



South Africa's Insurgent Citizens: On Dissent and the Possibility of Politics

By Julian Brown

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Twenty years after South Africa's first democratic election, the nation's politics are more fractious than ever before. The lofty dreams of the early days of the post-apartheid era have dissolved into cynicism in the face of incessant police violence, the quashing of dissent, and the spread of corruption. To many South Africans today, politics is a failed enterprise, the preserve only of the corrupt, the self-interested, the incompetent, and the violent.

With this book, Julian Brown mounts a powerful, polemic argument against that sort of despair. Politics is alive and well in South Africa—if you know where to look. Brown reveals a new kind of politics, in the streets and the courtrooms, a politics created by a new kind of citizen, one that is neither respectful nor passive, but insurgent. South African politics, Brown argues, may be fractured—but it's in those very cracks that a powerful new movement is beginning to grow.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Julian Brown's book offers us a rich and intriguing account of ourselves as a country of protest. His analysis is insightful, and ultimately hopeful—for it is only through principled challenges to the present, on the streets, in the halls of power, and in the courts, that our constitutional ideals of dignity and equality for all can be realised.”

(Justice Edwin Cameron, Constitutional Court of South Africa)

“Julian Brown writes that moments of political insurgency 'can provide a lightning flash of illumination' into the inequalities of South Africa. His book is similarly revealing. He vividly analyses popular politics, insisting that the mobilisation of ordinary, insurgent citizens has and will impact on the shape of society and as yet unpredictable political outcomes.”

(William Beinart, University of Oxford)

“Whereas conventional readings of South African politics worry about a crisis of post-apartheid democracy, Brown offers a provocative argument that makes a welcome contribution to how we understand political agency among poor communities in South Africa today.”

(Thiven Reddy, University of Cape Town)

“*South Africa's Insurgent Citizens* provides an innovative understanding of rising popular protest in the country today. The book shows how, despite growing repression, activists and communities are finding new ways to exert their rights to protest and political expression.”

(Gillian Hart, author of *Rethinking the South African Crisis*)

“A fascinating account of protest based on an unshrinking belief in the importance of an organised, strong, powerful, and vibrant civil society, particularly of poor people. Its controversial thesis is that the early abandonment of protest and settling with the state can retard the strengthening of civil society.”

(Justice Zak Yacoob, former judge of the Constitutional Court of South Africa)

“Rooted in current South African case studies of community organisation, social protest and public interest litigation, this book makes an invaluable contribution to the literature on democratic politics. Beyond this, it offers a compelling vision of the possibilities of claiming justice from below.”

(Sandra Liebenberg, University of Stellenbosch)

“A timely and important analytical contribution to the growing scholarship on contemporary protest politics in South Africa. Brown both challenges existing analytical frameworks and offers innovative ways of thinking about protests.”

(Noor Nieftagodien, University of the Witwatersrand)

“Brown provides a provocative view of South African political society by championing a politics of

disruption by, and on behalf of, those left outside the realm of an oligarchic society. . . . This is a well-written, sober analysis bolstered by extensive research that provides a perspective anyone interested in South Africa and its future should read. Highly recommended.”

(Choice)

“Brown’s book features a similar diagnosis of what ails South Africa. Nonetheless, his focus on the growing mass mobilization of citizens through various civic associations, unions, and protest movements leads him to a cautious optimism about the future.”

(Foreign Affairs)

About the Author

Julian Brown is a lecturer in political studies at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Christopher Jones:

Reading a book tends to be new life style within this era globalization. With examining you can get a lot of information that could give you benefit in your life. Along with book everyone in this world can easily share their idea. Ebooks can also inspire a lot of people. Plenty of author can inspire their particular reader with their story or even their experience. Not only the storyline that share in the ebooks. But also they write about advantage about something that you need case in point. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your sons or daughters, there are many kinds of book that you can get now. The authors on this planet always try to improve their expertise in writing, they also doing some exploration before they write for their book. One of them is this South Africa's Insurgent Citizens: On Dissent and the Possibility of Politics.

Judy Turner:

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