

September 27-29, 2013

URBAN CONVERGENCES

Housing Justice, Left Governments, and Lessons from the Global South



Dharavi Slum in Bombay, by Thomas Leuthard

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Movement activists, progressive politicians, and academics discuss mega events, housing justice, and the right to the city in India, Brazil, and South Africa.

Parsons The New School for Design
Design and Urban Ecologies

**ROSA
LUXEMBURG
STIFTUNG**
NEW YORK OFFICE

The Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung—New York Office in conjunction with Parsons The New School Graduate Program in Design & Urban Ecologies proudly presents:

URBAN CONVERGENCES

Housing Justice, Left Governments, and Lessons from the Global South

Following hard-won liberation struggles against various forms of colonialism, India, Brazil, and South Africa have now emerged as power players on the global stage. While their governments are imbued with the history and rhetoric of left movements, these countries' major cities are spaces of contestation, pitting the need for universal housing, water and electricity access, and employment against the realities of global austerity in the neoliberal age.

This tension is brought closer to home through mega events such as Brazil's upcoming World Cup (2014) and Olympics (2016), as well as South Africa's World Cup (2010) and India's Commonwealth Games (2010). These events seek to transform urban centers of the Global South into cosmopolitan world cities, at the expense of retracting public spaces and services, displacing hundreds of thousands, and further marginalizing the urban poor. How do left governments in these countries address the contradiction of fighting for social justice in a neoliberal world?

Urban Convergences will take this framework as an opening for a series of discussions on how activists, government actors, and academics are confronting these new realities for a vision of a socially just city in the 21st century.

LOCATION: THE NEW SCHOOL

Fri: 6pm-8pm, 55 West 13th Street, Arnhold Hall

Sat: 9am-3:30pm, 66 West 12th Street, Wollman Hall

Sun: 10.30am-5pm, 55 West 13th Street, Arnhold Hall

Details and updates: www.rosalux-nyc.org/urban-convergences

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, 9/27

LOCATION: 55 West 13th Street, Arnhold Hall (2nd Floor), The New School

6:00-6:30pm: REGISTRATION

6:30-6:40pm: **WELCOMING REMARKS**

Stefanie Ehmsen, Co-director, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung—New York Office

6:40-8:00pm: **KEYNOTE ADDRESSES**

Leda Paulani, Municipal Secretary for Planning, São Paulo, Brazil

Miloon Kothari, Former UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, India

8:00-9:00pm: OPENING RECEPTION

Saturday, 9/28

LOCATION: 65 W 11th Street (enter at 66 W 12th Street), 5th Floor, The New School

9:00-9:15am: ARRIVAL

9:15-9:30am: **WELCOMING REMARKS**

*Miguel Robles-Durán, Director, Design & Urban Ecologies Department,
Parsons The New School for Design*

9:30-11:00am: **THE WORLD CUP, SPECTACLE CAPITALISM, AND THE ATTACK ON
FAIR HOUSING**

The upcoming Brazil World Cup has drawn much attention of late. Billions in taxpayer money have been spent, while the rights and needs of the urban poor have been ignored, leading to mass protests around the country. Indeed, with the World Cup shortly followed by the 2016 Olympics, Brazilians must grapple with a form of spectacle capitalism that privatizes the gains and socializes the costs of mega events – at the expense of the poor and the working class. In this context, what lessons can be learned from South Africa’s 2010 World Cup, as well as India’s 2010 Commonwealth Games, both in terms of what to expect and how we can fight?

PANELISTS: *Paul Divakar, General Secretary, Dalit Human Rights/NCDHR, New Delhi, India*

Aly Karam, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

Eloisa Varela, Joint People’s Committees of the World Cup, Brazil

Moderated by Ayşe Çavdar, Istanbul, Turkey

11:00-11:30am: COFFEE BREAK

11:30am-1pm: **FOCUS ON BRAZIL**

Brazil's favelas are known the world over. Painful reminders of the human cost of capitalist exploitation, these shanty towns are nonetheless vibrant with culture, economic activity, and political power. The militarized state treatment of favelas, combined with the retraction of basic services and displacement of its population, threatens to quash this character and further isolate and marginalize the country's urban poor. What should we know about the struggles in the favelas and how they connect to other battles over housing justice and the right to the city?

PANELISTS: *Samuel Queiroz, People's Committee of the World Cup, Fortaleza*
Cosme Felippen, Community Forum of Porto, Rio de Janeiro
Joana Barros, Federation of Organizations for Social and Educational Assistance, Rio de Janeiro
Moderated by Gerhard Dilger, Director, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung—São Paulo Office

1:00-2:00pm: LUNCH

2:00-3:30pm: **FOCUS ON INDIA**

India has a greater population than the whole of the Americas; it has more distinctive cultures and living languages than Europe. Amidst this great size and diversity is a proud left tradition; there is a variety of socialist and communist parties, some of which have governed whole municipalities or regions for decades. India also has some of the world's largest housing challenges, with slums like Dharavi, in Mumbai, housing close to a million people on less than one square mile. How have different municipal governments dealt with the multiple housing crises of the urban poor? What can we learn particularly from the actions of left municipal governments?

PANELISTS: *Manisha Verma, Joint Secretary, National Advisory Council, Government of India, New Delhi*
Amita Bhide, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai
Jayshree Satpute, Director, Nazdeek Alliance for Socio-Economic Rights in South Asia, New Delhi
Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, MIT
Moderated by Ethan Earle, Project Manager, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung—New York Office

Sunday, 9/29

LOCATION: 55 West 13th Street, Arnhold Hall (Room I202), The New School

10:30-10:45am: ARRIVAL

10:45-11:00am: **WELCOMING REMARKS**

Rachel LaForest, Executive Director, Right to the City Alliance, New York

11am-12:30pm: **FOCUS ON SOUTH AFRICA**

The African National Congress broke South Africa's apartheid, brought democracy to the country, and became an international symbol of proud, successful resistance to colonialism. Today, the ANC retains much of its power but little of its original revolutionary anti-colonialism, instead actively dispensing austerity policies. Nonetheless, the ANC continues to employ leftist rhetoric, and many open socialists work actively within its ranks. How do social movement groups seeking transformative change in today's South Africa relate to the ANC? In what ways does the party's left-wing past create opportunities as well as obstacles in the quest for greater housing justice?

PANELISTS: *Patrick Bond, Director, Centre for Civil Society, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban*
David Ntseng, Church Land Programme, Durban
Najuwa Gallant, Tafelsig People's Association, Cape Town
Muziwakhe Gerald Ndlalose, President, Abahlali baseMjondolo, Durban
Moderated by Rachel LaForest, Right to the City Alliance, New York

12:30-1:30pm: LUNCH

1:30-3:00pm: **WORKSHOPS**

Gentrification in the Global North: New York and Berlin

Peter Marcuse, School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University, New York
Kendall Jackman, Picture the Homeless, New York
Ingo Bader, Alliance Against Rents for Profits, Berlin
Moderated by Katharina Weise, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, Berlin

Water & Food: Organizing for Access to Basic Human Rights

Manisha Verma, National Advisory Council, Government of India, New Delhi
Muziwakhe Gerald Ndlalose, President, Abahlali baseMjondolo, Durban
Moderated by Sanjay Bharti, Dalit Human Rights/NCDHR, New Delhi

Theory on the Streets: Toward a Theoretical Framework for 21st Century Housing Justice

Patrick Bond, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban
Miguel Robles-Durán, Parsons The New School for Design
Moderated by Monami Maulik, Director, Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM), New York

3:00-3:30pm: COFFEE BREAK

3:30-5:00pm:

HOUSING JUSTICE AND LEFT GOVERNMENTS: OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLES

In this concluding session, panelists will reflect on the previous days' conversations, with a specific focus on the chances and limits of left governments. Which characteristics are shared between Indian, Brazilian, and South African housing conditions and the movements that struggle to improve them? How can the Left come to terms with the contradictory nature of governing in a neoliberal environment?

PANELISTS: *Josette Cole, Director, Development Action Group, Cape Town, South Africa*
Miloon Kothari, Former UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, India
Leda Paulani, Municipal Secretary for Planning, São Paulo, Brazil
*Moderated by Albert Scharenberg, Co-director, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung—
New York Office*

SPEAKERS

Ingo Bader is a scholar and activist from Berlin, focusing on gentrification and urban subcultures. He is engaged in the national campaign Alliance Against Rents for Profit and in the International Network for Urban Research & Action (INURA).

Joana Barros works as researcher at the Center for Civil Rights of the University of São Paulo. She has also worked as an architect and urban planner. Barros works with the Federation of Organizations for Social and Educational Assistance and as an advisor to the National Right to the City group.

Sanjay Kumar Bharti is a Dalit activist. Since 2010, he has worked as a research and advocacy officer for the Dalit Arthik Adhikar Andolan (DAAA), a wing of the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), where he has been engaged in a project on economic rights and urban poverty.

Amita Bhide is the chair of the Center of Urban Planning, Policy and Governance in the School of Habitat Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India. She is also a recipient of the Inaugural fellowship of the India China Institute of The New School University, New York.

Patrick Bond is professor for political economy at the School of Built Environment and Development Studies and director of the Centre for Civil Society at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban. Working closely with activists and advocacy organizations, his research addresses political ecology, social mobilization, public policy, and geopolitics.

Josette Cole is the director of the Development Action Group in Cape Town. This non-profit organization works to fight poverty and promote integrated urban environments. Cole is an activist, freelance development consultant, researcher, and author.

Ayşe Çavdar is a journalist from Istanbul, Turkey. She has a degree in journalism from Ankara University and a degree in history from Bogazici University. She has worked for newspapers and magazines, including Yeni Şafak, Yeni Yüzyıl, Nokta, Ülke, Atlas, and İstanbul.

Gerhard Dilger is the director of the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung—São Paulo Office. He has been an editor and freelance journalist based in Latin America since 1992 where he reported for the columbian paper *El Tiempo* and the German daily *die tageszeitung*.

Paul Divakar Namala is a founding member of the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), a forum that is fighting against discrimination based on caste and supported by activists, academics, and people's movements throughout the country. He is currently the General Secretary of Dalit Arthik Adhikar Andolan (DAAA).

Ethan Earle is a project manager at the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung—New York Office. He formerly directed the U.S. branch of The Working World, a loan fund for worker-owned cooperatives founded in Argentina. He is an active member of the editorial board of WorkingUSA: The Journal of Labor and Society.

Stefanie Ehmsen is the co-director of the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung—New York Office. Before her appointment in 2012, she was guest professor of gender and diversity at the Beuth Hochschule in Berlin. From 2006 to 2011, Ehmsen was a member of the executive board of the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung.

Cosme Felippsen is an activist working for the Community Forum of Porto, a group fighting the negative impact of mega events on the city of Rio de Janeiro. He is also a community leader of the youth group of Morro da Providencia.

Najuwa Gallant is chair of the Tafelsig People's Association, which is a member of the city's housing steering committee and addresses backyarders, overcrowded houses, and informal settlements.

Kendall Jackman is a member of Picture the Homeless, a citywide, multiracial, bilingual organization founded and led by homeless people living in shelters as well as those living on the streets and in other public places. A native New Yorker, Jackman was active in the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements.

Aly Karam is associate professor at the School of Architecture and Planning and Assistant Dean for Graduate Affairs for the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. He started his career as an architect, with projects in Egypt, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia.

Miloon Kothari served as the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing at the UN Commission on Human Rights from 2000-2008. He is the coordinator of the South Asian Regional Programme of the Habitat International Coalition's Housing and Land Rights Network and a leading advisor on human rights in India.

Rachel LaForest has been the director of the Right to the City Alliance since May 2011. She also directed the organizing and public policy departments of the Transport Workers Union as well as the Actors Equity Association and coordinated successful campaigns for Jobs with Justice, New York.

Peter Marcuse is professor of urban planning at Columbia University in New York City. He practiced law for twenty years, specializing in labor and civil rights law. His work focuses on city planning, housing, social justice, globalization, and urban history. He has written extensively on the right to the city and the Occupy movement.

Monami Maulik is the director of Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM) New York, an organization of low-wage South Asian immigrant workers and youth. She was born in

refugee colonies of Kolkata, India and grew up in the Bronx, New York. She works as a grassroots organizer in the fields of immigration, racial justice, and youth.

Muziwakhe Gerald Ndlalose is the president of Abahlali baseMjondolo (Shack Dwellers), a movement that is based in Durban, South Africa, and that is the largest organization of the militant poor in post-apartheid South Africa.

David Ntseng is the manager at the Church Land Programme, an independent non-profit organization in KwaZulu Natal, working together with grassroots movements for dignity, land and housing rights, and a just and sustainable agrarian transformation.

Leda Maria Paulani is the Municipal Secretary for Planning in São Paulo, Brazil. She has also taught at the Faculty of Economics and Administration at the University of São Paulo and was the president of the Brazilian Society of Political Economy.

Samuel Queiroz is an activist for the People's Committee of the World Cup in Fortaleza, Brazil. He is also a member of the Lauro Vieira de Campos community that is currently mobilizing against threats by the VLT (Light Rail) construction project.

Balakrishnan Rajagopal is associate professor of law and development at the Department of Urban Studies and Planning and founding director of the Program on Human Rights and Justice at the Center for International Studies at MIT. He is one of the founders of the Third World Approaches to International Law Network.

Miguel Robles-Durán is the director of the Urban Ecologies Program at The New School/Parsons in New York, a senior fellow of the Civic City Program, based in Geneva, Switzerland, and cofounder of Cohabitation Strategies, an international non-profit cooperative based in New York and Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Jayshree Satpute is director and co-founder of Nazdeek Alliance for Socio-Economic Rights in South Asia, New Delhi. As a lawyer and human rights activist, Satpute has been advocating the protection of slum dwellers, refugees, poor women, and children at the Supreme Court of India and various High Courts.

Albert Scharenberg is the co-director of the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung—New York Office. Previously, he taught political science at the Free University of Berlin and published on urban politics. Scharenberg also worked as a journalist and served as head of the Science Advisory Board of the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung.

Eloisa Varela is an activist for the national organization Joint People's Committees of the World Cup in Brazil as well as the coordinator of the General Association of People Affected by the Cup (ACAP). Her academic background is in Geography.

Manisha Verma has served as Joint Secretary of the National Advisory Council of India since 2010. Previously, she was director of the Rajiv Gandhi Drinking Water Mission and has worked as Collector and District Magistrate as well as Chief Executive Officer for the Government of Maharashtra, India.

Katharina Weise works for the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung in Berlin, where she is the scientific advisor and coordinator for municipal and local politics and leads the RLS expert group on urban politics.