

Politics and Photography in Apartheid South Africa

David L. Krantz

Resistance or struggle photography is a term describing the photographic documentation of conflict between oppressed and oppressor from the perspective of the subjugated. An example of this genre is explored in the context of apartheid South Africa during the 1980s through the work of a collective called Afrapix. This group's images of the repression of Black and Coloured populations by the apartheid regime, although largely curbed in South Africa, found an extensive international reception. These photographs contributed to the worldwide condemnation and sanctions that ultimately led to the collapse of the apartheid government. Whether photographs should be used as weapons in the political struggle, a position fostered by the African National Congress (ANC) and accepted by Afrapix, is explored through the divergent views of the photographer David Goldblatt. The decline of Afrapix is examined in relation to shifting market and aesthetic considerations following the end of apartheid.

Keywords: *Resistance or struggle photography, Afrapix, African National Congress (ANC), apartheid, Southlight, Omar Badsha (b. 1942), David Goldblatt (b. 1930), Albie Sachs (b. 1935), Guy Tillim (b. 1962), Paul Weinberg (b. 1956)*

Resistance or Struggle Photography is the term used by South African anti-apartheid photographers to describe a genre of photography that is political in its stance. Its intention, beyond the aesthetic, is to document the conflicts between oppressors and their victims so as alert, persuade and elicit support for the oppressed. The reality captured by the photograph is from the vantage point of the subjugated person. Important examples of resistance photography are provided by the work of the Afrapix collective. During the 1980s Afrapix photographs contributed to the culture of struggle that played such an important role in mobilizing local and international response against repression of the country's vast majority Black population by the apartheid regime. Afrapix's images ranged from documenting violence and confrontations (figures 1, 2) to recording everyday situations, especially as lived by South African Blacks under apartheid (figure 3). Generally they appeared in photo essays, magazines, newspapers, and public exhibition spaces, and, to a lesser extent, in commercial galleries or museum archives. The story of the evolution of this group provides insight into an important episode in the history of photography, while also raising some important issues regarding the relationship between photography and politics.¹

The Apartheid Regime

With the election of the Nationalist Party in 1948, the long-standing segregation and domination of Blacks was increasingly legitimated, codified

1 – The following narrative is based on the general consensus among those ten respondents I interviewed in Johannesburg from October to December 2006 concerning the evolution and impact of Afrapix. Although there are divergences, disagreements and details that are not included in this account, they do not detract from the general narrative I have developed.

Figure 1. Paul Weinberg, *Workers leaving May Day meeting find riot police, May 1985*. Courtesy Aperture Press.



and enforced. The laws defining this racism were subsumed under the term 'apartheid'. Among these regulations was the requirement for the relocation of Blacks, often forcibly, to segregated, isolated townships. The aim was to limit and control the number of Blacks in white urban areas to the minimum required for labour. The rest would reside in highly restricted ethnic Homelands that would eventually become independent states. Whereas approximately 80% of South Africa's population was black, the Homelands represented only approximately 13% of the land area of the country. Within white areas, the activities of Blacks were highly controlled and restricted. They could not reside in their work areas, nor could they migrate into white areas from their vastly overcrowded, underdeveloped, remote townships. Similar but less extreme restrictions were applied also to the smaller Indian and mixed-race Coloured populations. The requirement that Blacks have a passbook controlled their activities to limited, specified locations. Separate, but far from equal, facilities and opportunities determined virtually all the Blacks' existence. In

Figure 2. Paul Weinberg, *A lone woman protests as soldiers occupying her township roll by in large armoured vehicles called 'hippos', Soweto, July 1985*. Courtesy Aperture Press.





Figure 3. Omar Badsha, Teacher with her class of eighty students, 1985. Courtesy of the artist.

short, the labour, land and activities of the Black majority were to be almost totally controlled and structured by the regime's predominantly small minority of White Afrikaaners (largely descendants of the Dutch white settlers).

These policies were maintained through the tacit consent of the country's far smaller White population, by their very living within this system of racism and repression and through curbing dissent from Black activists largely in the African National Congress along with a number of Whites and Coloured. Depending on the potential threat of the dissenters, the government used such measures as fines, intimidation, harassment, censorship, incarceration, torture, exile and murder. The control of defiance even extended to invading nearby neutral countries to destroy banned resistance movements based in exile.

One episode that especially highlights the power of the photographic image as a means of opposition is represented by images showing the Soweto uprising of 1976. There, unwarranted violence by the police against black schoolchildren's non-violent protest was documented and distributed worldwide. One particular struggle picture, showing a dead child being carried away from the conflict, became iconic of the brutality of the apartheid regime. The photographs of the earlier Sharpsville massacre of 1961 provided one of the initial alerts to the regime's excesses.

Impelled by the Soweto uprising, the anti-apartheid struggle became more sustained, with heightened levels of open confrontation and resistance. The attempt to make the country ungovernable by using sabotage, large-scale demonstrations and open flaunting of the law led the government to respond by instituting further restrictions under a series of state-of-emergency decrees. These laws worked against the system, however, by generating international indignation and censure regarding these gross curtailments of fundamental human rights. Aprapix's photographs contributed to this condemnation through their powerful documentation of the events and of the outcomes resulting from the government's racist policies.

Resistance Photography and Censorship

Creating and distributing such images could be problematic and dangerous. Film and cameras were sometimes confiscated during government operations in the townships, with film being fogged. Afrapix members were sometimes harassed, with their facilities being raided. Photographers ran the risk of being

beaten or even shot by police during conflict situations, as well as sometimes being threatened and attacked by the local communities, which mistrusted the photographers' intentions and political affiliation. Although there was no censorship or illegality applied to photographs (except for those showing sensitive government settings), there existed a pervasive climate of fear, created by the Security Police's surveillance and by awareness that this could easily lead to detention without legal recourse. Despite all these difficulties, photographs were taken and attained public exposure. Some were smuggled out of the country, using a variety of inventive subterfuges (as with the often-noted case of Ernest Cole's 'House of Bondage' of 1967). Some images appeared in alternative literary magazines such as *Staffrider* or in independent, underground news publications. A larger number of photographs were shown in galleries of community-based organizations.

Resistance photographs became increasingly available in the 1980s, when censorship restrictions became more readily evaded and less consistently enforced. This apparent relaxation of restrictions was due in large part to increasing international pressure, by means of severe sanctions, towards reconstituting civil liberties. In this climate of greater openness and increasing White involvement in anti-apartheid political engagement, Omar Badsha and Paul Weinberg, two photographers, spearheaded a decision to extend the availability of such images beyond the more vulnerable individual photographer's initiatives by organizing Afrapix to archive and distribute resistance photography.

Afrapix's Principles and Goals

The following position statements clearly project Afrapix's intentions and objectives:

Photography can't be divorced from the political, social issues that surround us daily. As photographers we are inextricably caught up in those processes – we are not objective instruments but play a part in the way we choose to make our statements.

[...] [T]he photographers in this collection do not look at our country through the lens of the rulers. They show South Africa in conflict, in suffering, in happiness and resistance.

[...] The images [...] locate these themes [sadness, dignity, power,] in a divided, struggling South Africa. These South African photographers project a vision of the realities they confront.²

Afrapix can be viewed as a kind of mini-Magnum. For it stands squarely with the tradition of collaborative, social concerned photography most familiar to Americans through the work of Eugene Smith, Dorothea Lange and Robert Capa among others.

Afrapix members resist being defined by the [markets'] daily whims. A large number of local photographers [...] move to satisfying international media needs [...]. Thus, the photographer becomes a citizen of the international news network. This has meant distancing from the non-racial democratic movement and from the intimacy of local avenues for change [...]. The social documentary photographer's commitment to alternative values frees him or her to continue working in a community

Even when it is not the focus of violence. [...] By having their itinerary shaped by those who define what is newsworthy, these photojournalists tend to come in at the end of the process and therefore are unable to record and account for the logic of the confrontations.

[We] strive not only to advance social documentary photography but also to help in a small way redress the grossly inequitable distribution of skills and unequal access to information, both legacies of apartheid education [via workshops, local exhibitions].³

[...] [T]o overcome the blind spots resulting from an internalized apartheid ideology. To see what had not hitherto been seen; to make visible what had

2 – Paul Weinberg, *South Africa through the Lens: Social Documentary Photography*, Braamfontein, S. A.: Ravan Press 1983.

3 – Paul Weinberg and R. Nixon, 'Taking Sides in South Africa: Afrapix's Democratic Documentary', *Our Times* (August 1986), 23-26.

been invisible; to find ways of articulating, [...] a reality obscured by government propaganda and the mass media.⁴

Afrapix's philosophy and aims received strong independent support at an ANC-sponsored conference concerning the arts and liberation that was held in 1982 in Botswana. The clear message of the conference was that art was to be used as a weapon in the struggle against apartheid. Out of this conference twenty photographers created the first collective exhibition of anti-apartheid images that would be brought to South Africa (published in 1983 as *Through the Lens*). As Paul Weinberg put it, 'Participants learnt a new language – participants were not above the struggle for change, but part of it'.⁵

A Dissenting Voice

While praising Resistance photographers as idealistic, talented and courageous, David Goldblatt, South Africa's preeminent documentary photographer, voiced the contrary position at the Botswana conference observing that 'the camera was not a machine-gun and that photographers shouldn't confuse their response to the politics of the country with their role as photographers'.⁶ Photographers required a degree of dispassion. They should not deliberately seek to be positive or negative, but should attempt to convey the reality of things, with all its attendant complexity. Goldblatt's insistence on detachment, in contrast to Afrapix's endorsement of subjectivity, reflected his underlying perspective on political engagement. 'My dispassion was an attitude in which I tried to avoid easy judgments', he affirmed. 'This resulted in a photography that appeared to be disengaged and apolitical, but which was in fact the opposite'.⁷ By probing the immediate, everyday world he lived in, he could illuminate South African life with its underlying values and structures. In his documentation of the daily life in the white town of Boksburg, for instance, he was portraying a quite different reality from that of the Blacks. 'To ascribe these different realities to madness was too easy,' he acknowledged, 'I probed the phenomenon of society much concerned with ordinary decencies yet based, it seemed to me, on fundamental immorality'.⁸

Goldblatt intends, in this and in a number of other works, that the viewer should come to understand those underpinnings of the South African life that led to apartheid's overt repression (the Struggle photographers' primary subject matter) and to highly diverse aspects of South African life. There were explorations of poverty, forced removals, Blacks' long commute to their generally menial work for the Whites, church architecture, among others. Goldblatt's images range in their political explicitness: There is an implicit political position involved in his images of Soweto's everyday life (prior to the uprising) in restoring the humanity and individuality to those defined by apartheid's racist view of Blacks as non-persons. His political stance is more evident, but rarely blatant, for example, in his collaborative photo essays with the writer, Nadine Gordimer. For instance, their 1986 book *Lifetimes Under Apartheid* was an anthology of excerpts from Gordimer's novels and Goldblatt's photographs of Soweto and Transkei's Coloured residents and gold miners, among others.

Whether showing workers labouring in the gold mines or Blacks commuting to employment from the distant segregated homeland (*On the Mines*, 1973; *The Transported of Kwandebelé*, 1989), Goldblatt exposes the hardships, poverty and often the courage involved in Blacks' lives under the government's repressive policies. In contrast, his pictures of South African buildings seem to have little obvious political reference; they could be misread as well-done architectural documentation. But there is a political statement that

4 – J. Ozynski, 'Staffrider and documentary photography', in *Ten Years of Staffrider 1978-1988*, ed. Andreas Ollphant and Ivan Vladislavic, Johannesburg: Raven Press 1988.

5 – Paul Weinberg, 'Beyond the barricades'. *Full Frame 1* (1990), 6.

6 – David Goldblatt, 'Interview with Obwui Enwezor', in David Goldblatt, *Fifty-One Years*, Barcelona: Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona 2001.

7 – David Goldblatt, *South Africa: The Structure of Things Then*, New York: Monacelli Press 1998.

8 – Ibid., 31.

the viewer is led to understand, not from any single image but via the presentation of an extended, deliberately sequenced number of images accompanied by apolitical clarifying texts. For example, comparing the openness of an earlier church to the closedness of a later church (figures 4, 5), Goldblatt alludes to regime's growing insularity and defensiveness. Goldblatt's photographic essays, through the images' sequencing and related written material, transform seemingly neutral images into a complex and subtle portrayal of what underpins South Africa's many worlds. For Goldblatt, it is the images that communicate the political, in contrast to the Resistance photographers whose political position is intertwined with the images thus providing a more subjective portrayal of reality.

Goldblatt chose not to join Afrapix. Moreover, some of the collective's members were suspicious of what they considered his limited political posture, of his being a sell-out to the regime. Whether this concern was one of a number of Afrapix's 'healthy' debates, or Goldblatt's perception, or actual mistrust is difficult to determine. The tension within Afrapix regarding Goldblatt's political stance dissipated over time, with, among other involvement, his active support and training of photographers through the Market Photo Workshop (a well regarded, continuing setting for training documentary photographers and photojournalists, both Blacks and Whites). Goldblatt's approach was not well received by the ANC. They considered his work as insufficiently weapon-like to further the struggle. This suspicion led to their instituting a boycott, in 1986, of his exhibition in England. Not only had Goldblatt breached their cultural boycott, but also they considered his images too limited in portraying the struggle. ANC's boycott was removed with the intervention of South African based members of the resistance movement.

Afrapix's Development

From its initial founding in 1982 until its closure in 1990, Afrapix grew from five to over twenty-five members. Membership was largely open to any photographer who wanted to join. Amateurs and professionals, Blacks and Whites made up the organization. (The mixing of the races was intentional, both as a confrontational political act as well as a means to further their explicit

Figure 4. David Goldblatt, *Dutch Reform Church. Inaugurated on 31 July 1966. Op-die-Berg, Koev Bokkeveld, Cape, 23 May 1987*. Black and white photograph. Courtesy of the artist.

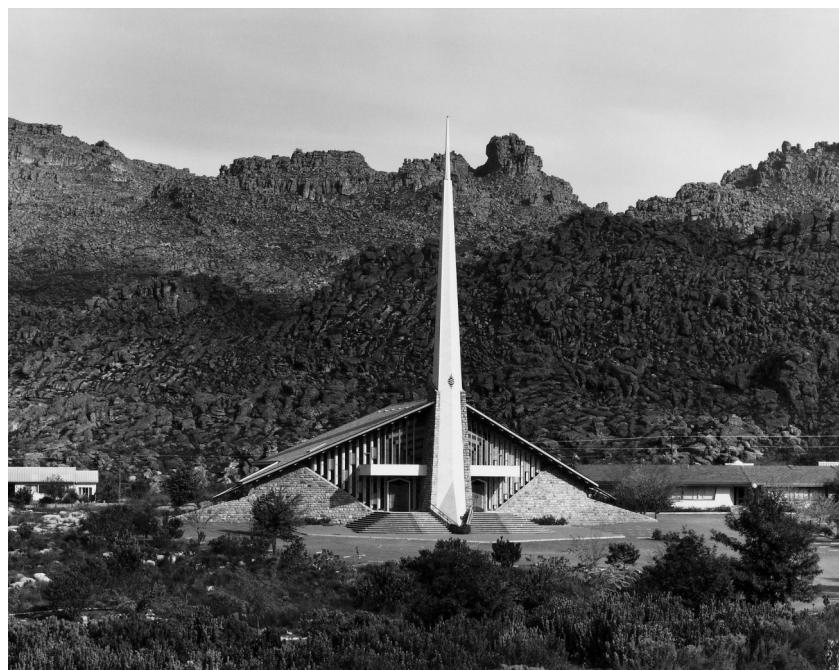




Figure 5. David Goldblatt, *Dutch Reform Church, Completed in 1984. Querlerina, J'burg. Transvaal*. 1 November 1982. Black and white photograph. Courtesy of the artist.

aim of supporting and training black photographers.) Considering Afrapix as a unitary entity, whether in terms of subject matter, level of training, race, ideological leaning, would obscure the free form, highly diverse character of the collective.

In general, their photographs were characterized by ‘styles that were both legible and highly expressive in their representation of oppression and resistance; [...] [the] use of expressive devices [such] as strong tonal contrasts, dramatic perspectives, sudden changes in scale, and a sense of violent movement – a movement that is sometimes implied to continue beyond the limits of the picture format; [...] As well as communicating the urgency of the moment; [it] attributed a sense of urgency to the subject. Tended to be [...] declamatory, dictating specific readings of the image. [...] to use the subject as evidence in someone else’s argument’.⁹

Among the major exhibitions, with associated catalogues, involving many Afrapix members were: *South Africa: The Cordoned Heart* (1989); *Beyond the Barricades: Popular Resistance in South Africa in the 1980s* (1989); *Hidden Camera: South African Photography Escaped from Censorship* (1989). *South Africa: The Cordoned Heart*, in particular, represented a significant break with past documentary photography. Sponsored in 1983 by the Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development, it not only recorded the poverty created by resettlement, migrant labour, but, ‘in a significant break with the past, it also documented organisation and resistance as a way out of the plight of poverty.

9 – Michael Godby, ‘After Apartheid: 10 South African Documentary Photographers’, *African Arts* 37 (Winter 2004), 36-41.

10 – Paul Weinberg, ‘Apartheid – A Vigilant Witness’, in *Culture in Another South Africa*, ed. Willem Campschreur and Joost Divendal, London: Zed Books 1989.

This conceptualization is significant in the consciousness of the documentary movement at the time ‘since Photography [...] needed to [...] take sides’.¹⁰

The collective’s first patron was the South African Conference of Churches, headed by Desmond Tutu. This organization provided the collective with office space and financial support through its purchase of their photographs. The demand for Afrapix’s photographs grew with the increasing levels of struggle and repression with anti-apartheid NGOs and with such news services as Associated Press and Reuters being among the clients.

This success also provided one source for the collective’s eventual disbanding. As the call for photographs increased, more photographers, with divergent views, joined. Santu Mofekang, for instance, a black photographer, originally supported and trained within the collective, considered the resistance images as reducing the richness of township life into one of perpetual struggle. His work, while maintaining a political posture, moved toward depicting a broader range of Black experience and activities.

Moreover, being that the organization was non-hierarchical, without clearly defined organizational roles, this developing diversity allowed for clashes between perspectives. Afrapix began to fracture due partly to an internal personal conflict that transmuted into arguments as to whether the collective should maintain and intensify its political engagement, particularly its involvement with training and bringing photography to Black communities as a form of empowerment, or become more concerned with a broader, less confrontational range of documentations created by selected professional photographers.

Eventually, Afrapix’s two broad factions split, with the more political group pursuing individual initiatives and the documentary faction developing as a non-collective agency (modelled on Magnum). This new organization, called Southlight, was less confrontational in relation to apartheid, with a broader range of work being featured in its archives.

Albie Sachs’s Controversial Claims

Almost coincident with Afrapix’s breakup, but not causally related, was a growing sentiment within ANC and parts of the arts community regarding the limitations of struggle photography. Albie Sachs, a well known, exiled White ANC activist, gave voice to this emerging view in a controversial paper that appeared in 1990. He questioned the value of maintaining that art and culture are weapons of struggle. Although he had originally supported this view, as pronounced in the 1982 Botswana Conference, in this paper (delivered in 1989 to the ANC Cultural Committee in exile), Sachs recognized that the identity of the future South Africa must be shaped by a greater diversity of expressions and explorations, in resistance art would play one necessary role. Although Sachs does not specifically mention Afrapix’s resistance photography in the claims quoted below, he considered them to be a relevant, successful and needed element in the essential variety of the arts (interview with Albie Sachs, 28 November 2006):

Our members should be banned from saying culture is a weapon of struggle [...]. Our artists are not pushed to improve the quality of their work; it is enough to be politically correct. Ambiguity and contradiction are completely shut out, and the only conflict permitted is that between the old and the new, as if there were only bad in the past and only good in the future.

In the case of a real instrument of struggle, there is no room for ambiguity: a gun is a gun is a gun, and if it were full of contradictions, it would fire in all sorts of directions and be useless for its purpose. But the power of art lies precisely in its capacity to expose contradictions and reveal hidden tensions [...].

There is nothing that the apartheid rulers would like more to convince us that because apartheid is ugly, the world is ugly. [...] It is as though our rulers stalk every page and haunt every picture; nothing is about us and the new consciousness we are developing.

Culture is not something separate from the general struggle, an artefact that is brought in from time to time to mobilize the people or else to prove to the world that after all we are civilized. Culture is us, who we are, how we see ourselves and the vision we have of the world'.¹¹

These observations produced a great deal of controversy, as can be seen from the extensive comments published along with the Sach's paper. Sach's view that future art should be questioning, broader ranging, more nuanced and less ideological was interpreted, mostly by cultural workers, as extolling aesthetically-oriented art for art's sake. Sachs responded: 'I regret that my paper came as a shock to many people working in the field of community arts, who saw it as implying that their work was of no value, because it failed to meet high aesthetic standards. Art and artistic endeavour need no justification. Perhaps we should not even try to define art, just do it and respond to it and argue about it'.¹² A second issue, raised by some resistance art practitioners, was that Sachs considered their contribution as no longer having worth. Sachs answered: 'Simply repeating the statement [that art is an instrument of struggle] [...] does not take us any further. It impoverishes both culture and the struggle. Our artists have a much more profound task, a more political one, if you like, than merely providing decoration or stimulation for those in combat. The artists, more than anyone else, can help us discover ourselves. Culture in the broad sense is our vision of ourselves and our world. This is a huge task [...] something that goes well beyond mobilizing people for this or that activity, important though mobilization might be'.¹³ In short, Sachs saw resistance art as part of a complex, diverse set of expressions that would help define the new South Africa. He was critical of the way resistance art was increasingly being used as a form of sloganeering rather than contributing to a nuanced, challenging perspective on the struggle and on the nation's evolving identity.

Struggle Photography in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Neither the dissolution of Afrapix nor Sach's position was critical in contributing to the decreasing role of photography in South Africa's transition to democracy (1990-1994). In this period, the resistance photographers' sharp distinction between oppressed and oppressor became blurred. The wrestling for power between Black political groups was gradually displacing the earlier struggle between the government and the Blacks.

Although some former Afrapix members documented the often-violent conflict between these factions, most photographs were taken by international news organizations' photojournalists. One South African group of photographers, calling themselves the Bang Bang Club, represents an extreme form of this documentation. "They were addicts of the adrenalin of hard news", observed Goldblatt in an interview conducted by Mark Haworth-Booth in 2005.¹⁴ Two of the four members of the Bang Bang Club died in the process of making their hallmark photographs, which captured the most immediate, shocking images. The photojournalistic focus on conflict and violence as a supplement to a news narrative thus constituted a highly selective portrayal of the multifaceted national developments during this period.

Beginning in 1990 and continuing through the 1994 election, struggle photographers lost much of their subject matter and their audience. In this changing political climate, with fewer repressive situations to document, along with declining international interest in a country that, with its moderating

11 – Albie Sachs, 'Preparing ourselves for freedom' in *Spring is Rebellious*, ed. Ingrid De Kok and Karen Press, Cape Town: Buchu Books 1990, 21-22.

12 – Ibid., 148.

13 – Ibid., 146.

14 – David Goldblatt, 'Interview with Mark Haworth-Booth', in David Goldblatt, *Intersections*, Munich: Prestel 2005.

15 – See Godby, ‘After Apartheid’, for some initial considerations.

drama, conflict and violence, was becoming less newsworthy, many of the Afrapix photographers (particularly those who continued doing documentary work) had to find different themes, ones that could appeal to the different clientele, with the art market of galleries and museums being the most contemporary sources. Although discussing the subsequent individual careers of some 1980s resistance photographers is beyond the scope of this paper, a few general observations can be made.¹⁵ Afrapix’s resistance photography legacy does continue in the current work of some the 1980s photographers, particularly Guy Tillim in his images Africa’s various civil conflicts. Not only have the locales and topics changed in this post-apartheid work, but also the depiction of conflict and violence has more aesthetic subtlety and depth. In *Amulets and Dreams: War, Youth, and Change*, for instance, Tillim replaces the stark imagery of human devastation of earlier resistance photographs with an indirect representation of the conflict’s residues, such as an image of a school building wall showing children studying in the lower portion, which is riddled by the war’s bullet holes. Tillim’s dramatic compositions contribute aesthetically to a deeper rendering that extends beyond documentation. But Tillim’s work also includes everyday living topics, as in his recent study of urban life in Johannesburg (2005). These photographs reach beyond the earlier representations of suffering created by the apartheid regime to highly diverse aspects of life emerging in contemporary South Africa. He shows the vibrancy, energy, adaptations and courage in these overcrowded, often meagre and problematic environments. As in Tillim’s civil conflict photographs, the Johannesburg images have a powerful aesthetic dimension, especially in their subtle use of available light to define the character of situations and individuals.¹⁶

16 – See Sally Gaule, ‘Guy Tillim: Jo’burg Downtown’, *De Arte* 73 (2006), 43–50, for a detailed analysis of Tillim’s urban photographs.

A similar range of content and aesthetic involvement can be found in other 1980s Afrapix photographers’ post-apartheid work. Paul Weinberg’s *In Search of the San* (1996), for instance, a portrayal of the indigenous San people’s profound difficulties with encroaching contemporary ‘civilizing’ forces, has strong aspects of his political engagement and social conscience. But other aspects of Weinberg’s work are concerned with everyday situations, as is the case with his recent photographs of South Africa’s diverse spiritual traditions in *The Moving Spirit* (2006). Weinberg’s images, like Tillim’s, have strong aesthetic features which create subtle and complex pictures, and Weinberg’s dramatic use of lighting produces an evocatively personal quality. Also there has been an increasing use of colour in post-apartheid photography, this change was not only promoted by advancing technology. As Goldblatt has observed, the use of colour during apartheid would have been inappropriate. It would have enhanced the beautiful and the personal, whereas black and white photographs to more effectively documented the external dramatic contradictions that defined this earlier period.¹⁷

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To what extent the increased aesthetic concern and changed subject matter of the 1980s resistance photographers was shaped by the replacement of their former newspaper and magazine clients with those in the art market is difficult to determine. While the impact of the market can be important in shaping the work of photographers, it is only one of the multiple determinants that shape these artists’ contemporary activities. There are also such factors as: increasing involvement with international styles and trends that were largely unavailable with the international boycotts and sanctions during apartheid; the disappearance and emergence of a variety of subject matters; new sources of support, such as commissions and corporate funding; and a host of individual artistic and personal decisions. Whatever remains of the political and social orientation that informed their former resistance art likely finds fewer artistic outlets for expression in South Africa’s current political climate.

Afrapix's legacy is multiple: it provided a body of powerful photographs documenting a significant period in South African history (although some images have less force, since their intelligibility depends more upon knowing specific historical moments and political issues); it helped to establish a South African tradition of documentary photography; and it trained and supported a newer generation of photographers, Black as well as White, who are now active contributors to the local and international art world. Although the issues addressed by Struggle Photography of the 1980s have less relevance in contemporary South Africa, it continues, as a genre, to have a compelling role in those emerging settings where there are still oppressors and oppressed.