 and one in 100 by the time the games began.¹⁴

Danny Jordaan, CEO of the World Cup™ Local Organising Committee, predicted in 2005 that the games would be worth as much as R50 billion profit to South Africa, even after 2010-related infrastructure expenses. But current estimates have been approximately halved (or more). The hospitality industry's market was glutted in many areas, after a third of rooms booked by Fifa's Match agency were cancelled in May.

Likewise, ordinary workers were misled into thinking they would benefit from manufacturing opportunities associated with World Cup™ paraphernalia, but as Congress of SA Trade Unions spokesperson Patrick Craven ruefully concluded, "Local companies have lost out, Chinese

13. <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2010-05-20-a-tale-of-two-stadiums>

14. http://www.project2010.co.za/2010_World_Cup_interview_Udesch_Pillay.asp,
<http://dispatch.ug/2010/06/16/is-it-really-africas-world-cup/>

companies have emerged as big winners.”¹⁵ Workers lost insofar as they failed to gain local production rights for the Zakumi doll mascot, which was instead produced in what the trade union movement alleged were Chinese sweatshops where teenagers were paid \$3/day. The man who arranged the deal was ANC Member of Parliament Shiaan-Bin Huang, whose home district in KwaZulu-Natal, Newcastle, had many idle factories which could have produced Zakumi.¹⁶

Residents, too, suffered, especially if they were working class and needed treatment at local hospitals. As *Times* journalists observed,

Fifa’s guidelines for designated hospitals around the country - which include keeping wards half empty - will result in long-term patients removed from their beds and shifted to facilities elsewhere. Routine referrals to major specialist hospitals have already been curtailed, if not stopped, until after the World Cup, leaving hundreds of patients without care for the next two months.¹⁷

Protest and defiance

The mood of poor and working people remained feisty in the run-up to the big event, with several dozen protests each day according to police statistics, most over ‘service delivery’ shortcomings. Several protests were aimed explicitly at the way the World Cup was being implemented.

For example, more than a thousand pupils demonstrated against the Mbombela stadium (Nelspruit) when schools displaced in the construction process were not rebuilt. Other World Cup™-related protests were held by informal traders in Durban and Cape Town, against Johannesburg officials by Soccer City neighbours in impoverished Riverlea township, against construction companies by workers, against the stadium construction by disabled people, and against national officials by four towns’ activists attempting to relocate the provincial borders to shift their municipalities to a wealthier province.

Just a month before the first kick and during the competition, strikes were threatened, raging or had just been settled over national electricity price increases, Eskom and transport sector wages and municipal worker grievances. The SA Transport and Allied Workers Union won a

15. <http://www.sportsillustrated.co.za/category/soccer/world-cup-2010/page/34/>

16. <http://www.cosatu.org.za/show.php?include=docs/pr/2010/pr0202.html&ID=2872&cat=COSATU%20Today>

17. <http://www.timeslive.co.za/sundaytimes/article464252.ece/World-Cup-hospitals-face-crisis>

wage increase double the inflation rate, while the mineworkers and metalworkers demanded and won an increase 50 per cent higher than inflation.

Fifa had insisted on a protest-free zone, with regular police bannings of attempted marches – even an innocuous education-for-all rally on June 7 (even though Fifa had sponsored the group, One Goal, requesting permission to march) – until sufficient resistance emerged to overcome the harassment. A few other victories were recorded along the way. Thousands of stadium construction workers fought for higher wages and often won. And AIDS activists prevented from distributing condoms at stadiums objected and won that right.

On 13 June 2010 in Durban, several hundred security workers at Durban's Moses Mabhida Stadium began revolting after the Germany-Australia game, demanding payment of a promised bonus. They only received R190 for 12 hours' work; outsourcing and super-exploitation have soured employee relations in the often dangerous security sector. Police tear-gassed and stun-grenaded 300 to break up the protest and promised that the ringleaders would be arrested. But half the ten stadia suffered this fate, as workers downed tools against the security labour brokers, leading to mass firings and compelling more expensive policing to come to Fifa's aid as internal security.

The most successful protest explicitly against the World Cup™ was by hundreds of Durban informal traders facing displacement from the century-old Early Morning Market. Were it not for sustained resistance over a year-long period, including a pitched battle with police in mid-2009, their space would have been transformed into a shopping mall, without them.

Some of the most impressive mobilisations were on the hardest front, perhaps: pop culture. To illustrate the challenge, Somali-born Toronto-bred musician K'naan had used his hit, 'Wavin' Flags', to promote the notion that a young boy on a dusty soccer field could simply drink a Coca Cola and become a world-class player. His remixed tune for Fifa self-censored all his earlier version's harder, anti-war lyrics:

*many wars, settling scores
bringing us promises, leaving us poor...
but look how they treat us
make us believers, make we fight their battles
then they deceive us...
... violent prone, poor people zone...
out of the darkness, in came the carnage
threatening my very survival
fractured my streets, and broke all my dreams*

Explaining why he remixed (without ideas like broken promises), K'naan explained: "It's about the one time that we all get together and the world forgets its conflict and its problems and we focus on this unity and celebration. That moment is connected now to 'Wavin' Flag'." Added Coca Cola entertainment marketing chief, Joe Belliotti: "He has the connection to Africa, he is not a fly-by-night pop star, and his song is very indicative of celebration."¹⁸

This kind of tragic commercialisation and depoliticisation called for a culture jam, readily provided in the tune 'Wavering Flag' by the Playing Fields Connective, whose lyrics included:

*When they are older
Our children might wonder
Why we sold out
In the name of the FIFA flag...*

*When I get sober
From all the soccer
There will go FIFA, and
guess who'll be making cash?*

*They don't put back?
They never put back?
They don't put back? nooo*

*The enemy's balls,
the penalties scored
The LOC had the key,
let in own goals*

*I heard them say
"World Cup is the way"
But what about later?
How long will we pay?¹⁹*

Then there were the Chomsky AllStars, whose 'Beautiful Gain' rip-off of the World Cup was advertised as follows: "Blending punk, blues, dub and Afrobeat, 'The Beautiful Gain', with its infectious melody and sublime rhythms, is set to become the 'Free Nelson Mandela' of the 21st century."

18. <http://www.songfacts.com/detail.php?id=17880>

19. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KP1sh-csauA>

²⁰ Yet more ripping protest music was released by a network of artists who came together to publicise Khulumani Support Group, the anti-apartheid victims' network which is suing corporations in the United States courts for taking away profits and interest when they should have been observing sanctions. Durban's Iain Robinson (Ewok) contributed the tune 'Shame on the Beautiful Game'²¹ which soon joined a whole CD of hip-hop protest tunes produced by the Grahamstown-based group Defboyz: "The core message of this CD is that social justice should never be subordinated in the pursuit of profits... The artists represented on this CD come from all over the world and in a variety of languages – put one message across – that the powers that be must be held accountable for their actions! Peace."²²

Finally, 15 artists from across the world were gathered virtually by Nomadic Wax, Dj Magee and Dj Nio to produce a song they describe as follows:

Legendary South African emcee Emile YX (Black Noise Crew) used the 'World Cup' track as an opportunity to respond to what is currently happening in his hometown of Cape Town, rapping "We'll foot the bill just so they can foot the ball." Emile and 15 other artists from a range of nations, including Italy, Brazil, South Africa, Morocco, and Trinidad-Tobago, among others, rap their verses in French, Spanish, Portuguese, English, and Arabic and explore many of the controversies, benefits, and pitfalls of the historic 2010 World Cup in South Africa.²³

But there were many aggrieved by Fifa and its South African government allies who did not fare so well. Durban's subsistence fisherfolk unsuccessfully fought a forced removal from piers at the World Cup™ Fan Fest park on the main beach. Johannesburg and Cape Town traders also lost their battle for space, due to the exclusion zones. And Cape Town housing displacees were shuttled into a bizarre, apartheid-style 'temporary' transit camp, Blikkiesdorp. Other losers included environmentalists concerned about the World Cup's™ vast carbon emissions – twice the 2006 record – and the South African government's attempt to 'offset' these through 'greenwashing' strategies such as the Clean Development Mechanism and inappropriate tree planting.

20. <http://chomskyallstars.bandcamp.com/track/the-beautiful-gain-full-version>

21. <http://redcardcampaign.wordpress.com/tag/shame-on-the-game>

22. <http://en.wordpress.com/tag/music-4-justice>

23. <http://nomadicwax.bandcamp.com/track/world-cup>

Most troubling, the networks of independent leftists which normally mobilise against large international events – the World Conference Against Racism (12,000 protesters on 31 August 2001) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (30 000 marched on 31 August 2002) – were simply unable to generate enthusiasm for two attempted marches: in Soweto against Fifa’s headquarters, by the Anti-Privatisation Forum; and from Blikkiesdorp by the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign. In Durban, a June 16 protest march to City Hall gathered more than 1000 to demand a ‘World Cup for All’. On July 3, several hundred rallied at City Hall against what might be regarded as the greatest failing of South Africa’s subaltern classes: xenophobia.

Xenophobia threats

A crisis began to emerge as the World Cup wound down, one that terrified progressives here and everywhere: xenophobic violence where sore losers adopt right-wing populist sentiments, and frame the foreigner. The FaceBook pages of hip young Johannesburg gangstas exploded with xenophobic raves after Uruguay beat Bafana Bafana. Wrote Khavi Mavodze, for example, “Foreigners leave our country, be warned, xenophobia is our first name.”²⁴

Even the ordinarily defensive African National Congress national executive committee and the Cabinet both expressed initial concern in May 2010 about a potential repeat of the violence two years earlier, that left 62 people dead and more than a hundred thousand displaced.

But denialism was another common reaction by those in power. Recall that in late 2007, the Africa Peer Review Mechanism panel of eminent persons issued a warning that went unheeded: “Xenophobia against other Africans is currently on the rise and must be nipped in the bud.” Thabo Mbeki replied that this was “simply not true.”²⁵

So when Jacob Zuma, told his party executive in May that “The branches of the ANC must start working now to deal with the issue of xenophobia,”²⁶ it was depressing when another politician combined denialism and stereotyping. Replying that “There is no tangible evidence,” Police General Bheki Cele added, a few days later: “We have

24.

<http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100001215301464&ref=search#!/profile.php?id=100001215301464&v=wall&ref=search>

25 SA Press Association (2007) ‘Mbeki critical of crime issues in APRM report’, Pretoria, 6 December.

26.

<http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page71654?oid=177542&sn=Detail>

observed a trend where foreigners commit crime - taking advantage of the fact that we have an unacceptable crime level - to tarnish our credibility and image.”²⁷

Cele’s finger-pointing at immigrants for crime is just one of the scapegoat strategies. The Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa called xenophobia a ‘credible threat’ in part because “some perpetrators appear to believe they have the tacit support of local political actors.”²⁸

In addition to increasing its moral suasion, prosecuting those guilty of xenophobic attacks, resolving local leadership turf battles that have xenophobic powerplays, and establishing emergency response mechanisms, the state has an obligation to address root causes for the social stress which is often expressed as xenophobia: mass unemployment, housing shortages, intense retail competition in townships and South Africa’s regional geopolitical interests which create more refugees than prosperity.

Conclusion

The World Cup™ is a formidable spectacle, not least because it attracts the world’s largest sports audience. South Africa’s hosting has gone off nearly flawlessly, contrary to predictions by Afropessimists. According to Fifa general secretary Jerome Valcke, “It’s been a perfect World Cup. The number of foreign visitors and tickets sales were beyond expectations.”²⁹ Fifa’s profit increase over the 2006 games in Germany was at least 50 per cent, he reported. Yet it is equally evident that aside from the unparalleled – albeit temporary - psychological boost, the rewards to society are outweighed by the burdens.

The international experience suggests that mega-sporting events were organised largely by the private sector, with little or no accountability to citizens or elected officials, although its decisions were likely to have major public policy implications. As Jennings has emphasised, Fifa’s “unaccountable structure ... is honed to deliver the game to the needs of global capitalism - with no checks or restraints. Just cheques.” The nature of urban governance associated with these events is “characterised by less democratic and more elite-driven priorities” (Swyngedouw et al., 2002: 542).

27. <http://www.sport24.co.za/Soccer/WorldCup/NationalNews/SAs-Cup-courts-fast-track-law-20100620>

28. <http://ipsnews.net/africa/nota.asp?idnews=51919>

29. <http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/article520522.ece/Jordaan--Brother-not-cashing-in-on-2010>

The South African experience was no different. The Fifa 2010 World Cup™ paid rhetorical lip service to reducing the socio-economic inequalities in the region; addressing the needs of the poor; was largely driven by corporate interests; and underwritten with public funds, with limited or no public participation; and undermined sovereignty and democratic rights. Mega sporting events should create zones of opportunity for those who have been historically disadvantaged; integrate the city so that urban resources are accessible to all citizens; and ensure popular participation in the planning process (Khan and Maharaj, 1998). Greater emphasis should be placed on policies that sustain growth through redistribution. This will also require a more direct intervention by the state than that currently envisaged.

In South Africa, as soccer hype fades and social protests become more insistent, local elites may realise their mistake in hosting these games in such a wasteful, arrogant manner. They may learn what we already know: profiteering by business and genuine joy associated with the world's most loved sport are mutually incompatible. The question for Brazilian soccer-lovers (2014 hosts) and for critics of multinational corporate rule is whether they will have greater success establishing countervailing pressure and reversing Fifa's power. Only with an antidote to commercialisation and foreign control can we truly call soccer the beautiful game.

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