WHAT’S HAPPENING AT TSHISIMANI CENTRE FOR ACTIVIST EDUCATION?

JULY–DECEMBER 2017

July

04. Travelling Exhibition: phefumla! (breathe) at the Goethe Institute, Johannesburg.


August

05-06. Film Festival: Women, Film and post-apartheid South Africa.


19-20. Unpacking South African Legal History and Education: Constitutionalism or Decolonisation?

September

02 - 03. Russian Revolution Series: Stop-motion animation boot camp for Grade 11 history learners.

29 - 30. Russian Revolution Series: Colloquium for history teachers on approaches to teaching the Russian Revolution.

12. Russian Revolution Series: The Russian Revolution and how it was imagined in the colonial world. Speaker: TBC


01–02. Solidarity Workshop: We Are All Palestinians.
Exhibition: Phefumla! (breathe!), Open Forum
04 July - 11 August

In October 2016, Open Forum ran its first residency programme for artists and students that were invited to participate through an open call and selection process. The 2016 residency generated artwork that includes performance art, video, photography, documentary, curated text, sculpture and sound installation. This work has been curated into the travelling exhibition, Phefumla!(breathe) supported by the Goethe-Institut and Tshisimani Centre for Activist Education. The exhibition education programme includes a dialogue with student activists and Open Forum artists from Cape Town and Johannesburg. Phefumla! (breathe!) is co-curated by Greer Valley in collaboration with the Open Forum residency participants.

Black Women in Cape Town: Sindiwe Magona
05 July

In honouring what Toni Cade Bambara called ‘radical cultural work’ and in continuing the important reflections of African women in literature, Tshisimani will be in conversation with Dr. Sindiwe Magona, feminists, intellectuals, students and youth activists looking at the case of Black Women in Cape Town through Magona’s Living, Loving and Lying Awake at Night on Wednesday.

Film Festival: Women, Film and post-apartheid South Africa
05 - 06 August

The post-apartheid film space has opened up area for a broad depiction of various female identities, allowing for articulation and expression of these identities. At the same time, there have been concerns raised about the depiction of women in South Africa films as “one dimensional”, stereotypical, not existing outside of their expected gender roles and in some instances, these subjects are denied true agency. These entanglements in productions to come in an era of assumed openness – in terms of ideas – are therefore a source of debate and discussion by film audiences.

To facilitate and add to these current debates, Tshisimani Centre for Activist Centre is hosting a two-day workshop that will include the contributions from female filmmakers. This workshop will look at the shifting identities of contemporary women, how these represented in film as well as the shaping of these and other identities by history and the environment.

Vivek Chibber lecture - Indian nationalism: 70-years after independence
10 August 2017; 17.30-20.30.

The on-going calls for ‘radical economic transformation’ as well as arguments about how lack of ‘economic freedom’ undermines political independence, sharply raise questions about the nature of the ideology that drove the liberation struggle, African nationalism. As we examine African nationalism, it is vital to reflect on nationalism that developed in other parts of the global South. India is good case study to consider. Emerging in the 1880s, Indian nationalism drove the struggle against British colonial rule and anchored the mass movement that won political independence in 1947.

Vivek Chibber will present a lecture on Indian nationalism from the days of the Bombay Plan, which advocated strong economic planning measures, to the turn to neoliberalism. Chibber will also touch on contemporary right-wing and ethnic nationalism in India. Tshisimani will host the lecture jointly with the Alternative Information and Development Centre (AIDC) and the Institute for African Alternatives (IFAA).

Chibber is an American-based academic, Marxist theorist and Professor of Sociology at New York University. He is the author of Locked in Place: State-Building and Late Industrialization in India (2003) and Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital (2013).
Political School on Urban Land & Housing (Pilot)

28 August - 01 September

Tshisimani, in partnership with Ndifuna Ukwazi and the Social Justice Coalition, are designing and testing a new training program for activists in urban social movements.

The program will:
1. Interrogate the political, economic and social forces that shape urban conditions in South Africa, Africa and across the world;
2. Introduce a variety of policy and legal instruments that may contribute to the reversal of spatial Apartheid in South Africa;
3. Explore how property power stands in the way of radical change, and discuss what political strategies and tactics might be used to address this.

The course will ultimately cater to new activists being inducted into campaigns for equitable access to urban land, housing and municipal services. The August pilot training will focus on bringing together a small group of leaders, organizers and educators from urban social movements across South Africa. The objective is to test the course and receive critical feedback, and provide participants with training and resources to conduct variations of the course back in their own organisations.

Unpacking South African Legal History and Education: Constitutionalism or Decolonisation?

19 - 20 August

In response to the call of the nationwide student movement for decolonization and the question of western systems of knowledge and symbolic orders, on Saturday 19 – Sun 20 August 2017 Tshisimani is putting together a programme on decolonisation in so far as it relates to the legal discipline. Placing Professor Mogobe Ramose’s work in conversation with the work of law student activists around the country, we hope to make a better sense of this moment in South African jurisprudence and legal activism.

Lecture: The Unresolved National Question in South Africa. Eddie Webster

18 August, 14.00-16.30

Early this year, Edward Webster and Karin Pampallis launched an edited book on why the goal of one united nation living prosperously under a constitutional democracy in South Africa remains elusive. The volume examines the way in which various strands of Left thought have in the past addressed the ‘national question’. It does this by focusing on four foundational traditions – Marxism-Leninism (the “Colonialism of a Special Type” thesis); the Congress tradition; the Trotskyist tradition; and Africanism. The volume also explores the various shifts in the debate from the 1960s onwards, and includes chapters on Afrikaner nationalism, ethnic issues, Black Consciousness, feminism, workerism and constitutionalism.

On Friday 18 August, Eddie Webster will give a lecture on the main arguments of The Unresolved National Question in South Africa: Left thought under apartheid. He will argue why discussions on the ‘national question’ are vital for debates about the decolonisation of knowledge.

Eddie Webster is Research Professor in the Society, Work and Development Institute (SWOP) at the University of the Witwatersrand.

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Stop-motion Workshop: What does the Russian Revolution mean today?

02 - 03 September

2017 marks the centenary of the Russian Revolution, arguably the most important political event of the twentieth century. To honour and reflect on the significance of the revolution and how it has shaped politics in the twentieth century, Tshisimani invites history teachers and Grade 11 learners within the Western Cape/Cape Town to participate in a series of events with the centre: a stop-motion animation boot camp for Grade 11 history learners. Inspired by celebrated animated films from Russia, participants will explore the uses of animation as a political tool, and create their own short stop-motion animation films about the Russian Revolution. These films will be uploaded to our website and social media as an educational resource for a wider audience.

Russian Revolution Series: Colloquium for History Teachers.

29 - 30 September

A colloquium for history teachers on approaches to teaching the Russian Revolution. This colloquium aims to examine the teaching of history and pool resources for enhanced teaching and learning of the history syllabus.

Radical Thinkers’ Series: CLR James (Tshisimani Radical Thinker No.2)

09 -12 October 2017


The year 2018 will mark 80 years since the publication of The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution. This seminal work placed the Haitian Revolution at the centre of popular memory and imagination. The Radical Thinkers series on CLR James looks into the life and ideas of a Caribbean communist, Pan-Africanist and scholar. The series will deal with CLR James as a thinker; race and class in the Haitian Revolution; Pan-Africanism and the ‘politics of the African Diaspora’. It will zoom into debates about James’ fervent hatred for slavery and colonialism as well as his simultaneous attachment to what he deemed universal ideals associated with the Enlightenment.

Race and the Making of the City – Cape Town

27 – 28 October

In March 2016, Tshisimani hosted a workshop exploring the various ways in which race, power and privilege were woven into the fabric of Cape Town. The workshop explored the purported links between blackness and disease, whiteness and purity and how these ideas animated the creation of African and Coloured locations in Cape Town and later served as templates for spatial exclusion of black people from cities. Building on this work and exploring the ways in which this history shapes activism today, Tshisimani will launch an interactive online educational pack through a two-day workshop on 27 – 28 October – a date that coincides with the slave rebellion of 1808.
Public seminar: What ‘revolution’ means today

22 November

Speaker TBC.

The Arab Spring is widely acclaimed for charting a new course or pathways for social change and presenting the world with new ways of doing politics. Asef Bayat looks at how these experiments re-invigorated the idea of radical social change in a way that was not strictly tied to anti-colonial nationalism, Marxist-Leninism and Islamism. Six years later, there is widespread consensus that the Arab Spring made only minimal shifts in the structures of power and societies in which it occurred. Bayat sees these ‘revolutions’ (struggles that put pressure on incumbent regimes to reform themselves) as double-edged swords that present possibilities for avoiding some of the costs associated with revolutionary change, while without constant mobilization and pressure from below, such attempts risk sliding back into old orders. Understanding the reasons for this is central to how we can imagine and fight for radical change in today’s world.

Solidarity Workshop:
“We are all Palestinians”

01 - 02 December

The year 2017 marks the 70th anniversary of the United Nation resolution for the partitioning of Palestine, the 50th anniversary of Israel’s occupation of Palestinian territories during the 1967 Six Day War, and 30 years after the first Intifada erupted. In 2017, it will be ten years after the imposition of a land, sea and air blockade on the Gaza Strip.

In June 2017, Tshisimani organised a 2-day short course on the roots of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. The workshop in December will look at the challenges of building solidarity with Palestinian people and how these can be overcome. This will be done through an examination of the work of solidarity groups in South Africa.