RISE AND FALL OF APARTHEID
Photography and the Bureaucracy of Everyday Life

OKWUI ENWEZOR
RORY BESTER
Apartheid is Violence. Violence is used to subjugate and to deny basic rights to black people. But no matter how the policy of apartheid has been applied over the years, both black and white democrats have actively opposed it. It is in the struggle for justice that the gulf between artists, writers, and photographers and the people has been narrowed.
—Omar Badsha, South Africa: The Torned Heart, 1984

I have spent all my life in Johannesburg. School, university, studio, are all within a three-kilometer radius of where I was born. So even when my pictures are set in Paris or New York, in the end they are about Johannesburg—that is to say, a rather bewildered provincial city. These pictures are not all little morals or illustrations of apartheid life. But they are all provoked by the question of how it is that one is able to construct a more or less coherent life in a situation so full of contradiction and disruption.
—William Kentridge, From South Africa: New Writing, Photographs, and Art, 1987

1989: THE BEGINNING OF THE END—AN APPOINTMENT WITH HISTORY

On February 2, 1990, a scene that took forty-two years to reach unfolded in the wood-paneled and brightly lit chambers of the South African national parliament. Inside the chambers, while legislators had gathered to preside over the dismantling of the legislative apparatus of the apartheid state, thus marking its formal end,? I lay the foundation for a possible postracial society based on the principles of universal franchise and a democratic regimes in the second half of the twentieth century. Democratic representatives of the new era began the process of ending legalized segregation and racism through the rescinding of thousands of laws, rules, and regulations that formed the pillars of the apartheid state. Over nearly half a century, the racial apartheid state and its institutions, one of the most repressive and brutal antidemocratic regimes in the second half of the twentieth century, was brought to an end.

De Klerk’s somber announcement was principally a declaration of the defeat of the pretenses of apartheid as law and of the apartheid government to the table for serious negotiation. Its formal end.

Events in the 1980s represent a significant coming to terms with the apartheid state at every level. It is within this context that the Detainees’ Hunger Strike at Diepkloof Prison in soweto, which started on January 23, 1989, was preceded in F. W. de Klerk’s act of rapprochement that occurred a year lat-er. The strike appeared to overtake the stage that finally brought the apartheid government to the table for serious negotiation. Twenty prisoners detained under the 1986 state of emergency laws began a hunger strike with an unequivocal demand: the unconditional release of all political prisoners. Their ac-tion convulsed the entire apartheid penal system, which held tens of thousands of activists. By the end of March 1989, more than 1,000 detainees had joined the hunger strikers at Diep-kloof in solidarity. Challenged and buffeted from all sides, the apartheid government’s implacable no-negotiation approach began to weaken, thus paving the way for the eventual re-lease of all political prisoners.2

While years of activist mobilization and the Detainees’ Hunger Strike laid the grounds of transformation, de Klerk’s surprise election on February 8, 1989, as the leader of the National Party following the incapacitation by stroke of Pres-ident P. W. Botha was an important historical watershed. In his inaugural speech, de Klerk outlined his vision of “fundamental reform” and a future for South Africa in which “White domination as far as it exists, must go.” In a pragmatic deal; a courageous act of statesmanship made in the face of insurmountable odds, de Klerk on the terms of the armistice between the diminished apartheid state and the anti-apartheid movement, of which he was the undisputed political and moral leader.

On February 11, 1990, twenty-seven years after his con-finement as a political prisoner, Mandela walked out of Victor Verster Prison in Cape Town a free man. The last bricks of totalitarian rule in the world were crumbling.

Off the ten anti-apartheid leaders sentenced to life in prison for treason in 1963 at the Rivonia Trial, Mandela was the last to be freed. Years of imprisonment and an embargo on pub-lic representations of his image had transformed him into both an enigma and an icon. The focus of the global media on his release was massive, but the scarcity of photographs left them guessing as to his current appearance. Time maga-zine’s February 5 cover illustration was an uncannily close rendition of the tall, trim seventy-two-year-old in gray suit and tie. Skeptical journalists asked: How does he look right foot held aloft? (Fig. 2, 18). The end of apartheid on that day was as ignominious for those who had perpetuated and maintained its injustice, as it was momentous and triumphant for all those South Africans who had been limited by its stric-tions of totalitarian rule in the twentieth century, most notably the former satellite states of the Soviet Union. While years of activist mobilization and the Detainees’ Hunger Strike at Diepkloof Prison in soweto, started on January 23, 1989, was preceded in F. W. de Klerk’s act of rapprochement that occurred a year later. The strike appeared to overtake the stage that finally brought the apartheid government to the table for serious negotiation. Twenty prisoners detained under the 1986 state of emergency laws began a hunger strike with an unequivocal demand: the unconditional release of all political prisoners. Their action convulsed the entire apartheid penal system, which held tens of thousands of activists. By the end of March 1989, more than 1,000 detainees had joined the hunger strikers at Diepkloof in solidarity. Challenged and buffeted from all sides, the apartheid government’s implacable no-negotiation approach began to weaken, thus paving the way for the eventual release of all political prisoners.

Meanwhile, international isolation of South Africa increased on its terms of the armistice between the diminished apartheid state and the anti-apartheid movement, of which he was the undisputed political and moral leader.

In light of these sweeping global changes, the scene in Cape Town on that day in parliament can be properly encap-sulated as an appointment with history. The announcement of the end of apartheid was part of a carefully choreographed and coordinated plan: first the unbanning of the African Na-tional Congress (ANC), Pan-African Congress (PAC), South African Communist Party (SACP), Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and other political, labor, and civic organizations; the lifting of the state of emergency; and the release of all political prisoners. At the center of this plan was the unconditional release of the world’s most famous political prisoner, Nelson Mandela, who in the months pre-ceding his liberation had been secretly negotiating with de Klerk on the terms of the armistice between the diminished apartheid state and the anti-apartheid movement, of which he was the undisputed political and moral leader.

On February 11, 1990, twenty-seven years after his con-finement as a political prisoner, Mandela walked out of Victor Verster Prison in Cape Town a free man. The last bricks of totalitarian rule in the world were crumbling.

1989: THE BEGINNING OF THE END—AN APPOINTMENT WITH HISTORY

On February 2, 1990, a scene that took forty-two years to reach unfolded in the wood-paneled and brightly lit chambers of the South African national parliament. Inside the chambers, while legislators had gathered to preside over the dismantling of the legislative apparatus of the apartheid state, thus marking its formal end,? I lay the foundation for a possible postracial society based on the principles of universal franchise and a
The rise and fall of apartheid

1948: Rise and institutionalization of apartheid

Translated from its Dutch root, the word apartheid means separation, to which the separation of races and spaces and the restoration of rights denied millions of people remain a work in progress. Apartheid’s corrosive mechanisms were too deeply woven into South Africa’s social fabric and unraveling it will be the work of a generation, if not more.

Between liberal and radical. Even if the anti-apartheid movement had triumphed on the basis of the principle of nonracial democracy—against assorted racist elements—especially the military’s right-wing and white supremacist fascist organizations such as the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB)—who had lost on the point of a flawed political ideology, the end of apartheid was anything but orderly. It was a raucous, chaotic, violent, and deeply contested affair. The dismantling of the legal framework of apartheid and the restoration of rights denied millions of people remain a work in progress. Apartheid’s corrosive mechanisms were too deeply woven into South Africa’s social fabric and unraveling it will be the work of a generation, if not more.

Each of their own cultural worldviews. According to Verwoerd, the speech was aimed at correcting the misunderstanding of the positive aspects of apartheid by its detractors. Despite this unconvincing attempt to modify negative perceptions of apartheid, in its development and deployment in South Africa, apartheid ideology represented a brutal tearing and severing of all social relationships between Africans and Europeans; between black and white identities. At its core, apart, meaning separate, and hide, which designates neighborhood, rather than joining two separate entities and ameliorating their cultural and historical differences, brought them together in a gesture of tearing apart, thus defacing any sense of shared space and common values, abrogating all protocols of mutual recognition. In a reverse gesture, from the idea of sundering, apartheid also inscribed the practice of a form of spatial politics that not only actively foregrounded the writing of separation, it also devised forms of nonrecognition that underscored the inferiority of Africans to Europeans. In this, apartheid severely limited and mutilated the citizenship of Africans, framing the belonging of black people and their political aspiration to universal franchise as incompatible with its ideology. Blackness was mutant, impure, diseased, and primitive. Whiteness, on the other hand, was pure, good, civilized, and godly. Thus describes the fundamental political and spatial character of apartheid as a practice of separation; of apartness. However, as discussed above, apartheid had its precursors in colonialism, first with the arrival of the Dutch East India Company, led by Jan van Riebeeck and his traders, on the Cape in 1652; then with the British takeover of the Cape Province in the early nineteenth century. One of van Riebeeck’s orders (a proto-apartheid legacy) was the planting of a hedge of wild almonds that served as a barrier between the Dutch settlement and those of the indigenous Khoi people of the Cape. A remnant of that original hedge survives to this day in Cape Town’s Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens. The Dutch settlement’s hedge of wild almonds was a literal representation of the tearing apart of spaces between Europeans and Africans at the moment of contact. The history of apartheid in South Africa begins with that early gesture. The result was a racial division that not only deepened but also carved out different kinds of social relations, and spatial relations. The first of these was the Imposed Amendment Act No. 21, which extended the 1927 prohibition on sexual relations between whites and blacks to now include whites and Coloureds. The Population Registration Act No. 30 mandated registration of the entire South African population by racial classification and consolidated the notorious pass laws, which regulated and restricted the movement of Africans in cities and other parts of the country. The group areas Act, which institutionalized spatially segregated zones. Finally, the Suppression of Communism Act No. 44 banned the Community Party of South Africa.

Between norm and law

By the end of the 1950s, through this frenzy of lawmaking, South Africa had moved from segregation as norm to its enforcement in the apparatus of law. In this harshly partitioned society, white Europeans occupied the top tier, with political rights and economic resources allocated accordingly; black Africans were demoted to the lowest rungs of society, with minimal rights, and resources withdrawn or reduced to substandard levels. The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act No. 49, like Jim Crow laws in the U.S. South, segregated common public services and social spaces, including accommodations and hospitals, buses and trains, cafés and restaurants, cinemas and theaters, schools and universities. Under the guise of restoring African education to Afri-
cians, the Bantu Education Act codified an inferior curriculum that would channel blacks into forms of labor appropriate to their rank in a segregated society. These laws, both enacted in 1953, further worsened the prospects of shared citizenship between whites and blacks.

Apartheid, then, represented a shift from de facto to de jure segregation (an enforced apartness), held together by the firmest threads of unjust and vigorously contested laws. But it was also an aesthetic act, one based on both the representation and construction of a qualitative difference in the standards of living that delineated the visible dimension of racial apartheid. The exultation of whiteness and concomitant diminution of blackness were written into the codes of racial apartness. The exultation of whiteness and concomitant diminution of blackness were written into the codes of racial apartness. This scriptural transaction of racialized ideology, however, was not only designed as an expression of political ideology, it was also a hierarchical cultural positioning meant to uplift Afrikaners. This goal was attained through social connections and literal—of objects and subjects, and the rituals of truth making visible the rituals of control and segregation mandated by the law. The images of segregation of spaces and amenities represent one way of thinking about the shift from norm to law is to understand how apartheid was sustained. Making laws is one thing, diffusing them through the societal bloodstream is quite a different matter. To think about the shift from norm to law is to understand how power functions, and the political force law offers the deployment and determined use of power. Apartheid laws were conceived and enacted as negations of rights with negative impacts on subjects. But Michel Foucault argues that we must also understand the function of power through the postinstitutionalization of law, by the way law illuminates internal conceptual and philosophical rules, namely power’s coherence as a productive instrument of social reality. “We must cease once and for all,” he writes, “to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it ‘excludes,’ it ‘represses,’ it ‘censors,’ it ‘abstracts,’ it ‘masks,’ it ‘conceals.’ In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production.”

This is an important insight. Apartheid’s social reality was not only the regime of law, but the construction of the necessary context in which the inferior status of Africans was established. This context defined the domains—formal and informal, liberal—and of objects and subjects, and the rituals of truth that bind them. It is by understanding the rituals of truth of apartheid (white entitlement and superiority, for instance), and how these rituals were translated by those who benefited and oppressed, that the intrinsically visual mechanisms of apartheid and segregation as well as delimited the boundaries of access into the city by Africans, not only functioning as textbook cases of the law demonstrably enforced through the pass law, the denial of citizenship, and the sequestering of African populations in mandated townships and native reserves, they were also constituted as intrinsically visual mechanisms. A park bench that has inscribed on it “for whites only” defines a structure. But it is also a picture that reproduces the conditions that secure the image of a norm. In this scenario, whites expect a manifest aesthetic distinction between the quality of their lives and those of blacks. Segregated train entrances, taxi ranks, bus stops, neighborhoods all made visible through highly legible typographic signs brings apartheid into view through the production of signs of division and segregation. Over time, such an expectation becomes internalized as norm, as the reality of the difference between whiteness and blackness. This is one way to read the subtle amelioration of law into the normative conditions of apartheid society. While the state might make laws, it must also produce an effect of their reality that will be clearly understood by a fair number of whites for whom those laws are at least a reminder that one knows that the access to the city will be severely policed, and that the slightest violation of the rules of segregation will result in dramatic measures of police harassment. The pass laws functioned in essentially this way. No one understood the intrinsic relationship between the norm, actuality, and the anxieties of apartheid more and exploited their pictorial values better than Ernest Cole (see pages 204–13). His book House of Bondage is an essay not only on the conditions of apartheid, but on how apartheid’s unambiguous pictorial values were demonstrably placed before the public at large. Cole’s images also demonstrate the central position that photography would play in documenting, as well as undoing, apartheid. To understand why, it will be necessary to examine the history of photography in South Africa before the onset of apartheid and after.
APARTHEID AND PHOTOGRAPHIC CULTURE

On the basis of existing evidence, it is reasonable to suggest that what we know today as South African photography emerged in 1948. But this does not mean there was no photography in South Africa before the advent of apartheid. In fact, it dates back to the country’s very beginnings. As Peter Metelerkamp writes,

The history of photography in South Africa is almost as old as the medium itself. Sir John Herschel, son of Sir William Herschel the discoverer of Uranus, and himself a famous astronomer, was the discoverer of the action of hyposulfates on silver. He spent several years in Cape Town in the 1830’s and coined the term “photography” after his return to Europe in 1838. He had a camera obscura installed in Cape Town and made several sketches from its images. That photographic and proto-photographic techniques had been available in South Africa only underlines the fact of its various uses prior to the period before 1948. For more than one hundred years, the practice of photography in South Africa passed through a series of discourses ranging from mimetic representations of colonial life, street scenes, landscape, and studio photography to ethnographic and genre scenes developed under the rubric of Native Studies. Alfred Martin Duggan-Cronin, an Irish-born mine security guard turned photographer, arrived in South Africa in 1897 to work in the Kimberley mines and would produce perhaps the most elaborate and exhaustive anthropological and photographic work on South African ethnic groups. His sprawling, eleven-volume Bantu Tribes of South Africa, published over a period of twenty-seven years beginning in 1928, remains unrivaled in the ethnographic genre of Native Studies. His work followed, but departed from, the earlier nineteenth-century carte-de-visite pictorial constructions of natives in South Africa. Other photographers, such as Constance Stuart Larrabee and Leon Levson, like Duggan-Cronin before them, saw in the image of the rural African, on the one hand, and the urbanized “native”, on the other, a modern duality that foregrounded a certain formulation of the ethnographic turn in the intersection of tribality and modernity.

The photographs of Stuart Larrabee, Levson’s more overtly political documentary pictures (figs. 3, 4), and to some extent Anne Fischer’s studies of white poverty and Jansja Wissemu’s documentations of the life of the Coloured community in District Six in Cape Town, mark a transitional point of photo-

FIG. 4. Leon Levson, Johannesburg photographer, Ferreirastown, 1940s.
The duality of tribal and modern was ruptured in 1948. The election of the Afrikaner-led National Party, which turned on the crucial question of citizenship, was therefore a watershed event for South African photography. The pictorial imagination of the camera not only became squarely focused on the struggle against apartheid, but the process of bringing graphic contact between the Other and the camera in the wake of apartheid. The work of Fischer especially seems to have been influenced by the Simbionese vision of rural poverty made famous in the U.S. Farm Security Administration work of Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, and Margaret Bourke-White.

In 1949, Bourke-White, on assignment for Life, arrived in South Africa in the wake of the National Party election victory to photograph the changing situation in the country. Among the photographs she made, published in the January 16, 1950, issue of the magazine, four stand out. The first is an image of South Africa’s minister of justice C. R. Swart and his wife in the company of another couple during a celebration commemorating the Voortrekkers, Boer pioneers of the nineteenth century (fig. 5). While the men wear contemporary three-piece suits and hats, the women’s attire harks back to the dress style of the Voortrekkers. This depiction of modernity and tradition, a pre-1948 Afrikaner ideal of feminine virtue and a post-1948 vision of masculinist modern nation builders, captures a central tenet of Afrikaner nationalism. The three other pictures by Bourke-White are more firmly anchored in the space and territory of apartheid.

The work of Fischer especially seems to have been influenced by the Simbionese vision of rural poverty made famous in the U.S. Farm Security Administration work of Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, and Margaret Bourke-White. In 1949, Bourke-White, on assignment for Life, arrived in South Africa in the wake of the National Party election victory to photograph the changing situation in the country. Among the photographs she made, published in the January 16, 1950, issue of the magazine, four stand out. The first is an image of South Africa’s minister of justice C. R. Swart and his wife in the company of another couple during a celebration commemorating the Voortrekkers, Boer pioneers of the nineteenth century (fig. 5). While the men wear contemporary three-piece suits and hats, the women’s attire harks back to the dress style of the Voortrekkers. This depiction of modernity and tradition, a pre-1948 Afrikaner ideal of feminine virtue and a post-1948 vision of masculinist modern nation builders, captures a central tenet of Afrikaner nationalism. The three other pictures by Bourke-White are more firmly anchored in the space and territory of apartheid.

The work of Fischer especially seems to have been influenced by the Simbionese vision of rural poverty made famous in the U.S. Farm Security Administration work of Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, and Margaret Bourke-White. In 1949, Bourke-White, on assignment for Life, arrived in South Africa in the wake of the National Party election victory to photograph the changing situation in the country. Among the photographs she made, published in the January 16, 1950, issue of the magazine, four stand out. The first is an image of South Africa’s minister of justice C. R. Swart and his wife in the company of another couple during a celebration commemorating the Voortrekkers, Boer pioneers of the nineteenth century (fig. 5). While the men wear contemporary three-piece suits and hats, the women’s attire harks back to the dress style of the Voortrekkers. This depiction of modernity and tradition, a pre-1948 Afrikaner ideal of feminine virtue and a post-1948 vision of masculinist modern nation builders, captures a central tenet of Afrikaner nationalism. The three other pictures by Bourke-White are more firmly anchored in the space and territory of apartheid.

The work of Fischer especially seems to have been influenced by the Simbionese vision of rural poverty made famous in the U.S. Farm Security Administration work of Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, and Margaret Bourke-White. In 1949, Bourke-White, on assignment for Life, arrived in South Africa in the wake of the National Party election victory to photograph the changing situation in the country. Among the photographs she made, published in the January 16, 1950, issue of the magazine, four stand out. The first is an image of South Africa’s minister of justice C. R. Swart and his wife in the company of another couple during a celebration commemorating the Voortrekkers, Boer pioneers of the nineteenth century (fig. 5). While the men wear contemporary three-piece suits and hats, the women’s attire harks back to the dress style of the Voortrekkers. This depiction of modernity and tradition, a pre-1948 Afrikaner ideal of feminine virtue and a post-1948 vision of masculinist modern nation builders, captures a central tenet of Afrikaner nationalism. The three other pictures by Bourke-White are more firmly anchored in the space and territory of apartheid.

The work of Fischer especially seems to have been influenced by the Simbionese vision of rural poverty made famous in the U.S. Farm Security Administration work of Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, and Margaret Bourke-White. In 1949, Bourke-White, on assignment for Life, arrived in South Africa in the wake of the National Party election victory to photograph the changing situation in the country. Among the photographs she made, published in the January 16, 1950, issue of the magazine, four stand out. The first is an image of South Africa’s minister of justice C. R. Swart and his wife in the company of another couple during a celebration commemorating the Voortrekkers, Boer pioneers of the nineteenth century (fig. 5). While the men wear contemporary three-piece suits and hats, the women’s attire harks back to the dress style of the Voortrekkers. This depiction of modernity and tradition, a pre-1948 Afrikaner ideal of feminine virtue and a post-1948 vision of masculinist modern nation builders, captures a central tenet of Afrikaner nationalism. The three other pictures by Bourke-White are more firmly anchored in the space and territory of apartheid.

The work of Fischer especially seems to have been influenced by the Simbionese vision of rural poverty made famous in the U.S. Farm Security Administration work of Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, and Margaret Bourke-White. In 1949, Bourke-White, on assignment for Life, arrived in South Africa in the wake of the National Party election victory to photograph the changing situation in the country. Among the photographs she made, published in the January 16, 1950, issue of the magazine, four stand out. The first is an image of South Africa’s minister of justice C. R. Swart and his wife in the company of another couple during a celebration commemorating the Voortrekkers, Boer pioneers of the nineteenth century (fig. 5). While the men wear contemporary three-piece suits and hats, the women’s attire harks back to the dress style of the Voortrekkers. This depiction of modernity and tradition, a pre-1948 Afrikaner ideal of feminine virtue and a post-1948 vision of masculinist modern nation builders, captures a central tenet of Afrikaner nationalism. The three other pictures by Bourke-White are more firmly anchored in the space and territory of apartheid.
29

The popularity of Drum and the pictures it painted of Afri- can modernity, of deeply creative lives being lived in the midst of political repression, did not go unnoticed by the apartheid state. Perhaps it was the success of Drum in shap- ing the image of African modernity that spurred the apartheid government’s Department of Information to sponsor the South Afri- can Panorama. A propaganda tool more than anything else, the magazine, though similar in format, lacked Drum’s pic- torial bravura. For a brief spell in the late 1950s, Panorama employed Ian Berry, a British photographer who also con- tributed to Drum. The assignments that Berry undertook for Panorama—hackneyed depictions of “natives,” Zulu wed- dings, and African extroa, sandwiched between fantasies of white civility featuring “eminent” white South Africans—were sharply at odds with his work for Drum, the most important of which was his record of the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960 (see pages 176–81). This dichotomy, writ large in two maga- zines of such opposed agendas, embodies the two pictorial constrictions that dominate the history of photography in the early apartheid period.

The consequent outpouring of photographic production and the sophisticated network of publishing, distribution, and dissemination that was firmly established by the 1980s, a period in which radical political activism emboldened photog- raphers to search for new kinds of imagery, marked a potent confluence of the visual language of photography. At least two competing visions of photographic practice emerged in this period. The first was argued from the point of view of social documentary rather than photojournalism. Social docu- mumentary was the founding ethos of the Afrapix collective, a disparate group of photographers—Paul Weinberg, Omar Badsha, Juda Ngwenya, Jimmy Matthews, Cedric Nunn, Lesley Lawson, Biddy Partridge, MSxoe Msy, Ouy Timim, Sants Mokasaken, Paul Alberts, Chris Ledochowski, Jeava Rapajopaul, and other loosely affiliated members—who’s ideas about the role of photography in the struggle against apartheid were predicated on an analytical notion of the photographic image (see pages 372–409). Photojournalism, on the other hand, embodied a kind of frontline approach to image making. The photography is not an analytical object but a conveyer of information, and the more direct its emotional content the more vivid its narrative becomes. A statement signed collectively by the twenty photographers featured in the book Beyond the Barricades expresses the large ambi- tions of documentary photography in the struggle against apartheid:

As communities were debating and discuss- ing the shape of a future post-apartheid society, photographers were drawn into this process and began to question the traditional practice of photography. This collective document and ac- companying exhibition represent an approach to documentary photography among a growing num- ber of both black and white South African photog- raphers. Since the early 1980s, these photogra- phers have been coming together to share their skills, ideas, and work as part of a commitment to documentary photography and nonracialism.

For photography here is not merely an individualized ap- proach to recording images, but a collective product aimed at the annihilation of inequality. Not all photographers, how- ever, shared this ideal of an overtly political and transparent- ly partisan photographic practice. The question of which side the photographer was on came to a head at a now infamous conference organized by the ANC in Gaborone, Botswana, as part of the Culture and Resistance Festival. There, Peter McKenzie boldly stated that “No photographer can lay claim to an individual artistic merit in an oppressed society.” David Goldblatt, for one, strongly disagreed. Already a target of critique for failing to clearly align his work with the goals of “struggle photography,” he stood his ground, even though politically he was deeply opposed to apartheid and a staunch supporter of most of the photographers at the conference. He later explained:

In 1981 the ANC organised a conference in Bo- toswana on liberation and the arts (at the time the ANC’s connection with this event could not be an- nounced publicly since the movement [sic] was banned). A day was devoted to each art. On the day devoted to photography, my colleagues rose, one after another, to support the notion that photo-ographers should use their cameras as weap- ons in the liberation struggle. Peter Magubane was criticised because work he had exhibited in Sweden showed black people as being oppressed rather than as strong in resistance. It was ironic that Peter, who had risked so much to expose conditions under apartheid, should now be told to be a better propagandist. I said the camera was not a machine-gun and that photographers shouldn’t confuse their response to politics of the country with their role as photographers. The latter demanded a degree of dispassion. They should not deliberately seek to be positive or negative, but should attempt to convey the real- ity of things, with all its attendant complexity, as well as they could.

These critical debates formed a rich terrain for the produc- tion of some of the most incisive photography during the 1980s in South Africa. By mid-decade, a group of young, brash, risk-taking practitioners in their twenties embodying a radi- cal alternative attitude had arrived on the scene. Collectively known as the Bang Bang Club, Greg Marinovich, Ken Oosterbroek, Kevin Carter, and Joao Silva were hired guns in the midst of the mediatization of conflict and the orgy of gore and blood that accompanied its depiction (see pages 484–99). The approach of the Bang Bang Club was full-on frontality. Rather than a nuanced, composed framing of resistance, Ma- rinevich et al. depict struggle as a scene of chaotic, entropic space: violent conflict between warring factions steeped in blood that accompanied its depiction (see pages 484–99). The approach of the Bang Bang Club was full-on frontality. Rather than a nuanced, composed framing of resistance, Ma- rinevich et al. depict struggle as a scene of chaotic, entropic space: violent conflict between warring factions steeped in blood that accompanied its depiction (see pages 484–99).
ised footage. However, the Bang Bang fraternity did not own a monopoly on this type of visual production. In fact, the events of the Soweto Uprising of June 16, 1976, marked an important breakthrough in the role of the camera at the forefront of politics dedicated to exposing the underbelly of apartheid. Because of the dramatic events that apartheid produced, photographic literalness fueled a perception that image production in South Africa tended to eschew nuance in favor of, as Njabulo Ndebele has argued, the photograph-ready spectacle. This perception has merit. But it is not the entire story. There are numerous instances, both by intent and happenstance, of discrete, slightly withdrawn photographic production that yet remained on the frontlines, such as the work of George Hallatt, Joe Alfers, and Roger Ballen. The pictorial records of apartheid—whether quiet pictures probing the seemingly mundane or the brash images of frontline photography—are not merely vehicles for presenting facts. They are above all ways of seeing and knowing, and, as argued by the photographers themselves, oftentimes a form of politics dedicated to exposing the underbelly of apartheid and its social conditions.

TOPOGRAPHICAL SCARRING: PHOTOGRAPHING APART/HEID

Beyond social documentary and photojournalism, beyond the analytical and collective, the artistic and the political, the interpretive and frontal, there is yet another photographic strategy that seems entirely identified with the work of David Goldblatt. Picture this: an innocuous black-and-white photograph that parsimoniously describes a sliver of cobblestone path curving into a dense clump of bush as it is today (fig. 12). The hedge in Goldblatt’s photograph does nothing to alert the general viewer to the deeper meaning it records. This is the photograph-ready spectacle. But its abstracted banality has a lot to teach us. It underlines and signifies the literalness of the apartheid condition. The architecture of the hedge represents what could be called the founding story of modern South Africa: It is the image of the country’s creation myth, the pure separation between civility and barbarism. Of all the images that trace the history of apartheid, this photograph by Goldblatt is perhaps least likely to attract a second look. But its abstracted banality has a lot to teach us about the varied mechanisms that define the representations and politics of apartheid. On this fact alone—a hedge—the landscape of South Africa was shaped, and, by extension, the history and politics of separation, segregation, colonialism: in short, apartheid, which radically deconstructed and eroded all social, cultural, political, and economic relations, was based on a principle of racial apartness that is today lost in the well-tended greenery of the hedge. The architecture of this apartheid, whether liberal or juridical, has for generations of South African artists and writers served as a mnemonic and iconographic burden. Speaking about his film Felix in Exile, William Kentridge articulates the relationship between memory and landscape:

In Felix in Exile, which was made in 1994 at the time of the first election, there was a lot of political violence in South Africa. One of the questions in the film is the way in which the landscape absorbs its history: where there’s been a battle, where there’s been a massacre. And the landscape itself, after a certain length of time, kind of hides those traces. . . . In the film, I was interested in thinking about the way in which the landscape forgets its history, as a metaphor for our history.10

The landscape in apartheid South Africa, as in all colonial situations, is freighted with both spatial and temporal disjunctures. Representations of what photographer Paul Albers calls “Borderlands of Apartheid”—between the townships and the urban centers—have stripped away at this landscape, tracing its liminal vectors, excavating its raw anatomy, and inscribing through pictorial analysis a descriptive vision of the land and the burden that the juridical framework of apartheid imposed on the navigation and negotiation of territory. Apart/heid in this way, apart/heid, is that which one of the most abhorred political systems was erected. Goldblatt’s photograph demonstrates how the archive of apartheid, much like the perfect crime, hides in plain sight, often making itself normal, inconspicuous, unremarkable, and largely unremarked. As the photograph shows, the superposition of the apartheid system is encrusted in the thin layer of its natural environment. Its survival today, as a manicured, incessantly preserved memory in the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens in Cape Town, gives us a strange but familiar image, and a structure.11

ENGAGED AND STRUGGLE PHOTOGRAPHY: DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES AND STRUCTURES OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE

I have suggested two important features of South African photography. The first is the idea that a truly South African photography emerged with the formation and consolidation of the apartheid state, with strategies developed in direct response to it. And secondly, how photography came to occupy a central discursive space in the documentation of apartheid. Here, photography was at the scene of the crime. The Defi-
ance Campaign of 1952, organized by the ANC, the South African Indian Congress, and other political organizations, and documented by photographers such as Eli Weinberg and Jurgen Schadeberg (see pages 84–107), was an early instance of the use of photography to document the anti-apartheid resistance. Like Cornell Capa’s idea of “concerned photography,” one might designate the strategies of post-1948 photographic production in South Africa as engaged photography.

Subtending this designation is the more widely used appellation struggle photography, a term that would crystallize in the wake of the student uprising of June 16, 1976. Images of the Soweto protests by luminaries such as Magubane, Nzima, and Kumalo represent a turning point in the frontline status of struggle photography.

Magubane is an exemplary case of the photographer as opponent of the regime. By the time of the events of June 16, he had worked for two decades on the frontlines of the struggle. From his early days with Drum, he suffered relentless government harassment. His Soweto images appeared a year after the apartheid regime had lifted a five-year ban on his work as a photographer. Before the ban, he had been imprisoned and placed in solitary confinement for some 500 days. For his Soweto work, he was beaten and jailed again. His one major regret: a failure to produce any usable images of the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, in which the police opened fire on unarmed protesters, killing sixty-nine and wounding scores more. However, his photograph of the mass funeral of the victims marks a seminal moment in the transformation of the struggle from nonviolent protests to armed resistance (see page 182). The event convinced activists that a negotiated settlement with the apartheid state was impossible, and marked a radical break with the resistance movement’s strategy of nonviolence. In fact, by 1960 it was clear that the goal of the apartheid government was to completely destroy the movement, through brutal repression, harassment, imprisonment, and ultimately exile of the leadership. It was in the shadow of Sharpeville that Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the ANC’s armed wing, formed in 1961. Protest had shifted to radicalism, a shift reflected in photographic output. The riveting and powerful images Magubane produced during and in the aftermath of the Soweto Uprising ushered in a new era of struggle photography.

In its explicit frontline relationship to documenting apartheid and resistance to it, struggle photography has a corollary in contemporaneous artistic practice that came to be known as “resistance art.” But a distinction should be made between struggle photography, resistance art, and engaged photography, if only to sharpen our understanding of the forms of criticality deployed in post-1948 photography. It would be too simplistic to label every type of visual production that was overtly critical of apartheid as either struggle photography or resistance art. It is in this regard that I have introduced the notion of engaged photography, that is to say, a photography operating with a critical awareness of apartheid that seeks to represent and understand it, against the idiom of struggle photography, whose explicit mission is to delegitimize apartheid. Yet, the distinction is not a straightforward one, since many photographers straddled both modes. Ernest Cole’s House of Bondage, for example, is one such hybrid species of anti-apartheid photography. Even in the case of David Goldblatt, who insists on making that distinction apparent in his work by refusing the use of his photographs for political purposes, the distinction is essentially rhetorical.
READING APARtheid IN THE PHOTOGRAPH: SIGNS TAKEN AS RESISTANCE

In the heading of this section of the essay, I have deliberately conflated two terms in the relationship that images of anti-apartheid struggle have to its representation. This is in the interplay between the photograph as text and the image as an instrument of signification. To represent an event is crucially different from what its images signifies. And I am particularly intrigued by the possible readings one can bring to images of the struggle against apartheid. What interests me most is the reading of the photograph as a graphic and scripted image, in other words, the relationship between the document as text and the image as index. I am thinking here of Carol Armstrong’s important analysis of early photography and how images initially circulated in the form of the page, in an album: a book of photographs. Armstrong’s quest, she wrote, was to perform a critical exegesis, “a kind of photographic explication de texte that involves an oscillation between close looking and close reading. . . .” Photographs of the anti-apartheid struggle blossomed in the context of their relentless textualization as documents that laid down truth claims, as evidence for the prosecution of apartheid ideology. Armstrong’s suggestion of close looking and reading in the context of the circulation of photographs of struggle through a global network of syndication and distribution presents us with the potential of the photograph less as a document of veracity but as a sign, whose naturalized occurrence in the domain of the gaze which unites the reading and looking function of the photographic image is not only to convey the truth, but to qualify the truth embedded in the transmission of images. For instance, the rhetoric of Black Power would have rejected any projection of the weakness of black activists in the face of massive repression. What would constitute the truth of anti-apartheid struggle—a man weeping over a dead comrade or a clenched fist punching the air in defiance? This question, among others, is pertinent to understanding the complex representational and signifying structures of struggle and engaged photography.

THE PRINTED PHOTOGRAPH

Between 1967, when Cole’s book House of Bondage was first published, and the end of the 1980s, there emerged a strong publishing culture in South Africa devoted to the critical analysis of the apartheid condition. Small-scale literary journals—Contrast, edited by Jack Cope; The Classic, founded by Nat Nakasa; and Staffrider, edited by Andries Oliphant—and a number of photographic books would solidify the essential discursive vision of photography making in South Africa.16 Drum magazine was one of the first publications to make photography on the page a significant component of the discursive environment. Two years after the photograph reproduced on its cover had become just as important as the camera. The page put images in circulation and constructed modes of spectatorship. A number of the books that appeared between the early 1970s and the end of the 1980s were modeled along the lines of the photo essay. Goldblatt’s On the Mines (1973), Some Afrikaners Photographed (1975), In Bloxburg (1982), Lifetimes: Under Apartheid (1988), and The Transported of KwaNdebele (1989); Omar Badsha’s Ulundi (1985); Paul Alberts’ The Borders of Apartheid (1983); and Roger Ballen’s Corpo (1994) represent the essence of documentary studies of apartheid that came to the fore after Cole’s pioneering book.21 The 1980s were especially crucial in the development of South African photography along the lines of publications. Of the many that appeared during this period, two anthologies stand out.

The first, South Africa: The Cordoned Heart, was in many ways the signature presentation aimed at solidifying the social documentary philosophy of the Afrapix collective. Edited by Omar Badsha, a co-founder of the collective, and featuring the work of many other photographers, The Cordoned Heart emerged as part of the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa conducted in 1986. Remarkable for its overt anti-apartheid content, the images in The Cordoned Heart were starkly different from those produced for the First Carnegie Inquiry, published in 1972. The changed first commission focused on white poverty, the second on poverty in black rural areas and urban townships. The photographic inquiry of The Cordoned Heart and the accompanying exhibition discarded the social analysis of race and difference in South Africa and focused instead on the logical of contextualizing apartheid through photography.

The second anthology, Beyond the Barricades: Popular Resistance in South Africa, largely extended the strategy of The Cordoned Heart. However, its imagery drew more from the state of emergency that was implemented in 1986 than from the problem of poverty.

NOTES ON GESTURE

The career of the opposition to apartheid can perhaps be read through the contrast between two gestures. Let us consider the gesture of the thumbs-up sign, as a signal of support, solidarity, community, commitment, and commiseration between and among activists and their supporters. When we examine the photographs of mass actions of the 1950s such as the Defiance Campaign (1952) and the Treason Trial (1955–61), we find the ubiquitous demonstration of this sign. Throughout the 1950s, the thumbs-up sign was still conceived in relation to the Gandhian philosophy of nonvio- lence, the use of the thumbs-up sign signified the belief that actions of persuasion—boycotts, stay-at-homes, strikes, civil disobedience—were viable strategies in the struggle to overturn apartheid. Demonstrations had an almost festive air; groups gathered in song; protesters gave the thumbs-up sign as encouragement and solidarity to detained activists; especially during important campaigns, activists posed for the camera, smiling, monk, enthusiastic in the rightness of their cause (fig. 14). The thumbs-up captured perfectly the idea that the ideologies of apartheid could be convinced to negotiate through a show of nonviolent mass action.

The commitment to nonviolence came to an effective end on March 21, 1960. The crystalizing event was the Sharpeville Massacre, in which sixty-nine protesters defying the pass laws were shot by the police.22 With the abandonment of peaceful, nonviolent action came a more militant, uncompromising gesture—the clenched fist.

This gesture signaled not only that many members of the movement had abandoned their passive resistance; 1960 was a crucial turning point in the apartheid state’s response to resistance. At the mass burial of the Sharpeville victims, photographed by Peter Magubane (see page 182), the carried row of coffins laid out before the graves brought home to the world the state of politics, and with it the commitment of the resistance to armed opposition. The government declared the first state of emergency that year; repression intensified and a fierce assault against the movement and its leadership sought to destroy all avenues of challenge to the supremacy of white rule. As a consequence, in 1961, the ANC and its allies formed Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the military wing of the organization. From then on, the battle was joined. Mass- sive show trials led to the conviction and imprisonment of the most senior and radical leaders of the ANC and the Commu- nist Party, the exile of other prominent leaders, and the execution of young people, who left the country to join the armed resistance.

In the 1960s, the raised clenched fist became a symbol of international Black Power, a sign of defiance against op- position. In South Africa, the gesture appeared organically among radical activists who wanted to defend themselves
against the brutality of the emerging security state. It was already the sign of differentiation between Black Power radicals and liberals within the membership of the ANC. Out of the dispute about strategy and black nationalist ideology within the movement, and particularly the antipathy of the radical Black Power bloc toward collaboration with Indians and white activists, emerged the more confrontational Pan-African Congress (PAC). This breakaway faction saw no purpose in compromise or in adopting a nonviolent stance in the face of state brutality and violence.11

In a telling image, Robert Sobukwe, founder and intellectual leader of PAC, marches to the police station in Orlando on March 21, 1960 (the same day as the shooting in Sharpeville), during an anti-pass protest with members of his group. As they walk past a group of African police officers, instead of a fist, they raise their hands in an open palm, perhaps a gesture of nonconfrontation. In a photograph by Alf Kumalo, a primly dressed Winnie Mandela, standing outside the courthouse in Johannesburg, where her husband Nelson Mandela has just been sentenced to life in prison at the end of the Rivonia Trial, raises a clenched fist in defiance (fig. 15). From the thumbs-up sign to the clenched fist, from the open palm to the V for Victory, these gestures can be read both as exercises in signification with their own communicative meanings and as resistance to apartheid through the years in numerous photographs of mass mobilization. The shift from one gesture to another produces in that very elementary signification a new image of the resistance to apartheid, thus shifting from nonviolence to revolt. Nevertheless, it is necessary to underscore the fundamental discursive discourse of the image of the fist, as it travels from gesture to representation, from symbol to sign, from significer to signification. The image of the raised clenched fist, thrust upward in defiance, has been a ubiquitous one in the history of modern radical struggles. It is not only a symbol of power, it signifies self-affirmation, subjecthood, and subjectivity.

CONSTRUCTING THE MULTITUDE: FUNERALS, PUBLIC MOURNING, AND THE ICONOGRAPHY OF MASS POLITICS

Beyond the gesture, the communicative value, or rather, the legibility of the photograph as a sign in the reading of the discursive potential of images of the struggle appears through other image typologies. If Sharpeville bore witness to the transformation of the gesture, the events of that day also produced the picture of the funeral as one of the central iconographic emblems of the anti-apartheid struggle.

Magubane’s photographs of the burial of the Sharpeville dead mark a moment from which funerals became not just occasions for mourning but a ritualized space of mass mobilization. Because apartheid was a potent killing machine, the upsurge of funerals, especially in the 1980s, created a new form of politics, and a frontier of radical opposition in the struggle. Funerals galvanized community outrage and resistance, a fact potently registered in their unceasing recurrence in the work of photographers, from the funerals of Hector Pieterson to Steve Biko, to the mass gathering that turned out for the burial of the Cradock Four (Matthew Doniew, Fort Calata, Sparrow Mkhonto, and Sicelo Mhlauli), activists who were abducted and murdered by the security police in Eastern Cape. The photographs of funerals by a host of photographers, ranging from gille de vlieg, Guy Tillim, Cedric Nunn, Oscar Badaha, Gideon Mendel, among others, provide another discursive layer in the reading of images of anti-apartheid resistance. Funerals became universalizing emblems of the people’s structures of feeling and identification. They combined mourning and pageantry to become instruments for constructing the idea of community, belonging, and identity.

SIGNIFYING SPEECH: PROTEST SIGNS AND THE RHETORIC OF RESISTANCE

If funerals provided the arena for the political production of the multitude, protests, strikes, and marches, often accompanied by a form of almost joyful, raucous, ritualized dancing, followed by vigorous singing, synchronized stomping, and swaying of the body called toyi-toying (fig. 16), were platforms on which the visuality of mass politics was enacted. Beyond the images of protests themselves, however, a significant aspect of anti-apartheid visuality is the protest sign. Protest signs traditionally are written as demands or as expressions of specific subject positions. Little is that an address, usually conveyed through a surrogate voice. Within the context of the struggle against apartheid, the written signs displayed at funerals, strikes, marches, and protests, as well as being frames of discursivity, were fundamentally expressive of creating signifying speech that created meaning in response to apartheid. Photographs document the prolific production of signs as forms of speech and their pervasive and relentless distribution through multiple channels and frameworks around which the resistance to apartheid took place. As a minor literary form, protest signs served not only as vivid testimonies against oppression and the demand for rights, the specificity of their signifying speech enunciated the boundary between presence and absence, visibility and invisibility. To speak, therefore, through the proliferation of signs was a mark of subjectivity, of becoming a subject. Speech acts in this form denoted citizenship (see pages 286–307). The Black Sash, Performativity, and Bearing Witness against Apartheid

In 1955, a group of English-speaking white liberal women formed the Women’s Defence of the Constitution League, commonly known as the Black Sash. Their principal goal was to mobilize against apartheid policies, using their privileged status as Europeans to challenge the regime and bear witness to the injustice it perpetrated. The group’s initial action was a protest against the purging of Coloured voters in the Cape from the voter rolls. Soon their actions expanded to encompass confrontations with the entire apartheid system and its flaunting of laws protecting civil liberties. In the course of their dramatic, disciplined, choreographed, and highly performative demonstrations and silent protests, the group developed a distinctive visual iconography involving coordinated gestures and poses by the members. The most prominent iconography, from which the popular name of the group derived, was a black sash worn across the right shoulder and under the left arm, then draped and tied to the left hip in a knot. In each of their wardless protests, the women stood either in long columns with their hands behind their backs or holding signs printed on symmetrically sized vertical white boards on which demands and declarations, written as if by a copywriter, announced their denunciations of the apartheid system (see pages 162–49).

The protest as a sign of contestation as an act of bearing witness has long been used in oppositional politics, in civil disobedience actions, boycotts, and strikes. The marches organized by Martin Luther King Jr. and other leaders of the American Civil Rights movement are contemporaneous with those occurring in South Africa from the early 1950s onward. Comparative analysis of the iconography of the Civil Rights and anti-apartheid movements, along with their visual record, reveals a striking similarity in strategies developed in both political contexts. What makes the protests of the Black Sash uniquely iconographic was the signifying ideal they put forward in a camera-ready fashion. First, Black Sash protest signs were designed not only to be visible in the public sphere, but more importantly, almost as photographic events. In other words, they were both physical presentations and indexi-
blankness created an impenetrable mask that betrayed little and when not wearing a hat, the hair was always freshly cut. For older members, this often included a hat and white gloves. almost identically styled conservative tailored clothing. For this reason, many would place the Black Sash as a synonym for the Black Sash movement. The Black Sash typically wore uniforms and was known for its disciplined behavior. The uniforms were designed to be as similar as possible, with members often wearing the same type of clothing. This uniformity was designed to create a sense of cohesion and unity among the members. The uniforms were often made of traditional materials, such as leather and wool, and were designed to be comfortable and practical for a variety of activities. The uniforms were also designed to be durable and resistant to the elements, which was important for the members who often participated in outdoor activities. The uniforms were also designed to be easily recognizable, with distinctive colors and patterns that were unique to the Black Sash movement. The uniforms were often adorned with symbols and emblems that represented the values and goals of the movement. The uniforms were an important part of the Black Sash movement's identity and helped to create a sense of belonging among the members.
social life and active citizenship, as claimed by both engaged and struggle photographers. What I would like to inscribe in the reading of the bureaucratic order of apartheid to which photography responded are a series of narrative and discursive strategies that run across and come to define apartheid and anti-apartheid photography.

These tendencies and strategies follow the course of pictorial readability, and are to be found in a number of image typologies that have been taken up by a generation of artists who came of age in the post-apartheid era. Throughout the process of this research, what has emerged is not only the resilience and accrued visual power of the photographs and discursive strategies that run across and came to define apartheid and anti-apartheid photography.

1. The black people in the context of the activist movement in South Africa is meant to convey all non-Europeans disfranchised by apartheid.

2. It is necessary here to indicate that the end of apartheid as law represents only the conclusion of the political and legal framework that constituted the basis of its racial politics. However, the end of apartheid law had limited effect on apartheid as fact and reality. Though by no means a definitive and conclusive termination of the apartheid system and its bureaucratic order, the interruption of apartheid as state policy nevertheless signaled a new turn in the ideological struggle toward representative democracy, which in turn would define a post-apartheid South Africa. Indeed, the anti-apartheid state policy’s existence has been consumed with questions dealing with the right from “transition” to democracy in the democratization of equality, social access, economic mobility and empowerment, and civic participation in the wider South African economy.

3. In response to the alarming exclusion of Africans from the articles of the Union, except to degrade their rights, the South African


5. See, for example, Oat-M. Gerhart, Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), on the formation of African nationalism as a response to apartheid. According to Gerhart, the purpose of her book was to explore structures of radicalization within the anti-apartheid struggle in organizations such as the Pan-African Congress and Black Consciousness movement, which developed along the lines of Black Power. The latter had been neglected by historians, who tended to focus on the more multicultural or liberal activists.

6. The first state of emergency under the government of Hendrik Verwoerd was declared on May 15, 1960, in response to the disturbances that occurred after the Sharpville Massacre, in which 69 protesters were shot dead by the police. The protest was part of a campaign against the pass laws organized by the Pan-African Congress (PAC).

7. Two publications from 1994 and 1997 detailing the extent of the repression in South Africa and the cultural responses to it are noteworthy here: Omar Badawi, ed., South Africa: The Condemned Heart (London: The Galaxy Press, 1994), and David Burn and Jaya Taylor, eds., From South Africa: Writing, Photographing, and Art (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). These publications represent the distillation of the creative resources directed toward the resistance to apartheid by artists, essayists, photographers, and writers and remain seminal touchstones in the literature of the anti-apartheid struggle.

8. Even as the Thry and Republican governments of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan in the U.K. (and U.S.) resisted complete cessation of political and economic relations with the apartheid government, behind the scenes they were already preparing for the inevitable. The minority white rule of Ian Smith had come to an end in Rhodesia and was replaced by the government of Robert Mugabe’s ZANU-PF in 1980, which adopted Zimbabwe as the name of the new nation. With Zimbabwe in black majority hands, the corollary in South Africa, though far removed, was no longer as safe as it seemed. A report on South Africa commissioned anourt called Foreign Policy Study Forum, and conducted by a coalition of U.S. academic, labor, and civil society organizations, came to the conclusion that if there was no negotiated settlement, the consequence of violence would be grave as to be unimprovable in how the political impasse would be settled. It needs to be said, however, that all through the 1980s there was no lack in studies on what to do about South Africa. See South Africa: Free Running Out: The Report of the Study Commission on U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).


12. The idea of a model constitution based on national universal franchise was developed and refined in June 25–26, 1955, at the Congress of the People held in Kliptown. The gathering brought together a coalition of the ANC, IFP, and political and religious organizations to draft the document that became the basis of an official provincial, popular anti-apartheid struggle. The Freedom Charter was the result of the democratic process of the Congress of the People. For an analysis and recollections of the event and the meaning of the Freedom Charter, see Raymond Suttner and Jeremy Cronin, 20 Years of The Freedom Charter (Johannesburg: J. Rubicon, 1991).


16. The first wave mobilization against the pass laws, the 1952 Defiance Campaign, in which a coalition of political groups came together to challenge the pass laws, was primarily an attack on the normative symbol of white superiority.


19. An in-depth treatment of the Native Studies genre of South African photographic production is developed in this volume by Michael Godley.


21. See Robin Carmody, et al., Women by Women 25 Years of Women’s Photography in South Africa (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2006). It is worth considering the possible influence of Fischer’s study of white poverty on Roger Ballen’s deliberately abject and staged portraits of what exists outside economic contexts of urban and deprivation. Several books in Ballen’s repertoire have contributed to a vision of practice that foregrounds the human condition and has deliberately courted controversy. See Roger Ballen, Mainland: Images from Rural South Africa (London Books, 1994); Oxford (London: Oxford, 2001); Sharp- Chamber London: Phaidon, 2005). However, it is important to underscore the phantasmatic aspect of Ballen’s work, which in the last decade particularly by contrast with his earlier classical documentary style, emphasized in the beautifully crafted images of rural poverty from his book Deep South: Small Towns of South Africa (Cape Town: Hert, 2002).

22. For an in-depth treatment of the Native Studies genre of South African photographic production is developed in this volume by Michael Godley.


When Paul Weinberg called struggle photography in a recorded interview with the author.


David Goldblatt references this idea of the structure, which the fakir and his mind represents, in his book South Africa: The Structure of Things (New York: Macmillan, 1999).


In the sense that I am using this term, engaged, photography designates a whole set of political attitudes and photographic practices directly devoted to documenting the everyday confrontation of the peoples of South Africa with apartheid’s political order. It was also an effort to reawaken social awareness of the restrictive conditions imposed by apartheid. The primary objective of engaged photography was to show life under apartheid through the prism of active resistance in order to present images of resistance and disobedience, and to articulate the solidarity by activists and diverse communities in the country.

Paul Weinberg used the term struggle to define not only the kinds of images to emerge from the struggle, but the attitudes devoted to the production of such images. For photographers dedicated to struggle photography, their images and practice were integral, rather than a subsidiary part, of the resistance to apartheid. The role the photographer played in the struggle was explicitly political, not only artistic. One instance of the disassociation of photographic practice from aesthetic practice is illustrated in the opening statement read by Peter McKeen at the conference in Salisbury, when he through the treatment of them of “struggle photography,” see “An Aesthetic of Flux and Flap: Struggle Photography,” in Newbury, p. 219–28.

40. The events that became known as the Soweto Uprising could be considered a direct consequence of the Bieta Education Act of 1932, which was introduced by the apartheid government in order to underscore the superiority of education for white students over that of black students. In 1932, in response to an order issued by the Bieta Education ministry that all black schools employ Afrikaans as well as English as the language of instruction, students revolted. See South Africa in Travail: The Disturbances of 1976/77 Evidence Presented by the S.A. Institute of Race Relations to the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Other Places During July 1976 (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1978).

41. In the quest of this failure to adequately capture the visual momentum of the Sharpie Monarch, see Magubane’s comments to Darren Nofu in Defence, pp. 165–62.

42. A report on the massacre was published by Amrouse Reeves, Bishop of Johannesburg, with a foreword by Chief Albert Luthuli, then president of the ANC. The book is illustrated with thirty photographs taken, as the cover states, “before, during, and after the shooting.” The book also contains an appendix of the inquest, which was led by Sidney Kentridge. Reeves states in his book that the book would become the basis for a number of images in films made by William Kentridge. Sidney Kentridge, whose role of handrawn animated films, 12 Drawings for Projects, have increasingly explored the relationship between apartheid and its representation in art. See Amrouse Reeves, Shouting at Sharpeville: The Agency of South Africa’s Children (London: Victor Gallosa, 1960).

43. For an excellent compendium of photographs covering the uprising in Soweto on June 16 and Alexandra on June 17, see Peter Magubane, Axel Ni. 1976: Never, Never Again 25th Anniversary (Johannesburg: Zonnebloem, 1991).

44. Sue Williamson, Resistance is an Art in South Africa (Cape Town: David Philip, 1994).

45. For a thorough treatment of the themes of “struggle photography,” see Andries Walter Oliphant and Ivan Vladislavic, eds., RISE AND FALL OF Apartheid (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1989).