

Debating Economic Policy for South Africa's Post-apartheid Transition:
From Scholarship and Ideology to Policy in Practice

Studies in Critical Social Sciences

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Debating Economic Policy for South Africa's Post-apartheid Transition: From Scholarship and Ideology to Policy in Practice

Critical Reconstructions of Political Economy

VOLUME 8

By

Ben Fine



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Preface

This is the second of three projected Volumes on the political economy of South Africa. The first was intended to demonstrate the availability of policy alternatives. This Volume focuses upon policy debates. The third is intended to cover the nature and evolving character of the Minerals-Energy Complex (MEC), now willingly terminologically amended to be the Minerals-Energy and Financial Complex (MEFC).

As indicated in the opening Chapter, I have struggled over many years to understand how to conceive policymaking in South Africa, whether economic or otherwise, let alone to explain policies adopted in practice. Preparing this and the previous Volume has allowed and forced me to offer some thoughts. To some degree, however, this represents part and parcel of a bigger question over which I have also been engaged, as have others who have not been in some sort of denial. This is what is the continuing dynamic of the MEFC as South Africa's system of accumulation (as, in part, a determinant of policy). Some, but probably a decreasing number, have always denied that it has ever had any theoretical or descriptive purchase on the South African economy, so this is not an issue for them. For others, including myself, more favourably inclined to the MEFC conceptualisation, there is no doubt that the MEFC has, at the very least, been profoundly restructured and transformed in the post-apartheid period. But does this mean that it has evolved itself out of existence?

I do not, at time of writing, know what my answer will be to this question. You will have to wait upon the third Volume which is about (debating) the MEFC. I deliberately sequenced these Volumes so that I could deal with availability of alternative policies (not world view challenging), followed by policy debates (needing me to resolve the first question delineated above), with the MEFC issue yet to be resolved. I look forward to reporting on my deliberations.

I have had some wonderful collaborations and relationships whilst working on South Africa. For this Volume, there are a few of my many co-authors involved. So, my thanks, first and foremost, to them, closely followed by all who have contributed to my endeavours.

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