

The strongest elements of the book are when it goes beyond the minutia of the military conflicts to make larger conclusions as to why the colonial powers in the wars of decolonization eventually resorted to the use of extreme violence and how we characterize that violence. As stated in the introduction of the book (p. 16), this is indeed the central goal of the work. Although some of the book's conclusions are not groundbreaking, the expansive use of case studies across empires increases the strength of such arguments.

Overall, "Empire's Violent End" is a valuable contribution to the scholarship on the history of violence and the wars of decolonization. It paves the way for further collaborative work, especially that which could link this type of anthology to more partnerships between scholars from the Global North and South.

Notes

- 1 M. Moyd, *Violent intermediaries: African soldiers, conquest, and everyday colonialism in German East Africa*, Athens 2014.
- 2 Female domestic cleaners or housekeepers in military encampments who were often forced into the role of concubines, see Zaalberg and Luttikhuis (eds.), *Empire's Violent End*, p. 101.
- 3 D. Porch, *The French Foreign Legion: A Complete History of the Legendary Fighting Force*, New York 2010.

**Ferial Haffajee (with Ivor Chipkin):
Days of Zondo: The Fight for Freedom from Corruption, Johannesburg: Maverick, 2022, 363 pp.**

Reviewed by
Ulf Engel, Leipzig

This volume takes stock of several years of intensive investigative journalism on how the South African state has been and continues to be undermined from within. It is also a solid, semi-academic documentation of the proceedings of the South African Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture, Corruption and Fraud in the Public Sector including Organs of State, led by the then acting deputy chief of justice, Raymond Zondo (in short, the Zondo Commission).

Between August 2018 and June 2022, this commission investigated the appropriation of public funds and tenders by a criminal network linked to the ruling African National Congress (ANC). The three Indian Gupta brothers orchestrated "state capture" in collusion with South African president Jacob G. Zuma and his cronies – often referred to as the party's "radical economic transformation" (RET) faction.[1] The state capture targeted state-owned enterprises (SOEs), such as the electricity utility Eskom, the national air carrier South African Airways (SAA), the arms manufacturing and procurement Denel, the transport providers Transnet and Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa), and the service provider Bososa, among others.[2]

It also led to situations where, allegedly, the Gupta brothers offered cabinet positions to ANC politicians. The extent of state capture is estimated at roughly INR 500 billion (USD 27.2 billion).[3]

On 2 November 2016, the public protector – which was one of the six independent state institutions that receives and investigates complaints from the public and which was represented at the time by Thuli Madonsela (now at Stellenbosch University) – recommended that the then president Zuma convene a commission of inquiry into state capture. Chaired by the then deputy chief justice, Zondo, the commission began its proceedings on 21 August 2018. After three years, “the breadth and depth of South Africa’s capture was laid bare for a traumatised nation to comprehend” (back cover). The findings were published in 2022 in six comprehensive volumes, covering almost 5,500 pages.[4] The lead author of this volume is the South African journalist and newspaper editor Ferial Haffajee. She was the editor of *City Press* (Johannesburg) newspaper from 2009 until 2016 and was previously the editor of the *Mail & Guardian* (Johannesburg) newspaper in 2004 (appointed at the age of 34). Haffajee was awarded the International Press Freedom Award by the Committee to Protect Journalists and was appointed to the board of the Vienna-based International Press Institute in 2011. Since 2016, she has been with the *Daily Maverick* (Johannesburg), currently as associate editor. Her partner in crime, so to say, in this endeavour is Ivor Chipkin, the founder of the Public Affairs Research Institute, currently directing the New South Institute (both Johannesburg). He is one of the lead authors of the *Betrayal of*

the Promise Report on State Capture (Centre for Complex Systems in Transition, Stellenbosch University, 2017). He also co-authored, with Mark Swilling and others, the book *Shadow State: The Politics of State Capture* (Wits University Press, 2018), which was another important contribution to unveiling the ruling party–associated networks undermining the sovereignty of the South African state.

Days of Zondo comes in three principal parts: “the map”, “the mechanism”, and “the matrix”. In the last (and fourth) part of the book, Chipkin develops a “typography of power”. Throughout the volume, infographics are offered for quick reference and guidance of the reader. Part one, “the map”, presents the highlights from the 429 hearings of the Zondo Commission and maps the various crime sites, thereby providing a cartography of state capture (which has been translated into a huge dataset). Part two, “the mechanism” (the notion of a corruption complex is taken from a Netflix series on Brazil) details the practices of state capture–related corruption, highlighting its vertical and horizontal embeddedness in South African society. Part three, “the matrix”, dissects the environment, the milieu, in which grand corruption in South Africa has thrived. And this clearly goes beyond the Gupta network, introducing other interlocking networks of highest-level corruption and theft. One example in this regard is Ace Magashule – the ANC strongmen in the Free State, former premier (2009–2018), and ANC secretary-general (2017–2022). Finally, in the “typography of power” (pp. 262–285), Chipkin sharpens the political economy of a liberation movement in power by discussing – with reference to the

Eighteenth Brumaire (Karl Marx, 1851) – what has become the ANC’s rent-seeking rationale in South African politics, a South African form of Bonapartism.

Meanwhile, Judge Zondo has been appointed chief justice, and no legal case has been opened against any of the ANC politicians prominently named in the six reports of the Zondo Commission. Rather, President Cyril Ramaphosa himself was accused of misconduct and corruption because cash in excess of USD 4 million was found hidden in a sofa on his Phala Phala game farm and because attempts were made to recover the money through extra-legal means.[5]

Regardless, Haffajee’s book illustrates why the long-standing free, critical press is one of the explanations for South Africa’s comparatively high levels of social resilience – despite a high density of organized crime, the dominance of political-criminal networks, and the loss of a moral compass on the part of the ruling ANC. The basis for the Zondo Commission was laid on 1 June

2017, when the *Daily Maverick* investigative journalism unit, amaBhugane (led by veteran journalists Stefaans Brümmer and Sam Sole), revealed 100,000 to 200,000 emails from inside the Gupta network (the #GuptaLeaks series). This volume underlines the continued relevance of the independent South African press in an impressive way.

Notes

- 1 The Gupta brothers – Ajay, Atul, and Rajesh – found exile in Dubai. Finally, on 6 April, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) informed the South African government that an extradition of Atul and Rajesh was off the cards. See *Daily Maverick* [Johannesburg], 7 April 2023. Ajay has not been indicted in this case.
- 2 See U. Engel 2002, Review: “State Capture in South Africa”, in: *Comparativ* 31 (2021) 2, pp. 267–275.
- 3 *The Conversation* [Melbourne], 8 February 2023.
- 4 URL: <<https://www.statecapture.org.za>>.
- 5 With its parliamentary majority, on 22 March 2023, the ANC defeated a motion for a special parliamentary investigation into the Phala Phala, or farmgate, saga. See *Daily Maverick* [Johannesburg], 23 March 2023.