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ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR GLOBALGESCHICHTE UND  
VERGLEICHENDE GESELLSCHAFTSFORSCHUNG

Matthias Middell (Ed.)

**Africa's Global 1989**

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# Comparativ

ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR GLOBALGESCHICHTE UND  
VERGLEICHENDE GESELLSCHAFTSFORSCHUNG

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Universität Leipzig, Research Centre Global Dynamics,  
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Redaktion COMPARATIV

IPF 169001

D – 04081 Leipzig

Tel.: +49 / (0)341 / 973 7888

E-Mail: [comparativ@uni-leipzig.de](mailto:comparativ@uni-leipzig.de)

Internet: [www.uni-leipzig.de/comparativ/](http://www.uni-leipzig.de/comparativ/)

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Oststraße 41  
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Tel./ Fax: +49 / (0)341 / 99 00 440  
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**Ed. by Matthias Middell**



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## Editorial

In this issue we continue the critical reflection on respatializations of global historical periods of change and caesuras by turning to the events of “1989”. About thirty years later seems a particularly good point of time of doing so as more archival material becomes accessible and as a younger generation of historians enters the debate, which sees the conflicts and transformation in and around 1989 with greater distance compared to long-standing interpretations by participants. In this course, especially individual societies gained attention which experienced at that time fundamental transformations linked with transnational and transregional shifts and were thus “1989” entered collective memory as a global caesura. This raises the intriguing question of how and to what extent these single memories have merged slowly into a common global memory of 1989, especially as we note at the same time a decreasing interest among scholars to actually consider the global character of that year and the changes it saw and initiated.

In view of that the issue interprets on the one hand 1989 as “global moment” with a nuanced understanding what signifies such moments and provides on the other hands empirical evidence for Africa regarding both the deep embeddedness of the course of events in transregional process and international dynamics and constellations as well as to how this shaped recollections.

The introduction outlines criteria for what constitutes a global moment. These include firstly a synchronicity of socio-political upheavals and conflicts which can be observed in many places of the world. The many mutual observations and references to each other did not lead, however, to a diffusion of some central models, rather they initiated their idiosyncratic adaption and intensified intercultural transfer. Secondly, global moments exist not per se but interrelated dynamics have to be recognized and signified by contemporaries. Related to that, thirdly interpretations that highlight interconnectedness and world-changing shifts have to be anchored in collective consciousness and memory. Therefore, two dimensions make global moments, entangled conflicts and transforma-

tions as well as their recognition and remembrance. The latter also draws attention to the fact that global interpretations of events can be forgotten or become less attractive than national or local interpretations at a later point of time when social and political circumstances change again.

Precisely this seems to happen currently in Africa in regard to the turbulent period around 1989. The proxy wars during the global cold war ended and initiated both social and political reorganisation in individual societies as well as a repositioning in the world at large as can be seen in the abandonment of nuclear weapons in South Africa which took place in the context of an international debate about disarmament and was anchored transnational peace movements. This globality, however, receded to the background, it is less and less remembered while national and pan-African spaces are increasingly used as frames when 1989 is the topic. The global character of the African events that are an essential part of the global moment of 1989 give way to a regionalization of the memory of 1989, which might also take place in other world region right now or in times to come. Does that mean that existing historical narratives have to be rewritten? At least the shifts in collective memory draws attention to a renegotiation of narratives and the hypotheses in this issue is that this concerns above all the long-time dominant narrative of 1989 about a self-liberation of peoples and nations from Soviet dominance and the transformation to market economies and democratic systems. Throughout Eastern Europe – and beyond – its triumphant narrative of “Westernization” is confronted with realities that do not fit. This in turn, invites us to think about the afterlives of global moments when regionally embedded processes of creating meaning do not melt into one globally recognized powerful narrative. It seems that we are in the midst of a process where the collectives memories of 1989 diverge and turn into separate repositories of historical knowledge which reorganize past global connectedness according the specific challenges societies are confronted with today.

Matthias Middell / Katja Naumann

# **1989: From the Global Moment to its Regional and National Memories**

**Matthias Middell**

## **ABSTRACTS**

Die Erwartung, die 2009 geäußert wurde, dass sich die vielen partikularen Geschichten des Jahres 1989 zu einer großen, kohärenten Globalgeschichte zusammenfügen und dass dabei das Bewußtsein der Zeitgenossen, einem besonderen Moment in der Weltgeschichte beizuwohnen, weiter vertieft würde, hat sich nicht erfüllt. Vielmehr werden verschiedene Erinnerungen an 1989 in den verschiedenen Weltregionen gepflegt und die Historiographie beschäftigt sich eher mit der Frage nach dem Zusammenhang des Umbruchs von 1989 im östlichen Europa mit dem Aufkommen des Populismus. Der Beitrag, der dieses Themenheft einleitet, versucht einige Erklärungen für diese Entwicklung zu bieten. Sie ist dabei sowohl Indikator wie Teil eines Abschieds von einer bestimmten Globalisierungsideologie, die weltweit zunehmende Konnektivität mit einem neoliberalen Globalisierungsprojekt verwechselt hat. Selbst wenn man sich, wie es die meisten Beiträge dieses Themenheftes tun, auf den afrikanischen Kontinent beschränkt, wird allerdings bereits mehr als deutlich, dass dies keineswegs einen Rückzug aus globalen Zusammenhängen und ihrer Erinnerung bedeutet, ganz im Gegenteil. Insofern ist die Rekonstruktion einiger wichtiger Momente des afrikanischen Beitrags zum globalen Moment 1989 vielleicht erhellender für das Verständnis dieser Zäsur, als es eine weitere Vereinnahmung der Vielfalt dieses Jahres für eine homogene Erzählung wäre.

The expectation expressed in 2009 that the many particular histories of 1989 would come together to form a great, coherent global history and that this would further deepen the interpretation established by the contemporaries witnessing a special moment in world history has not been fulfilled. Rather, different memories of 1989 are cultivated in different regions of the world, and most recent historiography is more concerned with the question of how the upheaval of 1989 in Eastern Europe is linked to the rise of populism. The article that introduces this thematic

issue tries to offer some explanations for this development that can be seen as both an indicator and part of a departure from a certain ideology of globalization that has confused increasing connectivity worldwide with a neoliberal globalization project. Even if one limits oneself to the African continent, as most of the contributions in this issue do, it is already more than clear that this does not mean a withdrawal from global contexts and their memory, quite the contrary. In this respect, the reconstruction of some important moments of the African contribution to the global moment in 1989 is perhaps more illuminating for understanding this caesura than would be a further appropriation of the diversity of that year for a homogeneous narrative.

In a way, 30 years is a magical number for historians. This has to do with the more technical issues regarding archive access, which in many cases is only possible for the first time 30 years after an event, which by no means can already be considered after that duration of time to be “complete”. Accordingly, subjective memories can be better checked when confronted with documents not understood thus far in their complex interrelationships, even if this does not mean that “the whole truth” is coming out. Myths that have emerged and consolidated in the course of the collective confrontation with historical events, regularly repeated in the media, can be called into question due to new legitimacy claim and, if necessary, can be shaken. As a consequence, historians, most of whom belong to a subsequent generation as well as attack established heroic tales with the instruments of professional historiography, gain greater legroom vis-à-vis contemporary witnesses as time progresses. And here, too, three decades is a sufficient period of time to weaken the dominance of the participants in the interpretation of events.

In this respect, the year 2019 was indeed a major caesura, with the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the revolutions in Eastern Europe, the collapse of the Cold War world order, and the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from many geopolitical constellations into which it had previously ambitiously penetrated. Exactly ten years earlier, Timothy Garton Ash dared to predict that in 2019 a younger historian would write a more globally oriented history of 1989 than would a historian in 2009.<sup>1</sup> As far as I can see, this forecast has been disappointed. Of course, a lot has been published on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of peaceful and velvet revolutions. What is more, there is a new generation of historians who have taken up the subject and are not under the same impression of involvement or concern with the upheavals of 1989 – as was the case with the authors of previous decades.<sup>2</sup> But has a truly global history emerged? Or are there other priorities now being set? On the one hand, the following text follows a hypothesis that we ourselves first presented in 2009,<sup>3</sup> namely that the event complex of 1989 was a *global moment* – being compa-

1 T. G. Ash, 1989! – The unwritten history, in: The New York Review of Books 56 (2009) 17, online: <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/23232> (accessed 26 June 2020).

2 For two of the many examples of this confusion between reporting on participatory observations and source-based historiography written by activists of the revolution itself, see Stefan Wolle, *The ideal world of dictatorship. Daily life and party rule in the GDR 1971–1989*, Berlin 2019 (first German edition in 2009); Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, *Endspiel. Die Revolution von 1989 in der DDR*, München 2009;

3 M. Middell, 1989 as a global moment, in: U. Engel/F. Hadler/M. Middell (eds.), *1989 in a global perspective*, Leipzig 2015, pp. 33-48.

rable to the bundle or cycle of Atlantic revolutions at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,<sup>4</sup> the revolutions and (civil) wars in the middle of the nineteenth century,<sup>5</sup> or the upheavals at the end of the first and second world wars.<sup>6</sup> We postulated three criteria for such a global moment, combining the results from research on the synchronicity of global events<sup>7</sup> as well as the impact of these events on world affairs<sup>8</sup> and their remembrance across borders.

(1) The global moment bundles together a series of synchronous events that result in structural (tectonic) shifts that take place in a critical juncture of globalization.<sup>9</sup> Insofar, the moment is part of a process that has a significantly longer duration. The example of the Atlantic revolutions offers a good illustration of such a moment because it bundles together the tensions of a deep crisis of traditional empires as well as the distortions of a world order that various powers were trying to shape to their advantage and according to their world perceptions. To this end, these powers engaged in military and political activities across almost the entire globe and entered into alliances with a broad set of social movements on various continents, whose transformational power could by no means be kept under control within a narrow framework of similar ideas about the future. For example, it was not the aim of the powers of England and France, which were struggling for hegemony at sea and on land, to launch a broad movement for the liberation of slaves. The rebellious liberal reformers from Venezuela to Chile did not have this in mind either, since their economy was based much more fundamentally on forced labour. Yet, at least as a programmatic goal, the equality of all people before the law prevailed, even if it would still take a long time until this ambitious idea of an inclusive society was politically realized.

For the definition of the global moment, however, it is precisely the quasi-simultaneity of sociopolitical upheavals and (often armed) conflicts that can be traced across the planet that is decisive. This quasi-simultaneity allows a mutual reference to each other – not as a diffusion of a centrally pronounced programme but as a creative adoption of attractive ideas in completely different contexts. Global moments are therefore also phases of a special concentration of intercultural transfer. In case of the 1989 rupture, more recent

4 M. Kossok, In Tyrannos. Revolutionen der Weltgeschichte, Leipzig 1989; M. Albertone/A. de Francesco (eds.), Rethinking the Atlantic World. Europe and America in the Age of Democratic Revolution, Basingstoke/New York 2009; D. Armitage/S. Subrahmanyam (eds.), The age of revolutions in global context, c. 1760–1840, Basingstoke/New York 2010; A. Forrest/M. Middell (eds.), The Routledge Companion to the French Revolution in World History, London 2015; M. Maruschke/M. Middell (eds.), The French Revolution as a Moment of Respatialization, Berlin/Boston 2019.

5 Ch. Bright/M. Geyer, Globalgeschichte und die Einheit der Welt. Weltgeschichte als Globalgeschichte – Überlegungen zu einer Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, in: *Comparativ* 4 (1994) 5, pp. 13–46.

6 E. Manela, *The Wilsonian moment. Self-determination and the international origins of anticolonial nationalism*, New York 2007.

7 P. Grosser, 1989, *l'année où le monde a basculé*, Paris 2009.

8 On this aspect, see also J. Rupnik (ed.), *1989 as a Political World Event. Democracy, Europe and the new international system in the age of globalization*, London 2014.

9 On this conceptualization of the relationship between event and structure in the history of global processes at large, see U. Engel/M. Middell, *Bruchzonen der Globalisierung, globale Krisen und Territorialitätsregimes – Kategorien einer Globalgeschichtsschreibung*, in: *Comparativ* 15 (2005) 5/6, pp. 5–38.

research has demonstrated to what extent the sources of the upheaval and its outcome must be searched regarding the one or even two decades before the revolutions. Some speak of the “shock of the global” for the 1970s;<sup>10</sup> others see at this time the beginning of the current configuration of modernity.<sup>11</sup> Frank Bösch, for example, has particularly focused on the year 1979 through a comparative overview.<sup>12</sup> I would agree with him and especially underline two events that in an iconic way have signalled the fading away of the bipolar world order dominated since 1945 by the USA and the Soviet Union. The one is the Iranian Revolution,<sup>13</sup> challenging (in fact until today) US hegemony in the Gulf, and the other is the disastrous military intervention of Soviet troops in Afghanistan,<sup>14</sup> in the end leading not only to defeat at the international stage but also to enormous tensions at home that contributed to the destabilization of the communist party’s power.

(2) However, pure simultaneity might not be sufficient to qualify a chain of events as a global moment. Rather, what is also required is an attribution of meaning at more than one location, which emphasizes the world-changing character of the events. There is thus a normative element inherent in the term global moment, which should be rooted not in the attribution of the historian, who judges retrospectively, but in the emphasis on the global character by contemporaries. This does not diminish the task of the historian, for he/she sometimes has to uncover this contemporary recognition of the event as world-changing, which may have receded into the background in the meantime. In the case of 1989, many scholars underline the world-changing character of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the dictatorship in Romania, the search of Gorbachev for a new place for his Soviet Union in a post-conflict world order,<sup>15</sup> and the dismantlement of the Soviet Union after the national liberation movements in the Baltic states had been successful.<sup>16</sup> Others highlight with similar enthusiasm the end of South Africa’s apartheid as a milestone in the history of human rights and the eradication of racial discrimination.<sup>17</sup> Both “hotspots” of 1989 together advance narratives that mark the end of a global cold war and the beginning of our times.<sup>18</sup> A strong sense of historical caesura finds expression in a heated discussion about globalization being the characteristic of the new era.

10 N. Ferguson/Ch. S. Maier/E. Manela/D. J. Sargent (eds.), *The Shock of the Global. The 1970s in Perspective*, Cambridge 2010.

11 A. Doering-Manteuffel/L. Raphael/T. Schlemmer (eds.), *Vorgeschichte der Gegenwart. Dimensionen des Strukturbruchs nach dem Boom*, Göttingen 2015.

12 F. Bösch, *Zeitenwende 1979. Als die Welt von heute begann*, München 2019.

13 A. Mirsepassi, *Iran’s Quiet Revolution. The Downfall of the Pahlavi State*, Cambridge 2019.

14 B. Chiari, *Kabul, 1979: Militärische Intervention und das Scheitern der sowjetischen Dritte-Welt-Politik in Afghanistan*, in: A. Hilger (ed.), *Die Sowjetunion und die Dritte Welt. UdSSR, Staatssozialismus und Antikolonialismus im Kalten Krieg 1945–1999*, München 2009, pp. 259–280.

15 Mikhail Gorbachev, *Address by Mikhail Gorbachev. 43rd UN General Assembly Session (1988)*, online: <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/%20116224%20.pdf> (accessed 26 June 2020).

16 A. E. Senn, *Gorbachev’s Failure in Lithuania*, New York 1995.

17 S. Dubow, *Apartheid, 1948–1994*, Oxford 2014.

18 O. A. Westad, *The global Cold War. Third world interventions and the making of our times*, Cambridge 2008.

However, this story was, and is still, not bought by everyone worldwide. More than a few saw themselves rather as victims than winners of this globalization<sup>19</sup> and therefore dismantled the myth of the trickle-down effect of welfare structures and policies when introducing seemingly free markets. Others insisted on their independent status in this increasingly connected world and even continued to use their own term (mondialization)<sup>20</sup> in order to signify their dissent with any confusion between globalization, American hegemony, and neo-liberalism, while still ironically contributing in a pointed manner to this confusion in public perception.<sup>21</sup> More recent studies have demonstrated that such a diverse reaction to the narrative of the fast-globalizing world was rather the rule than the exception.<sup>22</sup> What made 1989 an important date in the specific calendars of so many regions was obviously not the same everywhere. On the contrary, the importance attributed to the dramatic changes of that year follows different logics and seems over time to tend to neglect the idea of any commonalities than to insist on a simplistic understanding of global causation for each and every particular historical configuration emerging (seemingly accidentally) around the same year.

(3) The last dimension of a global moment – which appears to be a possible forgetting of the common origins of many local situations – consists of anchoring the moment in a collective memory. But who is the collective of global memory today? There are surprisingly few studies that consider this question, with most studies of collective memory – together with the growing interest in memory and remembrance – still focusing on the national, or at most the regional (European or African), level. Around the turn to the new millennium, authors, such as Charles Maier, were optimistic about being able to predict the development of global memory, and there is evidence that these predictions have captured something important – such as the increasing importance of the post-colonial in the international debate on memory.<sup>23</sup> But few empirical studies have followed since then. This undoubtedly has to do with the fact that there is a much greater demand for assessments of national and, to some extent, European memory culture because collective memory has been recognized by politicians as a factor of social stability within their own politics. Accordingly, the community of memory researchers is being asked how collective memory is changing, where dangers threaten, and where it can be used

19 D. Held/A. G. McGrew, *Globalization/anti-globalization. Beyond the great divide*, Cambridge 2007.

20 Among many others, see O. Dollfus, *La mondialisation*, Paris 1997.

21 Ch. Maurel, *La World/Global History : questions et débats*, in: *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 104 (2009) 4, pp. 153–166.

22 M. B. Steger, *The Rise of the Global Imaginary. Political ideologies from the French Revolution to the global war on terror*, Oxford/New York 2009 started from the assumption of a converging global imaginary, but later he himself insisted on differences, see M. B. Steger/P. James, *Globalization matters. Engaging the global in unsettled times*, Cambridge 2019. For the German context, see D. Kuchenbuch, "Eine Welt". Globales Interdependenzbewusstsein und die Moralisierung des Alltags in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 38 (2012), pp. 158–184 and J. Eckel, "Alles hängt mit allem zusammen". Zur Historisierung des Globalisierungsdiskurses der 1990er und 2000er Jahre, in: *Historische Zeitschrift* 307 (2018), pp. 42–78.

23 Ch. S. Maier, *Consigning the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era*, in: *American Historical Review* 105 (2000), pp. 807–831.

for specific political purposes.<sup>24</sup> In my view, there is currently no comparable demand for the study of convergence or divergence of global memory.<sup>25</sup> In other words, there is no such field as global memory studies, which in turn could lead to empirical studies; however, there is undeniably a demand for powerful narratives of history leading to our present. And this demand provides the emerging global history with a powerful position while emphasizing interrelationships, which have often been neglected until recently, as well as the opposing trends of fragmentation. Global history advances the idea of a multiplication of paths towards modernities instead of an all too simple Eurocentrism. Moreover, it attributes growing importance to global challenges, such as climate change, pandemics, hunger, and malnutrition, to the further development of humanity. Whether these narratives, however, will supersede the older narratives of striving for a bounded community and sovereignty, as expressed, for example, in the invention of nations, remains an unanswered question for the time being. Comparative studies that ask about the meaning of an event in a restricted context and then establish the hypothesis that an event is placed high up in the ranking of remembered historical events in very different contexts must obviously have global resonance. With regard to the year 1989, we have already established such evidence through a worldwide survey among students in 2009, albeit with very limited resources, that is to say in the form of an online questionnaire sent out by email only.<sup>26</sup> The research design can undoubtedly be refined, but the problem remains: as long as global memory is conceived of as a simultaneous reference to different events that took place simultaneously, it remains precarious whether this is really a shared memory.<sup>27</sup> These hints at methodological difficulties and gaps in literature seem necessary in order to understand the situation in 2019 with regard to the memory of the year 1989. It seems that there is a growing interest among professional historians in the question of what may have caused the various events of 1989 to occur together or at least made them communicate with each other. At the same time, the collective memory of a global moment may be disintegrating before our eyes into different parts that explicitly want nothing to do with each other.

The underlying geography of collective memories is not easy to grasp, and we are far from knowing or even understanding all its facets. But perhaps one can get to the bottom

24 S. Berger/Bill Niven (eds.), *Writing the History of Memory*, London 2014; S. Berger/E. Storm (eds.), *Writing the History of Nationalism*, London 2019.

25 Routledge has started in 2018 a book series on "Memory Studies: Global Constellations", and the first 18 volumes address issues like slavery and slave trade, colonialism, transregional war scenarios, and imperial features but are often collective volumes with contributions privileging nevertheless a national perspective. See <https://www.routledge.com/Memory-Studies-Global-Constellations/book-series> (accessed 20 June 2020).

26 H. Ellermann/D. Glowsky/K.-U. Kromeier/V. Andorfer, *How Global are Our Memories? An Empirical Approach using an Online Survey*, Leipzig 2006; some of the results have been published: H. Ellermann, D. Glowsky, K.-U. Kromeier, and V. Andorfer, *How Global are Our Memories? An Empirical Approach using an Online Survey*, in: *Comparativ* 18 (2008) 2, pp. 99–114.

27 For a methodological inspiration for the study of a shared approach towards the past even across historical frontlines, see T. Frank/F. Hadler, *Disputed territories and shared pasts. Overlapping national histories in modern Europe*, New York 2010. The many studies of imperial memories from a postcolonial point of view feed similar research designs.

of this geography by asking where “1989” actually took place. The most common answer puts Eastern Europe in the spotlight, where first the dissolution of Soviet hegemony and then the dissolution of the Soviet Union itself comes to mind. This perception is particularly noticeable in the eyes of the former counterpart in the Cold War – the United States – which, due to the increasing dominance of the US-American worldview, became the hegemonic understanding of “1989”. Lifting the material and psychological burden of the previous decades-long confrontation not only released the Eastern Europeans, who were becoming increasingly economically drained, but also provided hope for new opportunities in the West. The fact that this perception was accompanied by an often unreflected triumphalism of a market-radical neo-liberalism did not necessarily mean that this version of history would prevail in the long run.<sup>28</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that in 2019 a new narrative was considered in addition to the already familiar narrative of the self-liberation of peoples and nations from the Soviet/imperial yoke and of the alternative-less drastic remedy for the transformation to a market economy. This new narrative originated from the current political transformations in East-Central Europe as well as from extensive research into the relationship of the socialist camp to global interdependencies. Although initial ideas focused on the establishment of socialism in the Soviet Union, and later in its satellite states of the Eastern bloc, as well as were based on the belief that socialism meant nothing other than a turning away from a globalization that was almost automatically identified with the market and capitalism, projects such as the Exeter-centred network “Socialism Goes Global”<sup>29</sup> make it very clear that the communist parties and the governments of the real socialist countries did indeed pursue their own globalization projects<sup>30</sup> and became active worldwide in advancing it.<sup>31</sup> This, undeniably, was long known to the Communist International, which gathered allies around itself in all parts of the world and tried to bring them to toe their – often wavering – line. The fact that this global alliance, especially in the crisis of the late 1930s and early 1940s, was committed to prioritizing support for the world’s first socialist state – which was fighting against the initially superior pincer movements of the Axis powers, Germany and Japan (which cost many of Communist Parties supporting the Soviet Union legitimacy at home) – does not necessarily speak against the idea of an independent

28 For a potpourri-like reminder that being victorious at a certain point in time and dominating the upcoming historical narratives falls more often apart than not since it is more likely that the losers will try to make sense of their defeat by reinterpreting it, see S. F. Kellerhoff, *Erinnerungspolitik*, in: *Die Welt*, online: <https://www.welt.de/geschichte/article181399614/Erinnerungspolitik-Die-Sieger-bestimmen-die-Geschichte-Von-wegen.html> (accessed 26 June 2020).

29 J. Mark/P. Apor, *Socialism Goes Global. Decolonization and the Making of a New Culture of Internationalism in Socialist Hungary, 1956–1989*, in: *The Journal of Modern History* 87 (2015) 4, pp. 852–891.

30 O. Sanchez-Sibony, *Red Globalization. The Political Economy of the Soviet Cold War from Stalin to Khrushchev*, New York 2014; U. Müller, *Der RGW als Schlüssel zu einer transnationalen Wirtschaftsgeschichte des östlichen Europas in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Internationale Wissenschaftliche Vereinigung Weltwirtschaft und Weltpolitik (IWVVV) – Berichte* 2 (2015), pp. 32–50.

31 U. Müller/D. Jajesiak-Quast (eds.), *Comecon revisited. Integration in the Eastern Bloc and Entanglements with the Global Economy (= Comparativ 27 [2017] 5/6)*, Leipzig 2017.

and thus alternative globalization project.<sup>32</sup> Especially with regard to the period from the 1960s to the 1980s, many studies have since brought to light the innumerable dimensions of this global commitment in the then so-called Third World.<sup>33</sup>

Another facet of this research became particularly relevant for the new narrative for the interpretation of 1989, namely the economic involvement of real-socialist states in the international division of labour. Scholars, like Johanna Bockman, claim that red globalization was by no means as alternative as one might assume in view of the endlessly emphasized difference between socialism and capitalism during the Cold War.<sup>34</sup> Instead, socialist managers had early on abandoned the ideas of the greatest possible social equality and had become kindred spirits of the drivers of the neo-liberal course, which became equated with keywords like Reaganomics and Thatcherism.<sup>35</sup> In this narrative, 1989 is less a liberation of the oppressed from communist dictatorship than the release of neo-liberal potential that had already emerged and grown in the period before 1989. The radicalism with which many transformation economies tackled the redistribution of social wealth from 1990 onwards, together with the origins of the oligarchs who have now gained fabled wealth and influence, serve as evidence for the thesis that ultimately seeks to explain why a populist protest movement has been developing for several years, specifically in the countries that were previously called socialist, that criticizes the democracy that has been achieved and, in extreme cases, offers the necessary voter support for the formation of new authoritarian regimes. This protest, so the thesis goes, is based on the unfinished revolution, which has not been able to keep its promise of freedom and equality and instead has continued tendencies that had already generated massive discontent before 1989. So it is rather disappointment with the lack of change, or at least the failure to complete it, that is playing into the hands of the populists.<sup>36</sup>

Interestingly enough, this argument is also found in the arsenal of views of history, which made its mark noticeably in Poland<sup>37</sup> and later in Hungary, stressing that the revolution of 1989 either was not a revolution at all or that it got stuck early on because its leaders were (too) quick to compromise with the forces of the previous regime.<sup>38</sup> As a result,

32 M. Middell (ed.), *Kommunismus jenseits des Eurozentrismus*, Berlin 2019.

33 J. Mark/A. M. Kalinovsky/S. Marung (eds.), *Alternative Globalizations. Eastern Europe and the postcolonial world*, Bloomington 2020.

34 J. Bockman, *The Long Road to 1989. Neoclassical Economics, Alternative Socialisms, and the Advent of Neoliberalism*, in: *Radical History Review* (2012) 112, pp. 9–42.

35 J. Bockman, *Socialist Globalization and Capitalist Neocolonialism. The Economic Ideas behind the NIEO*, in: *Humanity* (2015), pp. 109–128; J. Bockmann, *The Origins of Neoliberalism between Soviet Socialism and Western Capitalism. A Galaxy without Borders*, in: *Theory and Society* 36 (2007) 4, pp. 343–371.

36 B. Iacob/J. Mark/T. Rupprecht, *The Struggle over 1989: The rise and contestation of eastern European populism*, in: *Eurozine* (2019) online also at <https://imperialglobalxeter.com/2019/09/09/the-struggle-over-1989-the-rise-and-contestation-of-eastern-european-populism/#more-6519> (accessed 26 June 2020).

37 The situation in Poland had been carefully examined in a conference “Poland 1989: Negotiations, (Re)Constructions, Interpretations”, organized by the Alexander Brückner Centre for Polish Studies in Halle and the Europejskie Centrum Solidarności, Gdańsk in late October 2019. See the report online at <https://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-8586> (accessed 26 June 2020).

38 J. Mark, *The Unfinished Revolution. Making Sense of the Communist Past in Central-Eastern Europe*, New Haven 2010). For an example of such kind of revisionist literature from Hungary, see R. Tökés, *A harmadik magyar*

this version does not consider 1989 a caesura but rather sees the coming to power of the Law and Justice party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS) in Poland and Viktor Orbán's new Fundamental Law (2011) in Hungary as a way to bring about the changes promised. Vladimir Putin's new history policy for Russia also departs from Gorbachev's central idea that the country had moved into the European house through perestroika and glasnost and in the future lived there in a comfortable apartment, enjoying the greatest admiration from its neighbours. Bitter frustration over a suspected betrayal of the 1989 agreements by the West is mixed in with Putin's new positioning of Russia in history through the successful efforts to be taken seriously as a strong global player. The emphasis on imperial traditions and reputation as well as a revived repertoire of a nationalist politics of history seem to be copied from the successful model that China has developed in dealing with the memory of 1989 – including a ban on alternative versions.<sup>39</sup>

The echoes of this criticism of the liberal success story reach far beyond Eastern Europe and can be traced back to South Africa's African National Congress (ANC), where former youth leader Julius Malema denounced the extraordinary corruption under President Jacob Zuma while calling through his newly founded oppositional party for a radical redistribution that challenged the ANC's inclusive policies of the past 30 years.<sup>40</sup> One could certainly include here the occasionally successful Syriza party in Greece and Podemos party in Spain, although the reference to an apparently failed 1989 is much less explicit.<sup>41</sup>

However, while populist versions – from the right as well as from the left – question the balance of the claimed transformation since 1990, the new historiographic narrative of a transformation of Eastern Europe into the Western variant of globalization that has been taking place since the 1960s has seen an enormous success as well as not only an astonishingly speedy societal dissemination and but also an equally astonishing lack of fundamental critique. Regarding the latter point, Eastern Europe's realignment to dominant economic and political norms generated remarkably little criticism or reflection at the time. The reorientation of its elites from state socialism to liberal capitalism happened remarkably quickly considering that they had based their former legitimacy on a rhetoric of anti-capitalism, anti-imperialism, and anti-Westernism.<sup>42</sup> Resistance on the part of the population also hardly existed, at least in comparison to Africa and Latin

közárság születése, Budapest 2015. 1989 is downplayed in this version and the establishment of the new (authoritarian) regime highlighted as the beginning of a new era. While liberals and populists agree in the anti-communist orientation of their narratives, they differ in attributing the current misery to either the long-lasting effects of the former communist regime or the lack of its consequent eradication.

39 On the prohibition of events in Hong Kong under the pretext of the fight against the Coronavirus that recall the uprising on Tiananmen Square in Beijing, see <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/hongkong-untersagt-gedenken-an-das-massaker-von-1989-a-72a0f1ab-7ecd-4bb6-babc-0c84e5601f04> (accessed 26 June 2020).

40 For his political programme at the moment of the 2019 elections, see the BBC portrait "Julius Malema – South Africa's radical agenda setter", <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-14718226> (accessed 26 June 2020).

41 J. Mark/B. Iacob/T. Rupprecht/L. Spaskovska, 1898: Eastern Europe in Global History, Cambridge 2019, p. 4.

42 *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11.

America, where the deregulated capitalism of the Washington Consensus was met with much stronger protest.<sup>43</sup>

The consequences of this narrative are varied. First of all, the authors agree on a successful repositioning of Eastern Europe in the course of a fundamental economic, political, and cultural repositioning of the world after 1989. This repositioning includes the integration of Central and South-Eastern Europe into an expanding European capitalism as well as new integration between Japan, China, Taiwan, and Singapore in East Asia, which is simultaneously looking for new markets for cheap labour in South Asia, just as Europe is by no means limited to the continent itself.<sup>44</sup> The role of Russia, which remains indispensable as a supplier of energy and raw materials, remains unclear, however.

This integration of East-Central Europe into a European realm of expanding capitalism was successful but at the price of an elite compromise, leaving Eastern Europe only the junior role, which since 2015/16 has been combined with the additional function of a highly questionable moral firewall against immigration. The dirty work of migration defence is undertaken at the many borders between the Aegean Sea and Hungary, and the European Union can continue to argue about a humanitarian compromise that meets its high normative standards. From the point of view of liberal commentators from Eastern Europe, this cynicism seems like a rejection of the values for which the transformation was based<sup>45</sup> as well as like a call to rehearse post-colonial thought and action, for which the Global South has more to offer.<sup>46</sup>

While the debate in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe about what was actually meant by 1989 is ongoing, the changes happening since 1989 in Western Europe and the USA have become completely disconnected from the turmoil of that year. Without a doubt, the communist and socialist parties and milieus have broken up and lost their binding force,<sup>47</sup> mostly in favour of right-wing populist formations in the party spectrum.<sup>48</sup> And Donald Trump laments the deindustrialization of parts of the USA, with the aim of maintaining the dissatisfaction of white workers as the basis for his polarizing policy, whereas the Democrats focus on the Sun Belt as the region promising future voters and stronger ties with production centres elsewhere in the world.<sup>49</sup> But in neither of

43 M. Boatca/W. Spohn (eds.), *Globale, multiple und postkoloniale Modernen*, München 2010.

44 For a short and comprehensive summary of research on the new economic regionalization, see S. Babones, *Economic Zones in a Global(ized?) Economy*, in: M. Middell (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Transregional Studies*, London 2019, pp. 619–625.

45 I. Krastev, *3 Versions of Europe Are Collapsing at the Same Time*, in: *Foreign Policy*, 10 July 2018, online: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/07/10/3-versions-of-europe-are-collapsing-at-the-same-time/> (accessed 26 June 2020).

46 D. Kołodziejczyk/C. Şandru (eds.), *Postcolonial perspectives on postcommunism in Central and Eastern Europe*, London/New York 2016; Mark et al. (eds.), *Alternative Globalizations*.

47 With the argument that this decline started much earlier than 1989, see D. Bell/B. Criddle, *The Decline of the French Communist Party*, in: *British Journal of Political Science* 19 (1989) 4, pp. 515–536.

48 C. de La Torre (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Global Populism*, London/New York 2019; C. R. Kaltwasser/P. Taggart/P. Ochoa Espejo/P. Ostiguy/B. Stanley (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Populism*, Oxford 2017.

49 R. Brownstein, *Democrats' Future Is Moving Beyond the Rust Belt. The partisan and generational struggles for control of the nation's direction will be decided in the Sun Belt instead*, in: *The Atlantic* 9 January 2020, online: <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/01/rust-belt-trump-democrats-sun-belt/604678/> (accessed 26 June 2020).

these two constellations does the reference to 1989 play a greater role. A distancing still dominates that connects 1989 only with Eastern Europe and wants to understand it as a catch phrase for what had been achieved in the West in 1968, namely civil rights, liberal democracy, and a transnationally embedded capitalism. What is also meant is an idea of emancipation that pushes social issues into the background and instead places the cultural management of identities in the foreground – the definitive departure of the old left in favour of a new left oriented towards identity politics, even if crisis after crisis are marked by social upheavals that again and again challenge this focus on cultural cleavages.<sup>50</sup>

Interestingly, the memory of 1989 is also alive in Central and South America and at the same time not part of a common global interpretation. The end of dictatorships and constant interference by the big neighbour in the north is remembered positively by the Latin American left, but a comparison between the situation in Eastern Europe and in Latin America finds little resonance. The same can be said about the situation in the Middle East, where the connection of current crises to the transformed world order are more than obvious. The region became part of the cycle of coloured revolutions stretching into the Arab Spring – which can be read as an echo of 1989, as was done in some of the former Soviet republics, from Ukraine to the countries in Central Asia – but the references to the former revolutionary outbreak remain weak in comparison to the reference to Muslim transnationality.<sup>51</sup>

As said, the findings are incomplete and there are certainly some dissenting opinions on the assessments presented here. Anything else would be surprising, given the profound rupture that 1989 represents for the various regions and for global history. At first glance, the position of those who identify “1989” with events happening in Eastern Europe in particular has prevailed; they present it as a genuine contribution of the region to a global transformation that has dragged on for many decades and in which Eastern Europe was, as it were, belatedly included or fought its way into. However, such an unbroken positive review is now seldom heard. Rather, there is talk of a collapse of several versions of the narrative of history,<sup>52</sup> as if something new had been created in 1989 that touches the world everywhere, but in completely different ways. Indeed, notions of a new regionalism<sup>53</sup> and multiple modernities<sup>54</sup> are gaining in importance, which help to overcome

50 A. Reckwitz, *Die Gesellschaft der Singularitäten. Zum Strukturwandel der Moderne*, Berlin 2018.

51 D. Reetz, 'Alternate' Globalities? On the Cultures and Formats of Transnational Muslim Networks from South Asia, in: U. Freitag / A. von Oppen (eds.), *Translocality. The Study of Globalising Processes from a Southern Perspective*, Leiden / Boston 2010, pp. 293–334.

52 Krastev, *3 Versions of Europe*.

53 F. Söderbaum, *Rethinking Regionalism*, London 2016. While the prognosis that large-scale regions become an important spatial format for the future global order has over the past years and especially with the Coronavirus crisis transformed into the prediction that it will be the dominant feature given the fragility of global connectedness and the lack of resilience of individual societies at times of stress. One can follow this shift in an exemplary way when comparing Parag Khanna's last two books: P. Khanna, *Connectography. Mapping the global network revolution*, London 2016 and P. Khanna, *The Future is Asian. Global order in the twenty-first century*, London 2019.

54 Sh. N. Eisenstadt, *Multiple Modernities*, in: *Daedalus* 129 (2000) 1, pp. 1–29.

naïve notions of a unity of the world produced by a complete marketization of social interactions.

If in 2019 we observe a regionalization of the memory of 1989, then this may not be a sign of a new fragmentation of the world alone, but rather of an awareness of the many overlapping processes of repositioning and the shaping of distinguishable globalization projects. Such processes of a regionalization of remembrance are related to new developments in global historiography. There is no doubt that global history has taken a great leap forward, expanding so much in the first 10–15 years of the twenty-first century that even some have spoken of the dominant perspective within the field of history. In the face of the previously prevailing criticism of meta-narratives and master narratives, this has been a quite extraordinary renaissance of world history in a new guise, no longer focusing primarily on the intellectual invention of the unity of the world but instead on the creation of that unity by the many actors in a large number of highly diverse global processes. This transition from older universal history to more recent global history has indeed fascinated new generations of historians as well as the public, as the full shelves of the world history departments in bookstores testify to. Global history has become more empirical and follows an imperative for research, and the great synthesis of world history continues to attract attention.

However, the growing enthusiasm for this new kind of history of global interdependence – for the history of fragmentation in a globalized world – has perhaps overlooked the fact that society is slowly becoming worn out regarding a discourse on “the global”. This fatigue is partly due to the emphasis on globalization, but to be precise it refers to an ideology of globalization that makes globalization appear to be a quasi-natural process without alternatives. In the name of this ideology of globalization, the worsening of social inequality in many societies<sup>55</sup> has been legitimized, and a dramatically growing porosity of any rule-based multilateralism comes more and more to the fore in international relations. The huge profits that have resulted from the possibilities of outsourcing production steps to low-wage countries, on the one hand, have actually enabled many millions of people to escape hunger and very rudimentary living conditions and, on the other hand, have also made the severity of modern capitalism’s exploitative conditions felt in peripheries that had previously been less affected by it. This mixture of positive and painful effects of global processes after the end of the Cold War has led to a shift in the discussion of global interdependence in the 2010s.

First, criticism from the left can be heard, which already made great demands for years for an alternative globalization that should promote equality and solidarity instead of inequality and competition. Second, at the latest with the migration crisis of 2015/16, when the unsuitability of the European regulations of the Dublin III agreement became glaringly apparent, criticism from the right began to intensify. The perspective of a multicultural society was openly rejected,<sup>56</sup> and restrictions imposed on immigration

55 T. Piketty, *Le capital au XXIe siècle*, Paris 2013.

56 T. van Rahden, *Demokratie. Eine gefährdete Lebensform*, Frankfurt am Main 2019; R. Chin, *The Crisis of Multicul-*

were demanded with zeal. Interestingly enough, situations became particularly violent in countries and regions that were, comparatively, affected very little by immigration or that benefited from opportunities for the export of goods or capital as well as from a further democratization of tourism. The consequences of the previous globalization processes – which by no means made everyone a winner, for example leaving behind large belts of rust where industry had been outsourced to other regions of the world – inspired a nationalism that knew how to use the trauma of lost hegemony and the phantom pain of past significance to mobilize support among a broad group of the population for the programme of “Brexit” and “Make America Great Again!”

However, this increasing demand for sovereignty and control over global flows, which is nothing new, is not limited to those states and societies that have to console themselves regarding the loss of their former world position or that still fear such a loss. This demand can also be observed with the Chinese globalization winners, who, on the one hand, present themselves as guarantors of the multilateral and the development of a global infrastructure, but, on the other hand, link this with an intensified ethnonationalism at home. The search for new ways of defining sovereignty vis-à-vis the seemingly untamed flows of capital and the power related to it finds many different forms – for example, not only in the form of nationalism but also of pan-Islamic, pan-African, and pan-Asian identities – but at the same time follows similar patterns of refusal of the former globalization ideology – sometimes marked as neo-liberalism.<sup>57</sup>

These tendencies in the political culture of today’s world can perhaps explain why interest in a global moment like 1989 has not increased but rather decreased in recent years. It goes without saying that this is not the end of the matter, and the diversity of publications is evidence of a continuing interest in the upheaval of 1989, which takes inspiration from two new sources. The first source, as mentioned above, is the opening of some archives, which play an important role. One need only to think of the now at least partially possible investigation of the political processes that led to German unification and the transformation of the East German economy. In this context, the study of the so-called Treuhandanstalt (Trust Agency) stands out as a central agency for the rapid transformation – and integration – of a former realsocialist economy into a capitalist economy in East Germany and the expropriation, disempowerment, marginalization, and social deprivation that occurred in the process.<sup>58</sup> The same applies to the investigation of the emergence of a group of oligarchs in the Eastern European transition economies, which was made possible by the political conflicts between these oligarchs over

turalism in Europe: A History, Princeton 2017 refers to 1989 as the point of departure for the strengthening of Islamophobia with the fatwa against Salman Rushdie and the debate on wearing headscarves in French public schools. She concludes: “This was the pivotal juncture when Islam itself came to be seen as a central threat to ‘liberal values,’ not just in Britain, but across all the major Western European powers” (p. 190). Presenting Islam as illiberal ideology and way of life, allowed to stigmatize immigrants without an openly racist language but with almost the same effects.

57 M. Burchardt/G. Kirn (eds.), *Beyond Neoliberalism. Social analysis after 1989*, Cham 2017; D. Harvey, *Spaces of neoliberalization: towards a theory of uneven geographical development*, Stuttgart 2019.

58 M. Böick, *Die Treuhand: Idee – Praxis – Erfahrung 1990–1994*, Göttingen 2018.

the further shaping of their societies or their relations with the West. Material resulted from these changes, which investigative journalists brought to light during court cases.<sup>59</sup> But this also applies to a whole series of documents that provide new clarification of the international negotiations between the great powers over the shaping of the world order after the Cold War.

The second source, however, is the question of what a new generation born after 1989 can do with the upheaval of that time and how they evaluate the behaviour of their parents' generation.<sup>60</sup> Still dominant is the sharp demarcation between civil rights activists, who undoubtedly formed a small minority in 1989, and the followers of the regime, who not only constituted the majority of the population, but also without whose reversal the victory of the 1989 revolutions would hardly be explainable. However, the opposition at that time has since spread across the various political camps of the post-revolutionary orders after 1989. They therefore are still fighting over whether the upheavals were actually about the renewal of socialism or about the quickest possible transformation to a competitive capitalist system.<sup>61</sup>

However, both factors – the opening of archives and the instrumentalization of remembrance in and for a generational conflict – initially privilege individual societies in which not only serious change has taken place, but also a firmly anchored awareness of a caesura has emerged.<sup>62</sup> And this is certainly the case in many societies, however without necessarily merging into a common memory of 1989.

The contributions in this issue provide strong evidence of this regionalization of memory with regard to Africa. The continent experienced a turbulent period around 1989, when the proxy wars of the great powers of the Cold War came to an end, giving way to peaceful solutions that not only required but also made possible the integration of opposing groups fighting against each other a merciless guerrilla warfare for more than a decade. From the Horn of Africa to the southern part of the continent, the many conflicts of this global cold war ended, as Chris Saunders reminds us in his contribution to this volume.

59 H. Pleines, *Oligarchs and Politics in Ukraine*, in: *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, 24 (2016) 1, pp. 105–127; R. Olearchyk, *Ukraine's oligarchs jostle for influence with President Zelensky. Akhmetov edges closer to country's leader while weakening rival Kolomoisky*, in: *Financial Times* 19 February 2020, online: <https://www.ft.com/content/1821b882-4366-11ea-bea0c7a29cd66fe> (accessed 26 June 2020). The most spectacular case is perhaps the Russian critic of Putin, Michail Chodorkowski, now exiled in London but a permanent source of insights into the economy of Russia.

60 M. Gloger, *Generation 1989? Zur Kritik einer populären Zeitdiagnose*, Bielefeld 2012.

61 See a series of interventions in the German weekly *Die ZEIT*, as a result of an article printed in June 2020 by Anne Hähnig, *Der Osten braucht eine neue Elite!*, online: <https://www.zeit.de/2020/23/buergerrechtler-ostdeutschland-osten-vorbilder-widerstand> (accessed 26 June 2020).

62 The example of East and West Germany is a particular one since built its memories on an unequal process of mutual interest in developments on the other side of the iron curtain still before 1989. As the authors in F. Bösch (ed.), *A History Shared and Divided: East and West Germany since the 1970s*, Oxford 2018, argue, the majority of the GDR population looked at the FRG while West Germans were much more interested in US-American developments. Remembering the East as economic, environmental, and political disaster while constructing an unbroken success story for the West corresponds, however, much more to the mental situation of the 1980s than of the 1950s or 1960s.

But this does not necessarily mean that this caesura is still remembered today as a global moment. On the contrary, the societies concerned evidently regard the fact that they are no longer the playground for a global competition of superpowers on which local allies tested their weaponry as a matter of regaining national sovereignty. The global loses its meaning and the national arena and the pan-African space once again become the essential frame for the contemplation of history as Ulf Engel demonstrates in his review of the current discussion about 1989 in Africa in this issue. The fact that in 1989, under the impression of the events in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the rule of communist parties there, the introduction of single-party systems (together with the constitutional amendments that had been prepared) was abandoned in several African countries at relatively short notice<sup>63</sup> gave wings to the idea of a third wave of democratization.<sup>64</sup> But in the context of negotiating a reorganization of the economic, financial, and political relations between the Global North and the Global South, the transregional learning process of 1989 and 1990 – when various actors carefully watched world politics for features to be followed in a process of fundamental political reorientation and repositioning – has receded into the background. The main focus is now on the conditionality of development cooperation, and democratization appears to be primarily a consequence of the Western demand for good governance.<sup>65</sup> Thus, in this case, the more spatially organized narrative of the relationship between the Global North and Global South overlaps the more temporally organized narrative of the global moment of 1989.

The same can be said for other outstanding events on the African continent. The abolition of apartheid in South Africa can be placed in many contexts. It undoubtedly can be explained in relation to the long-lasting struggle in the country for a multiethnic society with equal rights of political participation for all. However, it is also a consequence of decades of international struggle against racism and for equal civil rights. Moreover, it certainly only became possible after the tensions of the Cold War had eased to such an extent that Western societies and their political elites were prepared to place principles of democracy above loyalty to alliances during the Cold War. Like a mirror, the Soviet bloc paid increasing attention to its own economic interests, which in turn reduced the fear of a communist takeover sufficiently on the other side, thereby allowing South Africa to take tentative and later courageous reform steps.

These reform steps included the removal of the nuclear weapons that South Africa possessed. The process is described in detail by Anna-Mart van Wyk and Robin Möser, who combine their absolutely amazing findings from South African and international archives, which one would expect to be inaccessible given the sensibility of military security issues at stake. This step reduced the risk of humanity's self-destruction and the

63 U. Engel, Africa's "1989", in: U. Engel / F. Hadler / M. Middell, 1989 in a Global Perspective, Leipzig 2015, pp. 331–348.

64 S. P. Huntington, The third wave. Democratization in the late twentieth century, Norman/London 1993.

65 H. Asche / U. Engel (eds.), Negotiating regions. Economic partnership agreements between the European Union and the African regional economic communities, Leipzig 2008; S. Koch, A Typology of Political Conditionality Beyond Aid: Conceptual Horizons Based on Lessons from the European Union, in: World Development 75 (2015), pp. 97–108.

devastation of a huge region, which undoubtedly had to do with the larger disarmament movements on the streets of many countries, including in the Global North, and with the progress of the negotiations concerning the reduction of nuclear weapons between the United States and the Soviet Union. This disarmament was part of a multitude of transnationally communicating movements towards a less dangerous world. The decision by the South African regime to dismantle its nuclear capacities cannot be explained by the international situation only; it has to be considered against the domestic changes as well, for example the power vacuum in 1989 after P.W. Botha had suffered a stroke and decided to transfer parts of the political authority he had centralized in his own hands to his possible successor, Frederik de Klerk. This opened up the opportunity for those who saw nuclear bombs as inappropriate for South Africa's national security (challenged rather by "bush wars", as de Klerk formulated it once) and costly with regard to its international reputation, which dominated the debate. In de Klerk's eyes, the transition of power from a white minority to a black majority was already complex enough and should not be further burdened with the nuclear question. And it should not be forgotten that the dismantlement of nuclear capacities was a strong symbolic act that helped secure international support from many sides for the transition. De Klerk referred directly to the Eastern European examples of revolutionary change when announcing his decision to release Nelson Mandela and to lift the ban on the ANC. This reference, however, was a contradictory one – the exact aim of the governing elites was to avoid the collapse they were observing in Eastern Europe and to open up avenues for a negotiated transition from one regime to its successor. In contrast, it can be argued that the international debate about disarmament was the strongest and most direct connection of the South African transformation to the global arena.

Thirty years later, the topic of disarmament is back on the agenda, after the "peace dividend" at the end of the Cold War had calmed spirits. A new bellicism, sitting at the threshold of deployable nuclear weapons, perpetuated the illusion that interventions legitimized by humanitarian law could be carried out without major human sacrifices. The most important treaties from the 1980s and early 1990s have been terminated or called into question because the Soviet-American bilateralism of the Cold War no longer seems appropriate and new world powers are securing their rise in the resulting vacuum. Nevertheless, the moment when South Africa scrapped its nuclear weapons – thus setting an example, which is still unique today, of the ideal of a world free from nuclear weapons – now seems more like an episode in the regional history of Southern Africa. However, it cannot be ruled out that the new danger posed by the arms race, with its hypersonic weapons and biological materials, drones, and cyber warfare, will soon lead to a renewed search for models of disarmament. For the time being, global history in this area, as for many other topics, perhaps must come to terms with the fact that it stockpiles knowledge and keeps it ready when it is needed.

Timothy Scarnecchia's article makes use of the now possible access to contemporary reports and observations in British and American archives. It reveals interesting details about the end of the conflicts in southern Africa, some of which invite us to redate

individual stages of the expiring Cold War. He complements what Chris Saunders concludes from historiographical and South African sources. It is exciting to read how the British and American diplomats interpreted the change in the attitudes of their Soviet counterparts. One can find in the reports their ideas on the supposed priorities of Soviet foreign policy. The central fears of the Western diplomats were directed at the export of armed revolutionary endeavours – above all through the supply of arms to liberation movements and the training of cadres during their stay in the Soviet Union or other countries of the Eastern bloc – at the intended establishment of a one-party state and the associated prevention of a political consolidation of any opposition as well as at the nationalization of the means of production, for example in extractive industries or in the financial sector. With great satisfaction, Western diplomats reported to their respective foreign ministries that Soviet negotiators were increasingly distancing themselves from these three building blocks of Soviet foreign policy, which had previously been considered central to the country's strategy, not only due to pressure from international political circumstances but also out of a well-considered self-interest. Thus, Soviet diplomats articulated a desire for stabilizing their position and offered the prospect of withdrawing Cuban troops from Angola. This corresponded to Gorbachev's ideas of a new world order, which would be supported not through escalation of conflicts in various parts of the world, but through reduction and which expected a symmetrical response from the USA. Soviet diplomats were also of the opinion that a nationalization of key industries in South Africa would not be to the advantage of Soviet economic interests. Rather, they recognized the opportunities to profit from the wealth of mineral resources from southern Africa and made great efforts to build economic relations, even if this had little effect on the turmoil of the Yeltsin years. Finally, these diplomats also indicated that they could imagine a post-apartheid South Africa that would establish a democratic balance between the various population groups through a multiparty system.

The comparisons between the political tensions in South Africa and the nationality conflicts in the crisis-ridden Soviet Union are interesting. Soviet diplomats obviously took a detached view of the efforts of radical representatives of trade unions, the South African Communist Party, and the ANC to push uncompromisingly for the enforcement of the rights of those who were oppressed and marginalized under apartheid. Frightened by the comparable inflexible attitude of nationalist leaders in the various republics of the Soviet Union, who were beginning to detach themselves from the Russian centre of the union, they developed little sympathy for similar attitudes among representatives of the black population in South Africa.

Thus, the sources that have now become newly accessible are not simply a source of information about new facts; they allow us to gain interesting insights into the way in which actors of 1989 saw and formulated the circumstances of that time. We should not forget, however, that these are initially only the reports of one side about the other; the Russian perception of American and British policy would have to be compared and would only complete the mirror cabinet into which Timothy Scarnecchia has guided us so eloquently.

This issue is a product of larger international conference held in the summer 2019 in Leipzig that was meant as a continuation of the 2009 conference with which we presented for the first time the global character of 1989. During the conference, we realized that there is a growing distance between the segments of historiography, suggesting that the global character of the series of events forming the global moment of 1989 is about to fall apart. However, we believe, as explained above, that this is only a farewell to an all too naïve and simplistic understanding of global moments guiding all region-specific processes into the same direction to produce global homogeneity. This obviously is not the case, and such a narrative is not attractive to today's historians and their audiences. Global moments bring processes of very different character and direction into contact and allow for a momentous intensification of transregional learning. The lessons learned are then integrated into very different repositories of knowledge about what seems best for the respective societies and how to reorganize global connectedness.

# **A View from Addis Ababa: From “1989” to Today’s Revolutions in Africa**

**Ulf Engel**

## **ABSTRACTS**

Dieser Artikel befasst sich mit den Reaktionen der Organisation für Afrikanische Einheit (OAU) und ihrer Nachfolgeorganisation, der Afrikanischen Union (AU), auf Volksaufstände und Revolutionen in den Mitgliedstaaten. Mit einem Schwerpunkt auf den kritischen Punkten von 1989, 2011 und 2019 kommt der Beitrag zu dem Schluss, dass diese Veränderungen hauptsächlich vor dem Hintergrund kontinentaler Erfahrungen behandelt, jedoch selten in einem globalen Kontext verortet wurden.

This article looks at responses over time by the OAU and its successor, the African Union, to popular uprisings and revolutions in member states. With a focus on the critical junctures of 1989, 2011, and 2019, the article concludes that these changes were mainly dealt with against the backdrop of continental experiences, but rarely situated in a global context.

## **1. Introduction**

How is the African Union, as the continent’s supra-national organisation of all African countries, narrating democratic changes and revolutions on the continent and placing them in a global context? How is, in this case, the “inside” and the “outside” of Africa negotiated? In this article I discuss how “1989” has initially been situated in continental and global politics by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, 1963–2002), and how its successor, the African Union (AU, established in 2002), has dealt with comparable critical junctures since, i.e. the uprisings throughout the Maghreb in 2011 and the cur-

rent situations developing since late 2018 in Algeria and Sudan.<sup>1</sup> Regional organisations, such as the OAU and the African Union, have played a major, though heavily under-researched role in the global history of democratic changes and revolutions – in terms of producing norms, giving meaning to and framing events unfolding, developing policy responses as well as coordinating communication on these issues to the outside world. But before delving into the OAU's take on "1989", it is worthwhile to briefly look back at the nature of "1989" in Africa. Politically, and with reference to a speech delivered by the then British Prime Ministers Harold Macmillan on 3 February 1960 in Cape Town, South Africa,<sup>2</sup> "1989" has been described as Africa's "second wind of change". Academically it has been claimed as part of the "third wave" of global democratisation.<sup>3</sup> As I have argued elsewhere,<sup>4</sup> timewise Africa's "1989" actually started earlier, namely in Southern Africa where after September 1986 a slow and fragile process of disentangling the warring parties in Angola and Namibia had started.<sup>5</sup> This culminated in the December 1988 Tripartite Accord between South Africa, Angola and Cuba and the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. The US/Soviet rapprochement in this part of the world finally led to the independence of Namibia in 1990, and the end of the civil wars in Angola and Mozambique in 1992. Moreover, during the course of these events some liberation movements in power dropped their commitment to Marxism-Leninism (Mozambique's FRELIMO in July 1989) or attempts to legally introduce a one-party state (Zimbabwe's ZANU-PF in January 1990). And, finally, in South Africa a pacted transition from apartheid to democracy was made possible (1990–1994). At a more theoretical level, and inspired by the spatial turn in the humanities and social sciences, Africa's "1989" has been identified as a cipher for "how power relations and sovereignty in Africa in the late 20th century were respaced and reordered".<sup>6</sup> Developments in Southern Africa intersected with "1989" trends elsewhere and accelerated the global momentum that had been building-up for many years already.

In any case, "1989" has unleashed two mega-trends on the African continent: first, a fundamental process of re-democratisation, including peaceful regimes changes, but also

1 In addition, there was a similar situation in 2014 in Burkina Faso when President Blaise Compaoré, who had been in power since 1987, was toppled after days of public protests. Though Zimbabwe when President Robert G. Mugabe was ousted in 2017 through a coup d'état has been a very different case. See D. Rogers, *Two Weeks in November. The astonishing untold story of the operation that toppled Mugabe*, London 2019.

2 South African History Online, "Speech made to the South Africa Parliament on 3 February 1960 by Harold Macmillan", <<https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/wind-change-speech-made-south-africa-parliament-3-february-1960-harold-macmillan>> (accessed 29 February 2020).

3 S. P. Huntington, *Democracy's Third Wave*, in: *Journal of Democracy* 2 (1991) 2, pp. 12–34. On "1989" in Southern Africa see also C. Saunders, "1989" in Southern Africa, in: U. Engel/F. Hadler/M. Middell (eds.), *1989 in a Global Perspective*, Leipzig 2015, pp. 349–361; for Africa as a whole see D. Simo, *Africa and the Turning Point of 1989*, in: Engel, Hadler and Middell, 1989 in a Global Perspective, pp. 362–374.

4 U. Engel, *Africa's "1989"*, in: Engel/Hadler/Middell (eds.), 1989 in a Global Perspective, pp. 331–348.

5 C. Saunders/S. Onslow, *The Cold War and Southern Africa, 1976–1990*, in: M. P. Leffler/O.A. Westad (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Cambridge 2009, pp. 222–243.

6 Engel, *Africa's "1989"*, p. 348.

sometimes less peaceful revolutions in many countries,<sup>7</sup> as well as, second and at the same time, a relapse into violent conflict in as many countries.<sup>8</sup> Another critical juncture in this respect occurred in 2011 when in many Maghreb countries revolutions broke out that seemed to carry the promise that Northern African countries could catch-up with the second wave of change of the early 1990s in Sub-Saharan Africa. Yet while, by and large, these hopes didn’t materialize – and quite contrary, Libya disintegrated into civil war with long-lasting spill-over effects all over the Sahelo-Saharan region and Egypt experienced a military backlash – events in Sudan and Algeria since late 2018 brought a *déjà vu* of a more democratic future on the horizon. In any case, the continuing dual condition of ongoing political transformations on the one hand and violent conflicts on the other is shaping the background against which African states position themselves vis-à-vis global change.

In the following second section, I will briefly discuss the long shadow of “1989” that has materialized into the dual condition of sustained democratic transitions on the one hand and violent conflict on the other. In the third section, the OAU’s response to “1989” will be reconstructed. In the fourth section, the African Union’s discussion of the dynamics of the Arab uprisings 2011 will be discussed. And in the fifth section, the Union’s take on the situations in Algeria and Sudan in 2018–2019 will be looked at. This is followed by conclusions.

## 2. The Long Shadow of “1989”: Democratic Transitions and Violent Conflicts

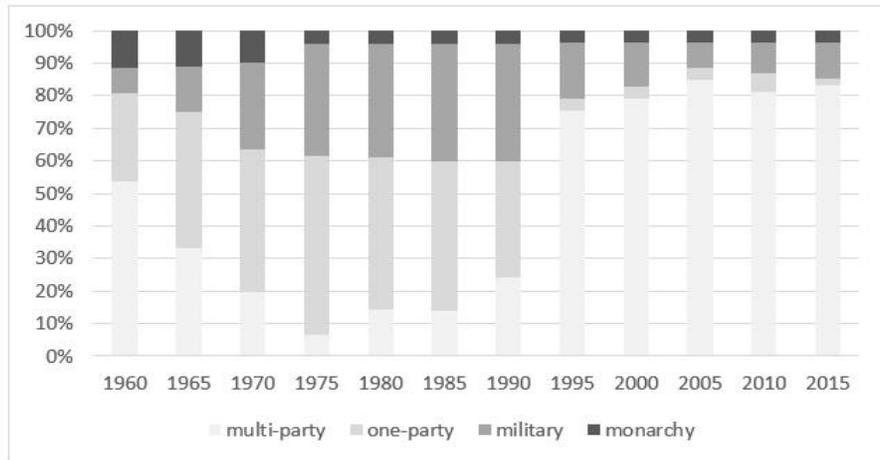
Very briefly, “1989” of course was a watershed that was marked by the transition of many African regimes from one-party states or military dictatorships to formal multi-party states. The idea of multi-partyism has gained currency, as can be seen from the developments captured in graph 1. While the number of African military regimes declined from 18 in 1990 to 6 in 2015 and the number of one-party states dropped from 18 (1990) to 1 (2015), at the same time the number of multi-party regimes increased from 7 (1985), 12 (1990) to 45 (2015).

Now, of course, this does not necessarily mean that the quality of democracy in these countries has improved at the same time. When measured by the Freedom House scores on political rights and civil liberties (which, by all its weaknesses, is the only index that allows for a cross-continental and cross-time perspective since 1972), it becomes clear that in many cases formal transitions to a “democratic” regime did not go hand-in-hand with substantial changes of governance performance (see graph 2).

7 M. Bratton/N. van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa. Regime Transition in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge 1997; and N. Cheeseman, *Democracy in Africa: Successes, Failures, and the Struggle for Political Reform*, Cambridge 2015.

8 S. Straus, *Making and Unmaking Nations. War, Leadership, and Genocide in Modern Africa*, Ithaca 2015.

Graph 1: African Regimes, 1960–2015



Notes: By and large, following the typology of M. Bratton and N. van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa*. Number of countries varies. Excluding Namibia for 1960–1989, South Africa for 1960–1994, and Southern Rhodesia for 1965–1979.

© U. Engel (2019). Sources: M. Bratton and N. van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa*; D. Nohlen/M. Krennrich/B. Thibaut (eds.), *Elections in Africa. A Data Handbook*, Oxford 1999.

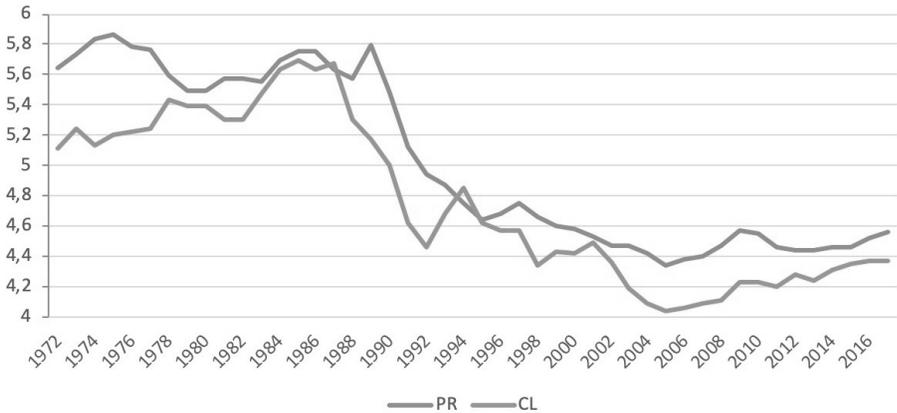
On a scale from 1 to 7 (“free” to “unfree”), on average African during the 1970s and 1980s scored somewhere between 5 and 6 (which, in the terminology of Freedom House, made most regimes “not free”). After “1989”, the scores improved, but only to the range between 4 to 5 (“partly free” to “unfree”). And since around 2005 a slight decline of the quality of democracy can be observed that basically is in line with Larry Diamond’s argument on the “global recession” of democracy<sup>9</sup> – a perspective that is also supported by the UN Economic Commission for Africa regular reports on governance in Africa.<sup>10</sup> The African Union has attributed this decline to an increase in the number of coups d’etat, incidents of electoral violence and debates about presidential term limits that have created sharp confrontations in some African societies.<sup>11</sup>

9 L. Diamond, *Facing up the Democratic Recession*, in: *Journal of Democracy* 26 (2015) 1, pp. 141–155.

10 See UN Economic Commission for Africa, *African Governance Report 2005*, Addis Ababa 2005; UNECA, *African Governance Report II*, Oxford 2009; UNECA, *African Governance Report III. Elections & the Management of Diversity*, Addis Ababa 2013; and UNECA, *Measuring corruption in Africa: The international dimension matters. African Governance Report IV*, Addis Ababa 2016.

11 AUC Chairperson 2010, *Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Prevention of Unconstitutional Changes of Government and Strengthening the Capacities of the African Union to Manage Such Situations*, 14th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, 31 January to 2 February 2010, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Assembly/AU/4 (XIV).

Graph 2: Regime Quality, 1972–2017



Note: scale 1 = free to 7 = unfree.

© U. Engel (2019). Source: Freedom House Index (1973–2018).

At the same time, elections increasingly started to matter.<sup>12</sup> Democracy as a principle has gained in importance,<sup>13</sup> democratic rules have become more and more institutionalised.<sup>14</sup> But they also got more and more contested as the primary means to gain access to power and state resources. Thus, not only the number of elections in Africa has increased since “1989”, but also the number of elections that have been hijacked by incumbents and ruling parties (see graph 3).

The second lasting effect of “1989” on the African continent has been the spread of violent conflict and the development of transregional conflict complexes.<sup>15</sup> This is not the place to discuss in detail how and why violent conflict in Africa has changed, suffice to state that the number of violent conflict has sharply increased in the 1990s, dropped since 2002, and is on the increase to unprecedented levels again since around 2010 (see graph 4). Initially this development has prompted the OAU to establish, in 1993, a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.<sup>16</sup> Against the background of violent conflicts unfolding in the 1990s in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and other places as well as the 1994 genocide in

12 J. Bleck/N. van de Walle, *Electoral Politics in Africa since 1990. Continuity and Change*, Cambridge 2019.

13 M. Bratton, *Formal Versus Informal Institutions in Africa*, in: *Journal of Democracy* 18 (2007) 3, pp. 96–110; and R. Mattes/M. Bratton 2016, *Do Africans still want democracy?*, Cape Town 2016 (= Afrobarometer Policy Paper; 36).

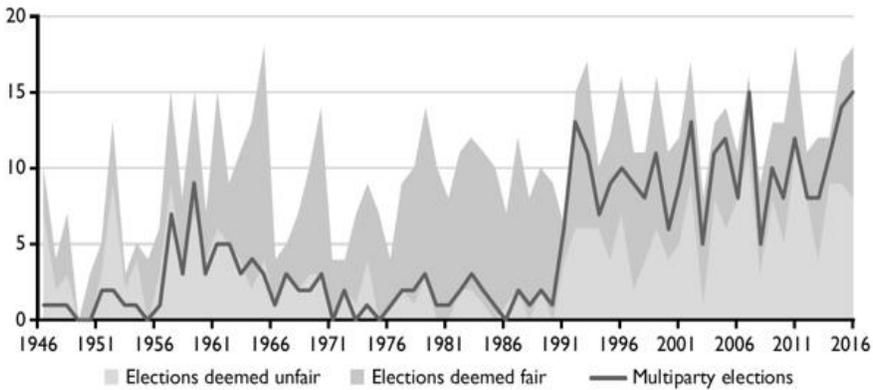
14 D. N. Posner/D.J. Young, *The Institutionalization of Political Power in Africa*, in: *Journal of Democracy* 18 (2007) 3, pp. 126–140.

15 See U. Engel, *Africa’s Transregional Conflicts*, in: *Comparativ* 28 (2019) 6, pp. 7–25.

16 OAU, *Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government on the Establishment within the OAU of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution*. 29th Ordinary Session of the OAU Assembly, 28–30 June 1993, Cairo, Egypt, AHG/DECL. 3 (XXIX).

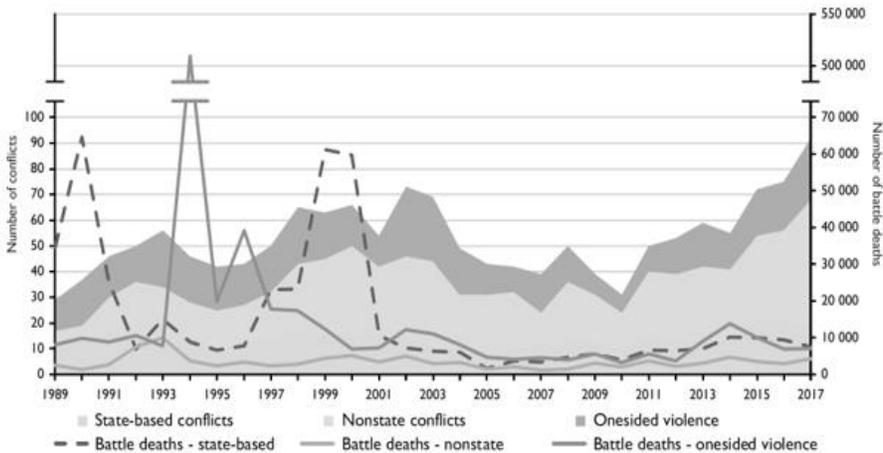
Rwanda, and the insufficiency of the OAU Mechanism,<sup>17</sup> a far-reaching approach was taken in 1999–2002. As a result, the OAU was transformed into the African Union.<sup>18</sup>

Graph 3: Election Trends in Africa, 1946–2016



Source: I.V. Bakken and S.A. Rustad, *Conflict Trends in Africa, 1989–2017*, in: *PRIO Conflict Trends* (2018) 6, p. 4.

Graph 4: Conflict Trends in Africa, 1989–2017



Source: Bakken and Rustad, *Conflict Trends in Africa, 1989–2017*, p. 2.

17 M. Muyangwa/ M. A. Vogt, *An Assessment of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, 1993–2000*, New York 2003.

18 To name but two overviews: K.M. Khamis, *Promoting the African Union*, Washington DC 2008; and T. Karbo/ T. Murithi (eds.), *The African Union. Autocracy, Diplomacy and Peacebuilding in Africa*, London 2018.

### 3. OAU Response to “1989”

To start with the irony: The OAU treated “1989” as external to the continent, without realising how much of “1989” actually was of African origin. The OAU Council of (Foreign) Ministers, as early as ... 1988, recognized “signs of change in international climate” and “of the emergence of a period of détente where a relaxation of tension would prevail in the relations between the two super power and would be extended to the international scene”.<sup>19</sup> The developments leading up to the signing of the Tripartite Accord between South Africa, Angola and Cuba in 1988 were cautiously welcomed, and interpreted within the larger history of the liberation struggles in Southern Africa and the proxy wars waged by the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>20</sup>

A broader reflection of the changing global order was discussed by the OAU Assembly in 1990. At the 26<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the OAU Heads of State and Government held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 9–11 July 1990 a declaration was adopted on the “Political and Socio-Economic Situation in Africa and the fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World”. It was based on a landmark report of the organisation’s Secretary-General, Salim Ahmed Salim, on the “Fundamental Changes taking place in the World and their Implications for Africa: Proposals for an African Response”. First of all, this implied that the global change of “1989” was happening outside of Africa:

*In particular, we have noted the changing East-West relations from confrontation to cooperation, the socio-economic and political changes in Eastern Europe, the steady move towards the political and monetary union of Western Europe, the increasing global tendency towards regional integration and the establishment of trading and economic blocks, as well as the advances in science and technology. These, we found, constitute major factors which should guide Africa’s collective thinking about the challenges and options before her in the 1990s and beyond in view of the real threat of marginalisation of our continent.*<sup>21</sup>

Yet at the same the OAU noted “with satisfaction”:

*[...] the achievements of Africa, in the struggle for the decolonization of the continent and, in the fight against racism and apartheid; as well as the positive role played by the OAU in this respect. The independence of Namibia has pushed further Africa’s frontiers of freedom.*<sup>22</sup>

19 OAU CoM, Resolution on Current International Development. 48th Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers, 19–23 May 1998, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, CM/Res.1158 (XLVIII).

20 See, for instance, Resolution on Namibia. 49th Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers, 20–25 February 1989, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, CM/Res.1177 (XLIX); and Resolution on People’s Republic of Angola. 49th Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers, 20–25 February 1989, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, CM/Res.1185 (XLIX).

21 OAU 1990, Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity on the Political and Socio-Economic Situation in Africa and the Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World. 26th Ordinary Session of the OAU Assembly, 9–11 July, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, AHG/Decl. 1 (XXVI), §2.

22 Ibid., §3.

Interestingly after more of decade of economic struggling, as an institution the OAU at that moment in time was, may be of course, far more concerned with its economic agenda: The 1980 Lagos Plan of Action for the economic development of Africa up to 2000, Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (1986–1990), and the African Common Position on Africa's External Debt Crisis.<sup>23</sup> Yet the connection to political developments was easily made in terms of a commitment to the new “good governance” agenda:

*We are fully aware that in order to facilitate this process of socio-economic transformation and integration, it is necessary to promote popular participation of our peoples in the processes of government and development. A permitting political environment which guarantees human rights and the observance of the rule of law, would ensure high standards of probity and accountability, particularly on the part of those who hold public office. In addition, popular-based political processes would ensure the involvement of all including in particular women and youth in the development efforts. We accordingly recommit ourselves to the further democratization of our societies and to the consolidation of democratic institutions in our countries.*<sup>24</sup>

However, given the different trajectories towards democracy in OAU member states, at the same time the OAU was quite wary about the extent of its commitment to genuine “democracy”:

*We reaffirm the right of our countries to determine, in all sovereignty, their system of democracy on the basis of their socio-cultural values, taking into account the realities of each of our countries and the necessity to ensure development and satisfy the basic needs of our peoples. We therefore assert that democracy and development should go together and should be mutually reinforcing.*<sup>25</sup>

So still, the organisation's emphasis was very much on economics rather than on politics. As an institution, it seems, the OAU hadn't fully grasped the political dimension of what was happening on the continent and how it related to the global:

*At this crucial juncture when our continent is emerging with difficulty, from a phase in its history that focused mainly on political liberation and nation building, and is about to embark on a new era laying greater emphasis on economic development, we need to strengthen the Organization of African Unity so that it may also become a viable instrument in the service of Africa's economic development and integration.*<sup>26</sup>

The 1991 OAU summit continued discussing the economic challenges the continent was facing, but neglected the political dimension of what was unfolding in member

23 Ibid., §5.

24 Ibid., §10.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid. §11.

states,<sup>27</sup> thus still constructing “1989” as something external to the continent. The global implications of the end of the Cold War were not reflected in the Assembly decisions at all. In July 1992 the OAU Council of [Foreign] Ministers in view of the ongoing democratic transitions in some member states very cautiously reaffirmed “the right of every State to determine freely, in full sovereignty and complete freedom, its political institutions without foreign influence” and in addition called on “extra-African Powers to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of African countries”.<sup>28</sup> And in the June 1993 Cairo Declaration, that commemorated the 30th anniversary of the organisation, the OAU Assembly only hinted at “fundamental changes that have taken place in the post-independence era, and more particularly since the end of the cold war”,<sup>29</sup> but didn’t take a position whatsoever on the issue – presumably because member states couldn’t agree on a concrete position as they were involved in their own domestic struggles about democracy. Other than that, the OAU was very much concerned with its own economic and security problems, most importantly regarding the establishment of the African Economic Community and the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

Revealing cumbersome and controversial policy processes both between member states, but also within the continental body, finally, in February 1994 the OAU Council of Ministers adopted a “Resolution on the Democratization Process in Africa” in which “the sovereign right of our countries to determine for ourselves an appropriate system of democracy on the basis of the sociocultural values of our respective countries” was reaffirmed; and stressed that “peace, political stability and economic development as well as the respect for Human Rights are necessary conditions for further democratization”. But at the same time, the Council also warned “that the process of democratic transition and economic transformation of our countries should evolve in an orderly manner in order to avoid the rupture of the socio-cultural fabric of African societies”.<sup>30</sup> The Council also appealed to the international community

*to refrain from taking any measures or punitive conditionalities which would have adverse and counter productive effects on African Countries engaged in genuine efforts at democratizing their societies and institutions.*<sup>31</sup>

27 OAU, Declaration of the Twenty-Seventh Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments on Employment in Africa. 27th Ordinary Session of the OAU Assembly, 3–5 June 1991, Abuja, Nigeria, AHG/Dec. 1 (XXVII).

28 OAU CoM, Resolution on the Right of States to Decide on Their Political Options Without Foreign Interference. 56th Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers. 22–28 June 1992, Dakar, Senegal, CM/Res. 1389 (LVI) Rev. 1.

29 OAU, Declaration on the Occasion of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Organization of African Unity. 29th Ordinary Session of the OAU Assembly, 28–30 June 1993, Cairo, Egypt, AHG/Decl. 1 (XXIX), §8.

30 OAU CoM, Resolution on the Democratization Process in Africa. 59th Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers. 31 January to 4 February 1994, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, CM/Res.1496 (LIX).

31 Ibid., §8.

Again, the major political changes were treated as happening in a container called Africa. At least, at this point in time “1989” was not perceived as a global dynamic, but something connected only through possible foreign intervention.

#### 4. AU Responses to “2011”

With a view to the Arab uprisings in the Maghreb in 2011,<sup>32</sup> the successor of the OAU, the African Union, embedded the dynamics in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia both in a continental, but also in a global perspective. Importantly, in May 2011 the Chairperson of the AU Commission, in those days Jean Ping from Gabon, tabled a report to an Extraordinary AU Assembly in which he not only discussed at length what was happening in these countries and linked this to the Commission’s quest for democracy and good governance, but also – though fairly diplomatically – contextualised these dynamics internationally by criticizing “the reluctance of members of the international community, and particularly the NATO alliance, to fully acknowledge the AU role in the promotion of peace in the continent and their selective application of the principle of ownership”.<sup>33</sup> First, the AU interpreted the developments in Tunisia and Egypt as a process of catching-up with the second wind of change in Sub-Saharan Africa twenty years before:<sup>34</sup>

*The uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt have unveiled a profound process that potentially contributes to democratic consolidation across Africa. Building on the great strides towards democratisation in Africa since 1990, the popular revolts and uprisings resemble the mass protests, food riots, and urban strikes that propelled the initial wave of democratization in Africa in the late 1980s.*<sup>35</sup>

By the same reasoning, the report continues constructing a common continental history by stating that

*The North African uprisings have removed some of the ambiguities in the discourse of democratization across Africa. North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa can now draw from the same shared experiences of building systems that underwrite liberties, freedoms, and accountability.*<sup>36</sup>

Second, the African Union placed these dynamics in a global narrative:

32 See A. Branch/Z. Mampily, *Africa Uprising. Popular Protest and Political Change*, London 2015; J. Brownlee/T. E. Masoud/A. Reynolds, *The Arab Spring. Pathways of Repression and Reform*, Oxford 2015; E. Kienle/N. Mourad Sika (eds.), *The Arab Uprisings. Transforming and Challenging State Power*, London 2015; and L. Sadiki (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of the Arab Spring. Rethinking Democratization*, London 2015.

33 AUC Chairperson, Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Current Challenges to Peace and Security on the Continent and the AU’s Efforts. Enhancing Africa’s Leadership, Promoting African Solutions. Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly, 25–26 May 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, EXT/ASSEMBLY/AU/2. (01.2011), §48

34 On this argument also see L. Way, *Comparing the Arab Revolts. The Lessons of 1989*, in: *Journal of Democracy* 22 (2011) 4, pp. 13–23.

35 AUC Chairperson, Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Current Challenges, §5.

36 *Ibid.*, §8.

*The grievances that have driven North Africa revolts have a universal ring to them: widespread dissatisfaction with authoritarian and insular governments that have been adept at manipulating constitutional rules to retain power; increasing income inequalities, high poverty levels, and declining living standards for middle classes; and disproportionately high levels of youth unemployment, leading to social alienation. New tools of mobilization, such as the social media, have only contributed to sharpening the organizational tools of the new groups and constituencies. In leading a wide range of aggrieved groups and constituencies, the middle classes in Egypt and Tunisia looked to the future optimistically, because they perceived authoritarian governments as the major impediments to realizing their real potentials.<sup>37</sup>*

Third, the African Union used the developments in Tunisia, Egypt and also Libya to call on member states to fully sign-up to the democratic agenda of the Union, and implement “existing instruments in the areas of human rights, the rule of law, democracy, elections and good governance”, in order to be able to prevent similar developments in their own countries.<sup>38</sup> In this view, “the uprisings in North Africa should be used as an opportunity to further the democratic and governance agenda of the AU”, the Chairperson of the Commission stated.<sup>39</sup>

And with regard to global politics the Chairperson insisted that

*partnerships are fully based on Africa’s leadership: because without such leadership, there will be no ownership and sustainability; because we understand the problems far better than even the closest partners; because we know which solutions will work, and how we can get there; and because, fundamentally, these problems are ours, and our peoples will live with their consequences.<sup>40</sup>*

In the meantime, he was adamant that the NATO campaign should come “to an immediate end”, as it was “significantly expanding beyond the objectives for which it was in the first place authorized”.<sup>41</sup>

Other than that, the African Union did not take any decisions for immediate action on the situation in Tunisia or Egypt. It only reiterated the continued relevance of its mediation plan for Libya,<sup>42</sup> that obviously was made needless by the intervention. Yet the African Union has to admit that it had a serious problem with one of its core norms: the rejection of “unconstitutional changes of government”. This policy was adopted in 2000 and updated in 2007.<sup>43</sup> Based on a universal understanding of human rights and

37 Ibid., §6.

38 Ibid., §46.

39 Ibid., §47.

40 Ibid., §48.

41 Ibid., §51.

42 African Union Decision on the Situation in Libya. 27th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, 30 June to 1 July 2011, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, Assembly/AU/Dec. 385 (XVII).

43 See U. Engel, The African Union and mediation in cases of Unconstitutional Changes of Government, 2008–2011, in: U. Engel (ed.), *New Mediation Practices in African Conflicts*, Leipzig 2012, pp. 55–82. See also I. K. Souaré, *The AU and the challenge of unconstitutional changes of government in Africa*, Pretoria 2009; J. S. Omotola,

democracy as well as the need for free and fair elections, good governance and the rule of law, as laid out in the 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance,<sup>44</sup> the Union had developed a legalistic policy script that should be invoked against any perpetrator of a coup d'état, or incumbents who didn't cease power after an election lost, or presidents who manipulated the constitution to extend their stay in office (also referred to as the third-term debate).

In his report on the situation the Chairperson of the AU Commission disarmingly states that

*The popular uprisings that occurred in Tunisia and in Egypt were unparalleled and posed serious doctrinal problems, because they do not correspond to any of the cases defined by the Lomé Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government [...]*<sup>45</sup>

And furthermore, he noted that

*Social protests without clear leadership and in circumstances of rapidly-unfolding events often take time to translate into steady and stable democratic outcomes. Moreover, spontaneous revolutionary impulses [emphasis added, UE] may not necessarily lead to orderly institution-building. Tunisia and Egypt are, however, gradually stabilizing themselves as a result of intricate bargaining among the various stakeholders about the shape of new institutional dispensations.*<sup>46</sup>

Through this formulation the Chairperson, though somewhat lightly, introduced the term “revolution” into the African Union’s political discourse.<sup>47</sup> The situation in Libya, too, was characterised by the Chairperson as a “democratic revolution”, though seen different from the dynamics unfolding in Tunisia and Egypt.<sup>48</sup> However, revolutions were simply not foreseen in the Union’s policy script. Member states, but also the Commission itself were deeply divided on how to respond to the dynamics unfolding.<sup>49</sup> After the UN Security Council adopted a resolution by through which a no-flight zone was introduced in Libya on 17 March 2011, and the launch of Operation *Unified Protector* by the NATO military alliance two days later, the African Union lost important time in

Unconstitutional changes of government in Africa: what implications for democratic consolidation?, Uppsala 2011; K. Sturman, Unconstitutional Changes of Government: The Democrat’s Dilemma in Africa, Johannesburg 2011; and S.A. Dersso, Defending constitutional rule as a peacemaking enterprise: the case of the AU’s ban on unconstitutional changes of government, in: International Peacekeeping 24 (2017) 4, pp. 639–660.

44 African Union, African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, Addis Ababa 2007.

45 AUC Chairperson, Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Current Challenges, §4.

46 Ibid., §7.

47 For the current academic analysis of the “revolutionary moment” in the Maghreb see S. Lacroix/ J.-P. Filiu, Revisiting the Arab Uprisings: The Politics of a Revolutionary Moment, London 2018; and A. Bayat, Revolution Without Revolutionaries: Making Sense of the Arab Spring, Stanford CA 2017. Of course, there have been revolutions in North Africa before. See L. Hahn, The Revolution in North Africa, in: Africa Today 14 (1967) 3, pp. 20–22. For an overview on the debate about what constitutes and what prompts “social revolutions” see G. Tiruneh, Social Revolutions: Their Causes, Patterns, and Phases, SAGE Open, (2014) July–September, pp. 1–12.

48 AUC Chairperson, Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Current Challenges, §13.

49 Personal observations at the African Union Commission, Addis Ababa, 19 February, 1 April and 1 May 2011.

coming to terms with its own response to the drama in Libya. In the end, it was too late for the Union to find support for a mediated conflict resolution.<sup>50</sup>

## 5. AU Responses to “2019”

In late 2018 thousands of people started demonstrating against the regime in Sudan, in early 2019 they were followed by the people in Algeria. In the case of Sudan protesters initially demanded the resignation of the military regime led by Gen. Omar al-Bashir (aged 75) since 1989. And in Algeria people protested against the plan of Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika (82), who had been in power since 1999, to run for a fifth term of office. In both cases the regimes initially had to make major concessions: on 11 April 2019 the Sudanese military removed al-Bashir from office and imprisoned him, in Algeria the ruling party forced Bouteflika’s resignation from office.<sup>51</sup>

Developments in Algeria and Sudan resonate the 2011 popular uprisings and revolutions in the region, with the counter-revolutionary spectre of a military backlash remaining.<sup>52</sup> And as such the African Union was faced with a “conundrum”.<sup>53</sup> After the popular uprisings and revolutions of 2011 the Union had revisited its doctrine. On the occasion of Gen. Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, the then Minister of Defence, removing democratically-elected Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi, a leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, amidst a wave of public protests from office on 3 July 2013 – which most observers including the African Union considered to be a coup d’etat<sup>54</sup> –, the Union established a High-Level Panel to look into the situation in Egypt.<sup>55</sup> The country’s new leadership rejected this move, claiming that it was “based on a wrong interpretation of the ‘popular revolution’”

50 On 10 March 2011 the AU Peace and Security Council had adopted the *AU Roadmap for the Resolution of the Crisis in Libya* and established a High-Level ad hoc Committee on Libya. See AU PSC, Communiqué adopted by the Peace and Security Council at its 265th meeting, held at the Level of Heads of State and Government, 10 March 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, PSC/PR/COMM.2 (CCLXV).

51 See Africa Research Bulletin. Political Series 56 (2019) 4, pp. 22247A-22250C; and 56 (2019) 3, pp. 22211A-22213C, respectively. On Algeria also see International Crisis Group, Post-Bouteflika Algeria: Growing Protests, Signs of Repression, Brussels, 26 April 2019 (= ICG Middle East & North Africa Briefing; 68). On Sudan also see M. Hassan/A. Kodouda, Sudan’s Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator, in: *Journal of Democracy* 30 (2019) 4, pp. 89–103; and International Crisis Group, Safeguarding Sudan’s Revolution, Brussels, 21 October 2019 (= ICG Africa Report; 281). In more general terms see Michele Dunne, Fear and Learning in the Arab Uprisings, in: *Journal of Democracy* 31 (2020) 1, pp. 182–192.

52 A. Adebayo, Africa: On the Revolutions in Sudan and Algeria, *Guardian*, 13 May 2019, <<https://allafrica.com/stories/201905130490.html>> (accessed: 9 August 2019); and G. Achcar, The seasons after the Arab Spring, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 6 May 2019, <<https://mondediplo.com/2019/06/05sudan>> (accessed 9 August 2019).

53 A.K. Abebe, Africa: Popular Protests Pose a Conundrum for the AU’s Opposition to Coups, *The Conversation*, 5 May 2019, <<https://allafrica.com/stories/201905060175.html>> (accessed: 9 August 2019); and the same, Sudan: a chance for the AU to refine support for countries in crisis, *The Conversation*, 7 June 2019, <[http://theconversation.com/...](http://theconversation.com/)> (accessed 9 August 2019).

54 AU PSC, Communiqué adopted by the Peace and Security Council at its 384th meeting, 5 July 2013, Addis Ababa, PSC/PR/COMM.2 (CCCLXXXIV).

55 The Panel was constituted on 8 July 2013, consisting of Alpha Oumar Konaré (former President of Mali, and former Chairperson of the AU Commission), Festus G. Mogae (former President of Botswana), and Dileita Mohamed Dileita (former Prime Minister of Djibouti). Morsi passed away on 17 June 2019, while on trial.

in Egypt.<sup>56</sup> Also, following protocol the African Union suspended Egypt's membership until the restoration of constitutional order.

The panel was of the view that constitutional order was restored through the subsequent elections held on 26–28 May 2014. Gen. el-Sisi became president – though there is a provision in the *African Charter* that perpetrators of a coup d'état shouldn't be allowed to run for presidency.<sup>57</sup> The Panel also noted that Egypt did not sign nor ratify the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.<sup>58</sup> Weighting up the choices the Panel then stated:

*The Panel held an extensive discussion on this issue. In so doing, it took into account the following: on the one hand, the need for consistency in the implementation of AU norms on unconstitutional changes of Government and consolidation of the democratic advances on the continent and, on the other hand, the need not to overlook other considerations of serious importance to the AU and the continent, particularly the need for the AU to continue to effectively and constructively engage the Egyptian authorities and other stakeholders on the democratization process in their country and the stabilization of the situation on the ground.*<sup>59</sup>

Because of the “unique set of circumstances”, the Panel recommend to lift the sanctions against Egypt.<sup>60</sup> And with regard to the future of the norm on unconstitutional changes of government, the Panel made the following recommendation:

*In light of the difficulties encountered in applying the AU norms on unconstitutional changes of Government, particularly in the context of popular uprisings the Panel recommends elaboration of a guideline for determining the compatibility of popular uprisings with AU norms on unconstitutional changes of Government. Taking into account recent experiences in North Africa, including in Egypt, the Panel recommends the following elements for such a guideline: (a) the descent of the government into total authoritarianism to the point of forfeiting its legitimacy; (b) the absence or total ineffectiveness of constitutional processes for effecting change of government; (c) popularity of the uprisings in the sense of attracting significant portion of the population and involving people from all walks of life and ideological persuasions; (d) the absence of involvement of the military in removing the government; (e) peacefulness of the popular protests.*<sup>61</sup>

Against this background, the African Union responded in very different ways to the popular uprisings in Algeria and Sudan.

56 African Union, Final Report of the African Union High-Panel for Egypt. 442nd meeting of the Peace and Security Council, 17 June 2014, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, PSC/AHG/4. (CDXVI), §30.

57 African Union, African Charter, §25(4).

58 African Union, Final Report of the African Union High-Panel for Egypt, §75.

59 Ibid., §76.

60 Ibid., §83.

61 Ibid., §83. See also S. A. Dersso, The Status and Legitimacy of Popular Uprisings in the AU Norms on Democracy and Constitutional Governance, in: *Journal of African Law* 63 (2019) Supplement S1, pp. 107–130.

After the forced resignation of Bouteflika in Algeria the former chief-of-staff, Deputy Minister of Defence Gen Ahmed Gaid Salah (aged 79) took over control and started purging Bouteflika’s inner circle, but not heading public calls for delivering on a “real democracy”. Cabinet was reshuffled and elections were initially scheduled for 4 July, but then postponed until 12 December 2019 when the former prime minister Abdelmadjid Tebboune (74) was elected president as an “independent candidate”. The elections were widely boycotted with an official voter turnout of 39.83 percent (out of which 14.62% were annulled or invalid); opposition parties claim that the turnout was even far lower. Only a few days later, on 23 December, the mastermind of the controlled transition within the ruling military-party complex, Gaid Salah, passed away.<sup>62</sup> Throughout these dynamic developments, the African Union did hardly pronounce itself on the situation in Algeria: In a rare statement on the situation the AUC Chairperson on 18 March 2019 called for a national dialogue to solve the “crisis” – i.e. before Bouteflika was forced to resign.<sup>63</sup> But at the end of the day Algeria is a member state that has been in charge of the important AUC Peace and Security portfolio since the beginning (i.e. 2004) and also is one of the five key member states bankrolling much of the Union’s activities.<sup>64</sup> In addition, Algeria is seen as an important partner in the African Union’s efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism in the Sahelo-Saharan part of the continent.<sup>65</sup> Since 2017 the country is coordinating the Union’s counter-terrorism efforts; it also hosts the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT).<sup>66</sup>

However, in Sudan the situation was markedly different. In this case the Union African swiftly invoked its policy script on unconstitutional change of government: It called the removal of al-Bashir on 11 April 2019 a coup d’etat. Initially it gave the new military leadership 15 days to hand-over power to a civilian government.<sup>67</sup> At first a stalemate developed in which combined public and AU pressure did not succeed in establishing a civilian government. A “Consultative Summit of the Regional Partners of The Sudan”, hosted by Egypt on 23 April 2019, then gave the leadership another 60 days to find a negotiated solution and hand over power to a civilian Transitional Authority.<sup>68</sup> Accordingly, the ruling Military Transitional Council (TMC) led by Gen Abdel Fattah

62 See Africa Research Bulletin. Political Series 56 (2019) 7, pp. 22363C-22365A; 56 (2019) 9, pp. 22467B-22468B; and 56 (2019) 12, pp. 22535A–22537C.

63 Middle East Monitor, African Union calls for national dialogue to bring Algerian crisis to an end, 18 March 2019, <<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20190318-african-union-calls-for-national-dialogue-to-bring-algerian-crisis-to-an-end/>> (accessed 30 January 2020).

64 See U. Engel, Revisiting the African Union’s Finances post-Kigali 2016, in: U. Engel / F. Mattheis (eds.), *The Finances of Regional Organisations in the Global South: Follow the Money*, London, New York 2019, pp. 19–34, at pp. 22f.

65 See Yahia H. Zoubir, Algeria’s Roles in the OAU/African Union: From National Liberation Promoter to Leader in the Global War on Terrorism, in: *Mediterranean Politics* 20 (2015) 1, pp. 55–75.

66 Middle East Monitor, African Union chooses Algeria as counterterrorism coordinator, 1 December 2017, <<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171201-african-union-chooses-algeria-as-counterterrorism-coordinator/>> (accessed 30 January 2020).

67 AU PSC, Communiqué adopted by the Peace and Security Council at its 840th meeting, 15 April 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, PSC/PR/COMM. (DCCCXL).

68 AU PSC, Communiqué adopted by the Peace and Security Council at its 846th meeting, 30 April 2019, Tunis, Tunisia, PSC/PR/COMM. (DCCCXLVI).

al-Burhan and his deputy Lt-Gen Mohamed Hamdan “Hemeti” Dagalo<sup>69</sup> on the one hand and the oppositional umbrella organisation Declaration of Freedom and Changes Forces (FFC) on the other, reached an agreement to allow for the establishment of a 300 member civilian council to lead the country until next elections to be held in three years. And when the violent backlash against the opposition forces was escalated by the Rapid Support Forces on 3 June 2019, the AUC Chairperson called on the TMC “to protect the civilians from further harm”, called for an “immediate cessation of the violence and rapid resumption of negotiations for a political settlement” and appealed to “all concerned to exercise utmost restraint and to respect the rights of citizens”.<sup>70</sup> But the AU did not, for instance deploy a field mission to make its own assessment of the dynamics in Sudan. Instead, on 6 June, the AU decided “to suspend, with immediate effect, the participation of the Republic of Sudan in all AU activities until the effective establishment of a civilian-led Transitional Authority, as the only way to allow the Sudan to exit from its current crisis”.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, it threatened that “should the Transition Military Council fail to hand-over power to a civilian-led Transitional Authority, Council shall, without any further delay, automatically impose punitive measures on individuals and entities obstructing the establishment of the civilian-led Transitional Authority”.<sup>72</sup> In the end, the AU through its Special Envoy to Sudan, Mohamed El Hassan Ould Labbat, as well as Ethiopian Special Envoy Mahmoud Dirir begun mediating between the Military Council and the Forces of Change. This prepared an intervention finally led by AUC Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat and Ethiopia’s Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (the latter on behalf of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, IGAD).<sup>73</sup> As a result, the TMC and the FFC signed a “political declaration” agreement on power-sharing during the transitional period (17 July) and a *Constitutional Declaration* (4 August) that paved the way for the formation of an interim mixed military-civilian government.<sup>74</sup>

69 The head of the notorious Rapid Support Forces, or RSF, which originated from the infamous Janjaweed militia that was responsible for the genocide in Darfur after 2003. See T. Etefa, Explainer: tracing the history of Sudan’s Janjaweed militia, *The Conversation*, 9 August 2019, <[http://theconversation.com/...](http://theconversation.com/)> (accessed 30 January 2020).

70 AUC Chairperson, Statement on the Situation in Sudan, 3 June 2019, Addis Ababa.

71 AU PSC, Communiqué adopted by the Peace and Security Council at its 854th meeting, 6 June 2019, Addis Ababa, PSC/PR/COMM. (DCCCXLIV), §12.

72 *Ibid.*, §13.

73 AUC Chairperson and Ethiopian Prime Minister, Joint Communiqué on the Situation in Sudan, 2 July 2019, Addis Ababa; AUC Chairperson, Statement on the situation in Sudan, 5 July 2019, Addis Ababa; and African Union High-Level Ad Hoc Committee for South Sudan (CS), Communiqué adopted at a meeting at ministerial level, 6 July 2019, Niamey, Niger.

74 Africa Research Bulletin. Political Series 56 (2019) 8, pp. 22391A-22394C. Following its policy script, the African Union subsequently lifted the sanctions imposed earlier. See AU PSC, Communiqué adopted by the Peace and Security Council at its 875th meeting, 6 September 2019, Addis Ababa, PSC/PR/COMM. (DCCCLXXV). The African Union remained seized with the matter. See AU PSC, Communiqué adopted by the Peace and Security Council at its 884th meeting, New York, United States, 10 October, PSC/PR/COMM (DCCCLXXXIV); and AU PSC, Communiqué adopted by the Peace and Security Council at its 906th meeting, 30 January 2020, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, PSC/PR/COMM. (CMVI).

After some initial stalling, this power-sharing government under the lead of former UN economist Abdallah Hamdook then managed to take some far-reaching decisions which gave rise to moderate optimism about the future path of the transition. Among others, the Sovereign Transition Council agreed on a ceasefire in Sudan’s internal conflict zones Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan (21 November); it disbanded the former ruling party, the National Congress Party (26 November); al-Bashir was convicted on charges of corruption and currency irregularities, and sentenced to two years in a “correctional facility” (14 December) and the government announced its intention to transfer the ousted military dictator and others indicted to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague on charges of war crimes and genocide committed during the war in Darfur (10 February 2020).<sup>75</sup>

Yet both in Algeria and Sudan, dismantling the “deep state” has only just begun. The uprisings clearly are unfinished business.

## 6. Conclusions

In this article, I have discussed how the Organisation of African Union and its successor, the African Union, have perceived a number of popular uprisings and revolutions on the continent, for the sake of simplicity referred to as “1989”, “2011” and “2019”. A number of conclusions can be drawn from the African experience which may also help to reassess more general scholarship on “1989” with its bias on Europe. First, the global “1989” received a tremendous push from developments in Africa, already as early as 1985/1986. Second, in most cases these changes were not discussed by the OAU as part of any global dynamics, but as very contingent, continental developments. Later, political changes were situated in terms of how they related to the *second wind of change* on the continent and how, in these terms, the Maghreb related to Sub-Saharan Africa. Third, “1989” created a dual and lasting condition on the continent of democratic transitions on the one hand and violent conflicts on the other. Against this background, and four, in support of democratic transitions the African Union developed systematic policy responses to unconstitutional changes of government. Five, but this did not result in a common understanding of popular uprisings and revolutions, as evidenced during the uprisings in Northern Africa in 2011 or the latest wave of change in Sudan and Algeria in 2019. As a result, some efforts were made to integrate popular uprisings and revolutions into the Union’s policy script – yet based on a narrow definition of the notion “revolution”, which excludes any violent action. Hence, the situation in Sudan will serve as a litmus test for

75 Africa Research Bulletin. Political Series 56 (2019) 11, pp. 22525B-C; Radio Dabanga, 29 November 2019, <<https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/sudan-dissolves-national-congress-party-repeals-public-order-bill>>; Radio Dabanga, 14 December 2019, <<https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/khartoum-court-convicts-sudan-s-ousted-dictator-al-bashir-of-corruption>>; and Radio Dabanga, 11 February 2020, <<https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/sudan-govt-to-extradite-al-bashir-to-icc>> (all accessed 13 February 2020).

this new policy and the commitment of the Union's member states to democracy on the continent. For sure, the revolutions of 2011 and 2019 showed an element of transregional embeddedness and signs of synchronization, both in the way they actually played out, and also with regard how they were perceived outside the continent. But there was no "global" ring to them. Neither in the case of Algeria nor in Sudan reference has been made by the African Union to dynamics outside the African continent – revolutions are still homegrown, and so are the African Union's responses, or lack thereof.

# 1989 in South(ern) Africa: The Fall of the Nuclear Wall

Anna-Mart van Wyk / Robin Möser

## ABSTRACTS

Dieser Artikel basiert auf neu erhaltenen Archivquellen und Interviews mit zentralen Akteuren und zielt darauf ab, einige Lücken in der Geschichtsschreibung zum Ende des Kalten Krieges im südlichen Afrika zu schließen. Es werden die letzten Jahre des südafrikanischen Atomwaffenprogramms vor dem Hintergrund der Beendigung des globalen Kalten Krieges in der südafrikanischen Region erörtert. Es wird argumentiert, dass die Ereignisse in Osteuropa im Jahr 1989 den grundlegenden Veränderungen in Südafrika nach einem jahrzehntelangen Befreiungskampf gegen das repressive Apartheidregime gegenübergestellt werden sollten. Es wird gezeigt, dass sich der September 1989 in Südafrika als ebenso bedeutsam erwies wie in Leipzig. Die Wahl von F. W. de Klerk zum Staatspräsidenten brachte Südafrika auf einen beispiellosen Reformkurs, einschließlich des Beschlusses, die sprichwörtliche „Atommauer“ der Apartheid abzureißen. Der Beitrag argumentiert, dass die Entscheidung der De Klerk-Regierung, das im Land entwickelte Atomwaffenarsenal zu beenden und zu demontieren, durch das Zusammentreffen von einheimischen und regionalen Faktoren ausgelöst wurde, aber auch die Ereignisse in Osteuropa beeinflussten, nicht zuletzt den bevorstehenden Fall der Sowjetunion, dem jahrzehntelangen Feind des Apartheid-Regimes. Die Entscheidung zur Denuklearisierung hatte außerdem wichtige Auswirkungen über die Region hinaus. Dies wird durch den phönixartigen Aufstieg von Pretorias Führern in der globalen nuklearen Nichtverbreitungsszene nach dem Ende seines Atomwaffenprogramms und dem Beitritt zum Atomwaffensperrvertrag veranschaulicht.

Resting on newly obtained archival sources and interviews with key actors, this article aims at filling some gaps in the historiography on the end of the Cold War in Southern Africa. It discusses the final years of the South African nuclear weapons programme against the backdrop of the winding down of the Global Cold War in the Southern African region. It argues that the events in Eastern Europe in 1989 should be juxtaposed against the fundamental changes in South Africa after a decades-long liberation struggle against the oppressive Apartheid regime. It shows how September 1989 proved to be as significant in South Africa as it was in Leipzig.

F.W. de Klerk's election as State President put South Africa on a path of unprecedented reform, including a decision to tear down Apartheid's proverbial 'nuclear wall'. The paper argues that while the decision of the De Klerk government to terminate and dismantle the indigenously developed nuclear weapons arsenal was triggered by a confluence of domestic and regional factors, the events in Eastern Europe also had an influence, not least being the impending fall of the Soviet Union, the Apartheid's regime decades-long enemy. The decision to denuclearize furthermore had important repercussions beyond the region. This is exemplified by the phoenix-like rise of Pretoria's leaders on the global non-proliferation scene, following the end of its programme and NPT accession.

On 9 November 1989, the Berlin Wall fell, sparked by peaceful political protests in Leipzig against the oppressive German Democratic Republic (GDR) government, ongoing since 4 September 1989. These events triggered a domino effect of events that ultimately brought the Soviet Union to its knees and ended the decades-long Cold War. The events of the time in Eastern Europe at first appear very far removed from Southern Africa; however, in an attempt to go beyond the rather Eurocentric interpretation of '1989', which take Europe as the center of the analysis from where repercussions triggered similar outcomes around the globe, it is indispensable to de-center a spatially bound narrative and instead engage with a plurality of stories of the many 1989s. Indeed, Engel, Middell, and Hadler in their book on the global events of 1989 convincingly show that "in fact, '1989' happened from sub-Saharan Africa to Central Europe and from Latin America to Southeast-Asia."<sup>1</sup>

In Southern Africa, 1989 ushered in the fall of the last colonial power in Africa: the minority Apartheid regime in South Africa. It also brought an end to the regime's nuclear weapons program. South Africa is by no means the only country to denuclearize; former Soviet states Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan inherited nuclear weapons from the Soviet Union and opted to return them to Russia as they did not have the money or other means to control and maintain these weapons.<sup>2</sup> South Africa, however, is the first (and only) state to date that decided to completely destroy an indigenous nuclear weapons arsenal, which was developed as a secret strategic deterrent during a time when one of the last proxy wars of the Cold War was playing out in Southern Africa.

This paper will investigate how, if at all, the events of 1989 contributed to the rapidly changing political scene in Southern Africa, and in particular, the decision of the Apartheid regime to tear down its proverbial 'nuclear wall'. The paper reviews the historiography of the South African nuclear dismantling case and fills some of the blank spots in the narrative with archival documents from the United States, United Kingdom, and South Africa. Light will be shed on the confluence of geostrategic and national events in the mid-late-1980s which impacted on the decision-making of the late Apartheid regime

1 U. Engel / F. Hadler / M. Middell, Introduction, in: F. Hadler / M. Middell / U. Engel (eds.), 1989 as a Global Moment, Leipzig 2015, p. 15.

2 U. Friedman, Why One President Gave Up His Country's Nukes, The Atlantic, 9 September 2017. Available at <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/09/north-korea-south-africa/539265/>.

and led to the unprecedented decision to dismantle its indigenously developed nuclear arsenal.

### **Raising The 'Nuclear Wall': The Cold War arrives in Southern Africa**

By 1989, South Africa had developed a small nuclear arsenal of six nuclear bombs, with a seventh being under construction. The arsenal was developed as a deterrent to what the Apartheid regime perceived to be a massive communist onslaught on Southern Africa and a threat to their position of power in the region. This arsenal was developed over a period of about 10–12 years, after the political executive took a formal decision in 1978 to this effect. Former Apartheid leaders unanimously agree that these weapons were never developed with the aim of utilizing it in a first strike capacity; rather, a three-phase nuclear strategy was sanctioned, which in short entailed the clandestine development of nuclear weapons, secretly revealing that nuclear capability to the United States and other countries in case of a military threat to South African territory, and lastly, if the secret disclosure had no effect, a public announcement of the capability and possibly a nuclear test. For fear of retaliation, the program did not envision actual military use. It was only meant to place South Africa in a position of power and authority in any future political or major international negotiations. The Apartheid regime had hoped to persuade the international community, more specifically the United States, to intervene to defuse any situation where South Africa's security was threatened.<sup>3</sup>

The watershed in South Africa's nuclear development came in 1974. A coup in Portugal led to the overthrow of the colonial governments in Angola and Mozambique, which in turn led to the influx of a communist presence in Southern Africa, from 1975. In Angola, there was a notable build-up of Cuban forces, assisted by the Soviet Union and the GDR. Here, it should be remembered that Pretoria regarded all radical black nationalist movements, including the exiled African National Congress (ANC) and Pan African Congress (PAC), as totally under communist control, in particular from the Soviet Union, China, and East Germany.<sup>4</sup> The Apartheid regime felt that its security position was rapidly deteriorating due to the changing geostrategic landscape in Southern Africa, exemplified by the gradual vanishing of what Pretoria had for years perceived as a crucial buffer zone to the north and east of South Africa.<sup>5</sup> Pretoria also became convinced that

3 M. Malan, *My Life with the South African Defence Force*, Pretoria 2006, p. 216; J. Shearar, *Denuclearization in Africa: The South African Dimension*, in: *Disarmament* 16 (1993) 2, pp. 171–186; P. Liberman, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Bomb*, in: *International Security* 26 (2001) 2, p. 56; D. Albright, *South Africa and the Affordable Bomb*, in: *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 50 (1994) 4, pp. 37–48, 56; J. Richelson, *Spying on the Bomb*, New York 2006, p. 283.

4 Richelson, *Spying on the Bomb*, pp. 244–245; Albright, *South Africa and the Affordable Bomb*, p. 41; Liberman, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Bomb*, p. 56; D. Albright, *South Africa Comes Clean*, in: *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 49 (1993), pp. 3–6; Shearar, *Denuclearization in Africa*.

5 South African Department of Defence Archives (SADOD Archives), Memorandum by R.F. Armstrong, 'The Jericho Weapon System', 31 March 1975.

the threat of the use of nuclear weapons against the country could not be discarded, that its defence strategy must take a potential nuclear threat into account, and that suitable steps should be taken to guard against such a threat.<sup>6</sup>

In 1975, South Africa became involved in the Angolan Civil War. Having the Cubans in Angola with Soviet support meant that there was a communist threat on their doorstep (South-West Africa was still under the administration of South Africa at the time). They were also asked by the United States to become involved in covert cooperation with the CIA; a fact confirmed in discussions with the former head of the South African Defence Force, General Jannie Geldenhuys, and the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pik Botha.<sup>7</sup> Like Pretoria, Washington was concerned about the large communist contingent being present in Angola, leading President Gerald Ford to state that resistance to Soviet expansion by military means must be a fundamental element of US foreign policy.<sup>8</sup>

In 1976, the perceived threat to South Africa's security was further enhanced through two events: the US Congress pulling the plug on American involvement in Angola, which also brought an end to the covert CIA support of the South African military forces; and the Soweto riots of June 1976, which led to many young black South African to seek refuge in the Front Line states,<sup>9</sup> where they received military training under communist advisors. This gave new impetus to the ANC's armed struggle and guerrilla insurgencies against South Africa, which would eventually culminate in an internal threat to Pretoria's security.<sup>10</sup> Finally, the involvement of the Soviet Union in Southern Africa raised fears among the Nationalists in Pretoria about its nuclear capabilities. In the words of former Minister of Defence Magnus Malan:

*If your enemy is sitting with a nuclear bomb and you don't take precautions about it, there's something wrong [...] the Russians had one and we had the Russians in Angola. There was nothing preventing their using it, other than the international community.*<sup>11</sup>

All these events convinced the Apartheid regime that it could not bank on international support against the perceived threats to its security.<sup>12</sup>

From 1977, South Africa became internationally more isolated. The Soviet Union spotted the construction of an underground nuclear test site in the Kalahari Desert in August 1977, alerted the United States in an unfamiliar show of cooperation, and Pretoria was warned not to proceed with a nuclear test. Pretoria denied with indignation that any

6 Ibid.

7 Anna-Mart van Wyk, conversations with General Jannie Geldenhuys and former Minister Pik Botha, 2009–2010.

8 P. Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976*, Chapel Hill 2002, p. 291; R. Massie, *Loosing the Bonds: The United States and South Africa in the Apartheid Years*, New York 1997, pp. 373, 382–383.

9 Jimmy Carter Library (hereafter JCL), White House Central File (hereafter WHCF), CO141: 20 January 1977–31 May 1977, Box CO-53, Memorandum, Paper by Ruth Morgentau, U.S. Southern African policy revisited, 1 March 1977.

10 P. van Slambrouck, 'South Africa Prepares to 'Go Nuclear'', in: *The Christian Science Monitor*, 31 January 1984, p. 1; R. W. Walters, *South Africa and the Bomb: Responsibility and Deterrence*, Lexington, MA 1987, pp. 91–92.

11 General Magnus Malan, quoted in: H. Hamann, *Days of the Generals: The Untold Story of South Africa's Apartheid-Era Military Generals*, Cape Town 2001, p. 165.

12 Massie, *Loosing the Bonds*, pp. 494–495.

explosion was contemplated.<sup>13</sup> However, in the months following the Kalahari incident, South Africa's position in the international arena deteriorated rapidly. Its participation in the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and the specialized agencies of the UN was suspended, a mandatory arms embargo and a voluntary oil embargo were instituted against it in 1977, it lost its designated seat on the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors, and it was denied participation in the General Conference of the IAEA. Regionally, the Apartheid regime started to face an even bigger threat to its security, with the looming independence and black majority rule of neighbouring Zimbabwe, which would mean that two radical black nationalist governments were established on South Africa's northern frontiers.<sup>14</sup> During all these events, the Apartheid regime remained absolutely immovable on political and racial justice at home. Defence spending was increased, and new security laws introduced that made South Africa a garrison state designed to suppress the revolts of the black majority.<sup>15</sup> A new strategy was launched, aimed at blocking pressure for majority rule and non-conventional onslaughts.<sup>16</sup> Part of this strategy included a formal decision in 1978, to develop a limited nuclear capability,<sup>17</sup> thereby raising a proverbial 'nuclear wall'. Since the 1978 decision to go nuclear, the Apartheid regime followed an ambiguous nuclear posture, which was based on creating a high degree of uncertainty about, firstly, their nuclear capability and secondly, their intentions regarding the use of that capability.<sup>18</sup> The 'Border War' with Angola was heating up and the exiled ANC accelerated its attempts to break the Apartheid regime's grip on South Africa through a new strategy involving mass mobilization and an intensified armed struggle. By the mid-1980s, the set was changing again, and the Apartheid regime now faced the biggest ever threat to its security. Between December 1983 and January 1984, the South African Defence Force launched Operation Askari. It was aimed at disrupting the planned infiltration of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia<sup>19</sup> (PLAN)'s special units into South West

13 van Slambrouck, *South Africa Prepares to 'Go Nuclear'*, p. 1; Walters, *South Africa and the Bomb*, pp. 91–92; South African Diplomatic Archives, Pretoria (SADA Pretoria), Brand Fourie Personal Papers, Nuclear Energy, Report, 1 U.S. option: Help South Africa enrich, in Nuclear Fuel, 8 August 1977, pp. 1–2; National Security Archive (hereafter NSA), National Security Council (hereafter NSC), Memorandum for Secretary of State and others, South Atlantic Nuclear Event, 22 October 1979; Moscow says A-bomb near in South Africa, *The New York Times*, 7 August 1977, p. 13; Richelson, *Spying on the Bomb*, p. 279; South Africa lashes out at U.S., in: *The Christian Science Monitor*, 8 August 1977, p. 2. For the most recent work on the abandoned South African test as well as on the United States/USSR response to it see: S. Bidgood, *The 1977 South Africa Nuclear Crisis*, in W. C. Potter and S. Bidgood (eds.), *Once and Future Partners: The United States, Russia And Nuclear Non-Proliferation*, Abingdon, 2018, pp. 55–78.

14 Shearar, *Denuclearization in Africa*, pp. 176–181.

15 JCL, WHCF, CO141: 20 January 1977–31 May 1977, Box CO-53, Memorandum, Paper by Ruth Morgentau, U.S. Southern African policy revisited, 1 March 1977.

16 ARMSCOR Archives Pretoria (hereafter AAP), State Security Board, Economic Liaison Committee, File 1/15/2/3/2, Vol. 5: Main Management: Departmental Committees, Commissions and Management Boards, Administration Total War: Feedback to the Management Committee, 11 September 1981; J.F. Burns, *Afrikaners dig in against threat to their rule*, in: *The New York Times*, 4 April 1977, pp. 1, 8.

17 Shearar, *Denuclearization in Africa*, pp. 176–188.

18 J. E. Spence, *South Africa: The Nuclear Option*, in: *African Affairs* 80 (1981) 321, p. 444.

19 PLAN was the military wing of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), who fought for the in-

Africa. It was a counterinsurgency operation that quickly developed into a conventional battle, with the South Africans outnumbered six to one against a force enjoying superior firepower by a tank company.<sup>20</sup> The outcome was a realization by the SADF that its conventional capacity was questionable and this may well have spurred on the more rapid development of a nuclear capability to maintain the myth that South Africa was militarily invincible. By the mid-1980s, the number of Cuban soldiers in Angola also started to increase rapidly, leading to an escalation in South African military involvement in both Angola and South West Africa.<sup>21</sup>

By 1985, the tables started turning for the Apartheid regime. Globally, the wave of anti-Apartheid protests escalated to an unprecedented level. Comprehensive economic sanctions were introduced against South Africa, triggered by the United States' Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, which followed the May 1986 SADF raid of ANC facilities in three neighbouring countries.<sup>22</sup> A number of other countries also instituted comprehensive sanctions against South Africa in the aftermath of the raids.<sup>23</sup> Within the borders of South Africa, continued incursions by ANC guerrillas and resistance against Apartheid reached a boiling point, leading to a series of states of emergency being declared by State President P.W. Botha from 1985. An estimated 26,000 people were detained and hundreds killed during these states of emergency.<sup>24</sup> The ANC started changing its tactics, realizing that scattered sabotage and assassination was about all the military force they could muster against Pretoria, and that they needed to focus more on diplomatic tactics. In early 1987, a series of successful initiatives were launched, which were aimed at painting Pretoria as the unreasonable party. South Africans were also encouraged to defy Pretoria's laws and meet with the ANC abroad – a tactic that led to a successful and positive meeting between a group of liberal Afrikaners and an ANC delegation in Dakar.<sup>25</sup> The Apartheid regime faced condemnation in virtually every sphere of international relations, and the UN demanded the immediate independence of South

dependence of South West Africa/Namibia, which was still under the control of the South African Apartheid regime at the time.

20 M. Norval, *Death in the Desert: The Namibian Tragedy*, Washington, DC, 1989, available at <http://www.geocities.com/odjobman/norch16.htm>.

21 Hamann, *Days of the Generals*, p. 168.

22 AAP, SAE, Box 3, File 5, Legislation, The Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, 18 October 1986; AAP, Main Management, Foreign Affairs and Organization (hereafter MMFAO), Embargo, File 1/17/1, Vol. 5, Research Document, Sanctions against South Africa: Current legislative issues, 14 August 1986.

23 Ibid.

24 United Nations General Assembly, Resolutions 39/50 A and B, The Situation in Namibia Resulting from the Illegal Occupation of the Territory by South Africa, and Implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), 12 December 1984, available at <http://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/quick/regular/39>; Security Council Widens S. Africa Arms Embargo, in: *Los Angeles Times*, 14 December 1984, p. 12; AAP, SAE, File 5, Legislation, The Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, 18 October 1986; AAP, Main Management, Foreign Affairs and Organization (hereafter MMFAO), Embargo, File 1/17/1, Vol. 5, Research Document, Sanctions against South Africa: Current legislative issues, 14 August 1986; Massie, *Loosing the Bonds*, pp. 639–40; South African History Online, *State of Emergency in South Africa: the 1960s and 1980s*, available at <https://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/state-emergency-south-africa-1960-and-1980s>.

25 Massie, *Loosing the Bonds*, pp. 639–640; U. van der Heyden, *Der Dakar-Prozess: Der Anfang vom Ende der Apartheid in Südafrika*, Kiel 2018.

West Africa.<sup>26</sup> In the words of former South African State President F.W. de Klerk: “If all these things, taken together, did not constitute a total onslaught, I can hardly imagine a situation which does deserve this label.”<sup>27</sup>

In Angola, even though the Soviet Union under the progressive leadership of Gorbachev was looking for a way out, Fidel Castro believed that his Cuban troops could only withdraw with honour if they were instrumental in obtaining the independence of South West Africa.<sup>28</sup> More Cuban troops were sent to Angola, and the Apartheid regime responded with also deploying more troops. In 1987, a military stalemate was reached at Cuito Cuanavale between Cuban and Angolan troops on one side, and SADF and South African-backed National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) insurgency forces on the other. At this point, it was clear that the Angolan War had been transformed from being primarily a game of cat-and-mouse to a standoff between two small armies with heavy artillery and modern weapons.<sup>29</sup> “The risk of hair-trigger reactions and miscalculations were substantial [...] a small spark could have ignited a cycle of bigger clashes [...]”<sup>30</sup>

Fears that the military situation in Angola could escalate into something far more severe grew steadily, leading in July 1988 to Pretoria requesting talks with the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union on accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).<sup>31</sup> Simultaneously, negotiations ensued to end the Border War. From March-December 1988, representatives from the United States, Soviet Union, Angola, South Africa, Cuba, the United Nations, UNITA, South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), the ANC and the Front-Line states engaged in intense negotiations. Pretoria was once again urged to sign the NPT in the best interest of all the countries of the Southern Africa region and the world as a whole.<sup>32</sup> The negotiations, brokered by representatives of the Soviet Union and the United States, brought about the independence of South West Africa (now to be called Namibia), and can be considered as the start of the winding down of the Cold War in the Southern African region.<sup>33</sup>

26 NSA, South Africa: The Making of United States Policy, 1962–1989, Resolutions, General Assembly 19/50 A and B, Condemnation of the occupation of Namibia and demand for its independence, 12 December 1984; Security Council widens S. Africa arms embargo, in: Los Angeles Times, 14 December 1984, p. 12.

27 F.W. de Klerk, quoted in Malan, *My life with the SA Defence Force*, p. 188.

28 Massie, *Loosing the Bonds*, pp. 639–640.

29 Ibid.

30 Chester Crocker, quoted in Massie, *Loosing the bonds*, pp. 640–641.

31 P. Lewis, Pretoria willing to discuss atom ban, in: *The New York Times*, 15 July 1988, p. A3.

32 Pretoria says it can build A-arms, in: *The New York Times*, 14 August 1988, p. 16; Superpowers urge SA to sign nuke treaty, in: *The Citizen*, 22 September 1988, p. 5; Massie, *Loosing the bonds*, pp. 641–642.

33 C. Saunders/S. Onslow, *The Cold War and Southern Africa, 1976–1990*, in: M. P. Leffler/O. A. Westad (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Cambridge 2019, pp. 222–243, 240–241.

## Breaking Down the 'Nuclear Wall'

The multilateral negotiations which led to the Angola-Namibia Accords on 22 December 1988 in New York ushered in a new era of engagement between South Africa and its neighbouring states. As stated, it granted independence to Namibia and ended the direct involvement of foreign troops in the Angolan Civil War. This changed the geopolitics of the Southern African region significantly, leading to an improvement in South Africa's external security situation. Furthermore, Soviet leader Michael Gorbachev's progressive change of stance towards radical liberation movements, coupled with the ongoing political protests across the GDR and the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, resulted in the withdrawal of Soviet support and the potential for a nuclear incident in Southern Africa. Cuban and South African military forces started to withdraw from Namibia shortly after the New York Accords and were replaced by a UN peacekeeping force.<sup>34</sup> This reduced the rationale for the Apartheid regime's nuclear weapons programme drastically, while at the same time affecting the Armaments Corporation (ARMSCOR) and the South African defence sector generally, because the settlement of the regional conflicts called for a reduced military budget.<sup>35</sup>

It is further important to note that the South African political landscape changed fundamentally in 1989 when P.W. Botha suffered a stroke. On 18 January 1989, the South African parliament was informed that he would be recovering for six weeks. While still in hospital, he proposed a separation of the offices of State President (which he had become in 1984, with the position taking on the executive role he previously enjoyed as prime minister) and leader of the National Party (NP). He called on his party to elect a replacement for him, indicating that he would remain president himself until the South African general election later that year. His successor at the helm of the NP became F.W. de Klerk, who was elected by the NP caucus after a narrow victory over Finance Minister Barend du Plessis.<sup>36</sup> The resulting leadership vacuum in the domestic political arena, in which it was not clear whether P.W. Botha would come back on a full-time basis or whether he would resign, presented a crucial element of uncertainty with regard to any governmental decision on the nuclear programme.<sup>37</sup>

Botha resigned as State President in August 1989. De Klerk became Acting State President until he was formally elected in September 1989. While the NP had failed to win the same number of votes compared to the previous election in 1987, it nevertheless

34 C. Saunders, *The Role of the United Nations in the Independence of Namibia*, in: *History Compass* 5 (2007) 3, pp. 737–744, at pp. 740–742.

35 H. Steyn / R. van der Walt / J. van Loggerenberg, *Armament and Disarmament: South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Experience*, Pretoria 2003, pp. 97–99.

36 H. Gillomee, *The Last Afrikaner Leaders: A Supreme Test of Power*, Cape Town 2012, p. 280; D. Geldenhuys / H. Kotze, *De Klerk: A Political Leadership Study*, in: *Politikon* 19 (1991) 1, pp. 20–44, at p. 37.

37 Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *South Africa and the NPT*, 20 January 1989, Teleletter Pretoria to FCO, File No. SEE 083/1 Part A.

emerged as the strongest party.<sup>38</sup> De Klerk was quick to describe his vision candidly to Cabinet and select others: Nelson Mandela would be released and South Africa should become part of the international community again by signing the NPT.<sup>39</sup>

The eclipse in power from Botha to De Klerk also meant a stronger role for the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) under the leadership of Foreign Minister Pik Botha. Previously, following the transition from John Vorster to P.W. Botha in 1978, the DFA, South Africa's prime actor with regard to foreign policy matters, had become side-lined by the military (SADF) and intelligence establishment, a fact often lamented by leading officials in the department.<sup>40</sup> P.W. Botha's leadership style meant he personally wanted closer control over South Africa's military and security apparatus.<sup>41</sup> However, in the lead-up to the 1988 New York Accords, Pik Botha was at the forefront of negotiating the settlement which ended the Border War. The DFA subsequently assumed a more influential position within the South African government in 1989,<sup>42</sup> boosted by the uncertainty about P.W. Botha's health and the prevalent power vacuum.

As far as the nuclear weapons program is concerned – Pik Botha in later years insisted that in the late 1980s, he had lobbied P.W. Botha and subsequently De Klerk, to dismantle its nuclear weapons because it was going to have far-reaching consequences for the country if they did not do so.<sup>43</sup> It should be remembered at this point that the nuclear weapons program was still top secret and Pik Botha as foreign minister was among very few people who were privy to it.<sup>44</sup> His contention that he urged an end to the program is supported by an unsigned document from the South African Diplomatic Archives, dated September 1988 and titled 'A balanced approach to the NPT: ARMSCOR/AEC concerns viewed from a DFA standpoint'.<sup>45</sup> Even though it gives the "DFA standpoint",

38 African Elections Database: Elections in South Africa, available at [http://africanelections.tripod.com/za.html#1989\\_House\\_of\\_Assembly\\_Election](http://africanelections.tripod.com/za.html#1989_House_of_Assembly_Election).

39 N. von Wielligh / L. von Wielligh-Steyn, *The Bomb: South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Program*, Pretoria 2016, p. 216.

40 R. Pfister, *Apartheid South Africa and African States: From Pariah to Middle Power, 1961–1994*, London 2005, pp. 15, 108 and 146.

41 For a detailed discussion of the rise and fall of the securocrats under P. W. Botha, see C. Alden, *Apartheid's Last Stand: The Rise and Fall of the South African Security State*, Basingstoke 1996.

42 Alden, *Apartheid's Last Stand*.

43 Pik Botha's keynote speech at the Conference on After the Wall: 20 years on, Scholarship and Society in Southern Africa, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa, 8–9 November 2009.

44 In September 1978, P.W. Botha formed a top-level Cabinet committee, known as the Witvlei Committee, and tasked them with "determining the way forward in the transition to the manufacture of suitable nuclear weapons for SA – taking into account the development already accomplished by the AEB with the peaceful uses of nuclear explosives – and, after approval of proposals, implementing them in earnest." The Witvlei Committee henceforth became responsible for all nuclear-related decisions. The Committee was chaired by Botha and included the minister of mining (at that point, future President F.W. de Klerk), the minister of foreign affairs (Roelof 'Pik' Botha), the ministers of finance and defence, the chairman of ARMSCOR, the director of the AEB, and the director general of foreign affairs as secretary. (H. Purkitt / S. Burgess, *South Africa's Weapons of Mass Destruction*, Bloomington 2005, pp. 61–62; Steyn et al., *Nuclear Armament and Disarmament*, p. 42; P.W. Botha's Speech at the Opening of Kentron Circle, in: Von Wielligh / Von-Wielligh-Steyn, *The Bomb*, p. 477; C. Gould, *The Nuclear Weapons History Project*, in: K. Allan [ed.], *Paper Wars: Access to Information in South Africa*, Wits University, Johannesburg 2009, p. 93).

45 SADA Pretoria, NPT-IAEA, Agreement/Negotiations on full-scope safeguards, Memorandum: A balanced approach to the NPT: ARMSCOR/AEC concerns viewed from a DFA standpoint, September 1988.

it was likely written by Botha or the Director-General of Foreign Affairs, who was the only other DFA person being part of the Witvlei Committee (see footnote 44). The document outlines the DFA standpoint of wanting a balanced approach to South Africa's nuclear capability and signing of the NPT, versus ARMSCOR and the Atomic Energy Corporation (AEC), who still favoured a military and strategic application of nuclear energy. ARMSCOR wanted to continue developing the weapons program to tactical and strategic preparedness, as well as continue the "strategy of uncertainty". The DFA however felt that ARMSCOR's proposed strategy neglected pressing social, political and other technological concerns, for example nuclear energy.<sup>46</sup>

The DFA furthermore opined that the continued development of nuclear weapons could only be justified based on three arguments: the certainty of eventual use, the deterrence factor, and national pride. According to the DFA, each of these presented its own difficulties. The eventual use of a nuclear weapon was fraught with national, moral and religious problems. For example, "against whom and how effectively can such a weapon be used in the sparsely populated openness of Africa?"<sup>47</sup>, not to speak of the immediate international response that would follow the use of a nuclear device, which would without a doubt destroy the political and military component of the South African society or government that had initiated the use of the device. In addition, the practical problems of contamination and fallout would have a devastating effect on the entire sub-continent.<sup>48</sup>

The DFA conceded that the deterrence factor of a nuclear weapons capability had some merit at face value; after all, it had been at the root of the superpower nuclear build-up during the Cold War. However, in the South African domestic context, it did not seem as if all the posturing and uncertainty have deterred Apartheid regime's "enemies" at all. In fact, the DFA argued, the inappropriateness of reliance on a nuclear deterrent was evidenced by continuing ANC attacks on South Africa, foreign boycotts and sanctions and the increasing political and physical isolation of South Africa. In addition, the deterrence strategy as decided upon in 1978 had led to increased pressure on South Africa and greater international condemnation of Pretoria's nuclear policy, as well as increased isolation from the international nuclear fraternity. Furthermore, the DFA strongly believed that should a situation arise where South Africa would advance its deterrent strategy to the third stage, it could not be rationally expected that the superpowers would just idly await the materialization of the threat. In fact, given the global sensitivity to nuclear proliferation at the time, as well as South Africa's unique political situation, mere confirmation of Pretoria's nuclear capacity might provoke the world's superpowers into pre-emptive action. Finally, the DFA did not believe that the national pride of South Africa would be enhanced at all by a public realization that South Africa's position had become so desperate that it had to rely on nuclear weapons for protection, and that South Africa

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

“was now fully capable of destroying itself and thereby the region in which we live”. Instead, South Africa’s national pride would be more enhanced by the country “becoming a respected member of the international community, thereby taking its rightful place as a leader within the nuclear family.” In conclusion, the DFA stated that it was convinced that when measuring the vast cost and danger of developing a nuclear weapons capability against social needs within South Africa, it created a moral and political dilemma that would eventually have grave political consequences.<sup>49</sup>

F.W. de Klerk seems to have shared the sentiments of the DFA. He contends that when he became State President in 1989, he was already determined to dismantle the nuclear weapons programme as a priority.<sup>50</sup> One of his first actions after assuming office in September 1989 was to summon an expert committee composed of senior officials from ARMSCOR, the AEC, the SADF, and a select group of government ministers, to review the nuclear weapons programme. Thereafter, at an ad hoc cabinet meeting in November 1989, De Klerk instructed the AEC, ARMSCOR and the SADF to immediately terminate the nuclear weapons program.<sup>51</sup> In February 1990, de Klerk gave the final order to dismantle the weapons.<sup>52</sup> In what was called the Mantel Project, the process of dismantling had to be completed before the end of September 1991, including the destruction of all documents related to the program.<sup>53</sup>

Over the years, De Klerk was asked many times what his reasons were for terminating the nuclear weapons program. He played the moral card, claiming he had misgivings about the program since he became minister of mineral and energy affairs<sup>54</sup> and was told it existed:

*I felt it was meaningless to use such a bomb in what was essentially a bush war – that it was unspeakable to think that we could destroy a city in one of our neighbouring countries in any way whatsoever.<sup>55</sup>*

In his autobiography, De Klerk recalled that he believed the nuclear weapons to be a burden to his government after they had lost their deterrence purpose following the end of the conflicts in the Southern African region.<sup>56</sup> With a view to the military threat to his country and the decisions he took, De Klerk recalled:

49 Ibid.

50 S. Onslow / R. F. Botha / R. Craggs, Interview with RF ‘Pik’ Botha, Commonwealth Oral History Project. Pretoria, 13 December 2012.

51 Von Wielligh / Von Wielligh-Steyn, *The Bomb*, p. 216.

52 D. Albright, *South Africa’s Secret Nuclear Weapons*, ISIS Report. 1994. Available at <http://isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/south-africas-secret-nuclear-weapons/13>.

53 Von Wielligh / Von Wielligh-Steyn, *The Bomb*, p. 218.

54 Prior to becoming minister of mineral and energy affairs, De Klerk was the Minister of Mines, Energy and Environmental Affairs. Some sources, such as Purkitt and Burgess, allude to him being privy to the program since its inception in 1978, when he was the minister of mines. See Purkitt/Burgess, *South Africa’s Weapons of Mass Destruction*, pp. 61–62.

55 Friedman, *Why One President Gave Up His Country’s Nukes*.

56 F.W. de Klerk, *The last Trek – A New Beginning: The Autobiography*, New York 1999, p. 274.

*[...] the whole picture had changed and that helped me, or let me rather put it differently, that robbed those who might have been against my decision [to end the nuclear weapons program] of arguments to advance why we should keep it.<sup>57</sup>*

He also stated later, in 1993, when he finally revealed the existence of the program to Parliament, that when he replaced P.W. Botha as President in 1989, it was evident to him that it was in the national interest of South Africa to totally reverse its nuclear policy and that there was “the prospect of moving away from a confrontational relationship with the international community in general and with our neighbours in Africa [...] to one of cooperation”.<sup>58</sup> He further said that when he became president, Foreign Minister Pik Botha urged him to take two key steps if he wished to improve South Africa’s relationship with the world: “The first was to release Nelson Mandela, and the second was to dismantle our nuclear weapons and accede to the NPT.”<sup>59</sup> [Interesting that this is exactly what he said in a special meeting in September 1989, as noted above]. Last but not least, he alluded to the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the collapse of Soviet communism having created a completely new global strategic environment, thereby removing one of South Africa’s central concerns. “I realized that there would never again be so favourable an opportunity for negotiations with our regional neighbours, so my colleagues and I did not hesitate to act.”<sup>60</sup> Moreover, the timing also seemed conducive for pushing through a decision with regard to possible internal adversaries. In fact, De Klerk recalled no opposition from his colleagues and the military/security circles during the meeting in September 1989 and contends that even if some people didn’t like it, there was nobody who forcibly argued against his suggestion.<sup>61</sup>

It should be noted also that by 1989, ARMSCOR was no longer committed to the nuclear weapons programme, because it believed an emphasis on the satellite and conventional delivery programme might be more viable in the future. The AEC had also changed direction towards NPT signature, partly because the enrichment package it could offer if the restrictions on South African uranium sales were lifted following accession to the Treaty, was considered too expensive on the world market.<sup>62</sup> The AEC furthermore wanted South Africa to adhere to the NPT as soon as possible in the light of a possible ANC takeover of government.<sup>63</sup> It is interesting to note that De Klerk never mentioned a potential nuclear proliferation risk by the ANC as a specific concern, or,

57 Robin Möser, Interview with F.W. de Klerk, 20 February 2017, Cape Town, South Africa.

58 History and Public Policy Digital Archive, WWICS, Washington, DC, Speech by South African President F. W. de Klerk to a joint session of Parliament on accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, 24 March 1993, as contributed by J.-A. van Wyk. Available at: <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116789>.

59 F.W. de Klerk, South Africa, The Nation That Gave Up Its Nukes, Opinion piece, Los Angeles Times, 22 December 2013. Available at <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-deklerk-south-africa-nukes-20131222-story.html>.

60 De Klerk, South Africa, The Nation That Gave Up Its Nukes.

61 Möser, Interview with F.W. de Klerk, 20 February 2017.

62 SADA Pretoria, Memorandum by Richard Carter, South African Department of Foreign Affairs, Main Points Arising from Luncheon on 14 November 1989 with Atomic Energy Corporation (AEC), 17 November 1989.

63 Ibid.

indeed, as motivation for him to end the nuclear weapons program. The AEC's Waldo Stumpf, who was involved in the dismantling of the weapons, relates that De Klerk never relayed anything on this matter. According to Stumpf, for De Klerk:

*This was not the factor. The factor was the handing over of a white minority to a black majority. That was already a complex business. Why make the process more difficult? [...] I never got the impression that De Klerk was afraid that the ANC would act irresponsibly with the nuclear bombs. But there were just too many complications. How would you hand the bombs over? Emotions would have run high in South Africa. In any case, would Mandela have been accepted on the world stage with 'nukes in his backyard'?*<sup>64</sup>

However, others in the political establishment did raise concerns on the matter. Stumpf and Pik Botha shared a similar assessment: acknowledging that the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) had a desire to possess a nuclear capability; and acknowledging that there were elements within the ANC leadership who shared this view. The Director-General of the National Intelligence Service at the time, Niel Barnard, was also concerned:

*If our nuclear weapons capacity had been handed over to the ANC, it would have had very serious and negative implications for South Africa's international relations, its constitutional status, and indeed its legitimacy as a state. This was an important reason for dismantling the nuclear arsenal. [Also] I was worried about these weapons ending up in the hands of the ANC, particularly as Mandela and Gaddafi were quite close at the time.*<sup>65</sup>

Interestingly, former South African General Constant Viljoen later alleged that some pressure for dismantling also came from ANC stalwart Nelson Mandela, whom De Klerk had apparently briefed completely about South Africa's nuclear capabilities,<sup>66</sup> although this is highly doubtful.

Domestically, the general openness toward reforms displayed by the De Klerk Government was soon to have far-reaching consequences for the country. De Klerk set into motion fundamental domestic political reforms aimed at bringing full democracy to South Africa, including talks with the ANC, the unbanning of the liberation movements and the release of the ANC stalwart, Nelson Mandela, and other political prisoners.<sup>67</sup> And on 7 June 1990, he announced the lifting of the state of emergency in all provinces except Natal, where the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) were still engrossed in political violence that had resulted in the deaths of 4,000 black South Africans over the previous four years.<sup>68</sup>

64 Von Wielligh / Von Wielligh-Steyn, *The Bomb*, p. 276.

65 *Ibid.*, pp. 277–278.

66 Hamann, *Days of the Generals*, p. 169.

67 W. Stumpf, *South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Program: From Deterrence to Dismantlement*, *Arms Control Today*, 25, December 1995/January 1996, p. 6; Shearar, *Denuclearization in Africa*; Malan, *My Life with the SA Defence Force*, p. 218.

68 President F. W. de Klerk lifts the State of Emergency, 7 June 1990, *South African History Online*. Available at <https://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/president-fw-de-klerk-lifts-state-emergency>.

## Into the Unknown: Beyond 1989

It is clear from the above discussion that it was a confluence of factors, both domestically and internationally, that led De Klerk to the decision to dismantle South Africa's entire nuclear deterrent capability.<sup>69</sup> During 1990 and 1991, the weapons were disassembled and its casings melted; the uranium enrichment plant was closed down, and the blueprints for the weapons were destroyed.<sup>70</sup> Still, Pretoria did not sign the NPT. One reason for this was fear of the right-wing element in South Africa who was watching De Klerk closely and who would possibly regard De Klerk's accession to the NPT as a sign of sell-out. Another important reason was that it wanted to use its voluntary nuclear dismantlement as a bargaining chip in resuming full participation in the activities of the IAEA, closer collaboration with other African countries in the development of nuclear technology, unconditional support for the principle of declaring Africa a nuclear weapons-free zone, and participation in global efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>71</sup> Some sources also suggest that Washington wanted Pretoria to sign the NPT as soon as possible as it might prompt other African states who were not yet signatories to the NPT to take the step of adherence. This in turn would rid the IAEA of the contentious political issue of South Africa's non-adherence and would provide an important impetus to the upcoming NPT review conference in 1995.<sup>72</sup>

On 28 June 1991, Pretoria at last announced that it was ready to sign the NPT.<sup>73</sup> In a statement following the announcement, Foreign Minister Pik Botha emphasized that South Africa's many years of refusal to sign the NPT was on the basis that doing so would jeopardize the country's security, and that Pretoria had never tested a nuclear weapon, either alone or in cooperation with other countries.<sup>74</sup> On 8 July 1991, Botha proceeded to sign the NPT at a ceremony in Pretoria, thereby permitting inspection of all South Africa's nuclear installations.<sup>75</sup> However, Botha remained tight-lipped about Pretoria's nuclear arsenal, only acknowledging that South Africa had the potential to develop a nuclear bomb and had a plant that produced weapons-grade uranium.<sup>76</sup>

69 Shearar, *Denuclearization in Africa*; Malan, *My Life with the SA Defence Force*, p. 218.

70 Liberman, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Bomb*, p. 56.

71 Shearar, *Denuclearization in Africa*. Furthermore, the former head of the NIS, Dr. Niel Barnard, spoke of a "wish list" he and others argued for in 1989–90, which should have been granted by Western governments in return for South African NPT accession, but it was never conveyed to the United States or the United Kingdom (Robin Möser, Interview with Niël Barnard, 21 February 2017, Gansbaai, South Africa).

72 George Bush Library (hereafter GBL), Bush Presidential Records, Staff and Office Files (hereafter BPRSOF), National Security Council (hereafter NSC), Daniel B Poneman Files (hereafter DBPF), South Africa [OA/ID CF01350], Analysis: South Africa: Ready to Accede to the NPT, 8 February 1990.

73 GBL, BPRSOF, NSC, DBPF, South Africa [OA/ID CF01350], Memorandum: Daniel Poneman to Brent Scowcroft Proposed press release on South African adherence to the Non-proliferation Treaty, 27 June 1991.

74 C.S. Wren, Pretoria accepts atom-arms ban and agrees to plant inspections, in: *The New York Times*, 28 June 1991, p. A1; K. Nelmapius, SA sal kernspervdrag onderskrif, *Beeld*, 28 June 1991, p. 1.

75 GBL, Public Papers, Statement: South Africa's accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

76 Wren, Pretoria accepts atom-arms ban, p. A1; Nelmapius, SA sal kernspervdrag onderskrif, p. 1.

In the months following South Africa's accession to the NPT, both Washington and the ANC suspected that Pretoria had hidden nuclear bomb components and manufacturing plants, and that they had been evasive about their stockpile of weapons-grade uranium.<sup>77</sup> The ANC, backed ironically by Washington, demanded full disclosure of all present and past activities of the South African nuclear weapons program. They said that continuation by the Apartheid government to act clandestinely and give ambiguous answers on all nuclear matters undermined the important process of building the confidence of all South Africans in the process of democratizing the country.<sup>78</sup> Finally, in March 1993, De Klerk at a joint session of the South African Parliament confirmed that South Africa had developed six and a half crude nuclear bombs during a top-secret fifteen-year program, and that this arsenal had been completely dismantled since a decision in this regard was made in late 1989.<sup>79</sup> Subsequent to the announcement, on 2 July 1993, the South African Act on the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (Act 87 of 1993) was passed.<sup>80</sup>

In the meantime, preparations for the first ever fully-inclusive democratic elections in the history of South Africa were underway. On 27 April 1994, the decades-long reign of the Apartheid regime ended when the ANC won the elections and Nelson Mandela became President of the Republic of South Africa. A month later, Vice-President Thabo Mbeki assured the UN Security Council that the new South African government was eager to see the fast establishment of a treaty on an African zone without nuclear weapons, coupled with an undertaking that South Africa would fulfil all its commitments resulting from its international agreements, including the NPT.<sup>81</sup>

All of the above actions, along with the highly publicized fact of South Africa becoming the first nation to fully develop a nuclear arsenal and then voluntarily dismantle it, opened the way for her to emerge as a world leader among non-aligned nations in promoting nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania later lamented the relinquishment of 'home grown' African technological skills that had developed the ultimate weapon of power, but the fact remains that only two years after De Klerk's announcement, South African diplomacy played a significant role at the UN-sponsored NPT Review Conference held in April 1995. By outlining a plan

77 Bombs away, in: *Economist*, 27 March 1993, p. 1; D. Albright/M. Hibbs, *South Africa: The ANC and the Atom Bomb*, in: *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 49 (1993) 3, pp. 32–38; Albright, *South Africa and the Affordable Bomb*, pp. 37–48.

78 Albright/Hibbs, *South Africa: The ANC and the Atom Bomb*, pp. 32–38.

79 B. Keller, *South Africa Says It Built 6 Atom Bombs*, in: *The New York Times*, 25 March 1993, p. A1; News summary: *Pretoria built nuclear bombs, Old suspicions confirmed*, in: *The New York Times*, 25 March 1993; Albright, *South Africa Comes Clean*, pp. 3–6; De Klerk: *South Africa had the Bomb*, in: *Africa Report*, p. 6; Liberman, *The Rise and Fall of the South African bomb*, p. 56; R. J. Smith, *South Africa's 16-Year Secret: The Nuclear Bomb*, in: *The Washington Post*, 12 May 1993, p. A1.

80 Act on the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (Act 87 of 1993). Available at [https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis\\_document/201504/act87of1993.pdf](https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201504/act87of1993.pdf).

81 W. Pretorius / F. Swart, *Wapenverbod teen SA kan gou waai; Thabo Mbeki na VN met brief van pres*, in: *Mandela, Beeld*, 23 May 1994, p. 1; F. Swart, *Kernkrag: SA se rol ter sprake, Mbeki woon debat in Veiligheidsraad by*, in: *Beeld*, 24 May 1994, p. 4.

for indefinite renewal of the NPT, South Africa played a major role in forging a consensus amongst member nations of the NPT to extend the agreement indefinitely.<sup>82</sup> South Africa thereby came full circle in its nuclear development – under the ANC, an original decision founded on *Realpolitik* was turned into a claim to moral authority and leadership in international relations.

## Conclusion

Usually, in the literature on ‘1989’, the African continent is not discussed thoroughly and tends to be marginalized. However, the dynamics at play towards the end of the 1980s in Southern Africa had far-reaching consequences. The region underwent some fundamental changes.<sup>83</sup> This included, *inter alia*, the end of the conflict in Southern Angola, Namibian independence, the thaw of the Apartheid regime as well as the nuclear weapons program its leaders had built during the height of the Cold War. For this reason, all the events discussed in this article should be juxtaposed against the symbolism of 1989: just like East Germans overthrew their oppressive regime through protests that eventually spread across Eastern Europe and brought the Soviet Union to its knees, so did the decades-long liberation struggle against the oppressive Apartheid regime bring fundamental change in South Africa by the end of the 1980s. Those in East Germany were elated about the latter, as both the government and public in that state supported the anti-Apartheid movement in South Africa, especially after the Soweto Uprising in 1976.<sup>84</sup> Of course, there is a huge paradox that remains: the same oppressive East German government that supported the liberation struggle abroad, denied its citizens democratic and human rights at home.<sup>85</sup> There is no doubt, however, that the events of 1989 in Eastern Europe had a far-reaching ripple effect even beyond the European continent. In South Africa, September 1989 proved to be as significant as it was in Leipzig. F.W. de Klerk’s election put South Africa on a path of unprecedented reform. Coinciding with the fall of the Berlin Wall, De Klerk’s November 1989 decision to tear down Apartheid’s ‘nuclear wall’ was unprecedented. Similarly, his release of Nelson Mandela in February 1990, the unbanning of the liberation movements, and negotiations for a democratic

82 P. McNab/J. Raisin/ R. Jones, UN Security Council Lifts Arms Embargo, in: Military and Arms Transfer News 94 (1994), available at <http://csf.colorado.edu/dfax/matr/matr9401.htm>; Curbs on South Africa end, in: The New York Times, 26 May 1994, p. A10; Shearar, Denuclearization in Africa; B. Crossette, South Africa Emerges as a Force for Extending Nuclear Arms Pact, in: The New York Times, 23 April 1995, p. A1; T. Robinson/ J. Boutwell, South Africa’s Arms Industry: A New Era of Democratic Accountability?, in: Armed Forces and Society 22 (1996), pp. 599–619. For the most recent work on South Africa’s role in the 1995 NPT Review Conference, see M. Onderco and A. van Wyk, Birth of a Norm Champion: How South Africa Came to Support the NPT’s Indefinite Extension, in: The Nonproliferation Review 26 (2019) 1–2, pp. 23–41.

83 Engel et al., Introduction, pp. 7–32.

84 M. Koch, Opposing Apartheid from Behind the Berlin Wall, in: DW, 15 December 2013, Available at <https://www.dw.com/en/opposing-apartheid-from-behind-the-berlin-wall/a-17297407>.

85 J.-J. Leidecker, East German Solidarity with South African Liberation, 23 April 2019, Available at <https://www.rosalux.de/en/news/id/40327/remembering-east-german-solidarity-with-the-south-african-liberation-struggle/>.

South Africa ushered in a new era of freedom for millions of oppressed South Africans. South Africans, East Germans and Eastern Europeans alike entered the 1990s with visions of liberation and freedom.

One can therefore not entirely dismiss the point that 1989 in Eastern Europe did impact on the events in Southern Africa. As noted above, De Klerk in his speech announcing the release of Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC, directly referred to the events in Eastern Europa, portraying them as one factor for his crucial decision.<sup>86</sup> Indeed, the case of South Africa's nuclear dismantling shows that "depending on which end of the kaleidoscope one looks through, 1989 can be seen as a global 'happening' with local manifestations, or as a concatenation of local events with global importance".<sup>87</sup> For the nuclear non-proliferation regime in particular, the South African reversal had important ramifications. Not only did it bolster the NPT and strengthen non-proliferation norms, it also ushered in a period in which the whole Southern African region signed the NPT, the entire African continent was made officially nuclear weapons free through the Pelindaba Treaty of 1996, and in which disarmament was promoted globally in the run-up to the 1995 NPT Review Conference.

86 C. Saunders, 1989 and Southern Africa, in: Hadler / Middell / Engel (eds.), 1989 as a Global Moment, pp. 349–362, at pp. 353–354.

87 B. Mazlish, Global Importance of 1989, in: *ibid.*, pp. 419–428, at p. 428.

# **External Influences on Southern African Transformations: '1989' in Perspective<sup>1</sup>**

**Chris Saunders**

## **ABSTRACTS**

Die Veränderungen im südlichen Afrika, die im Laufe der 1980er Jahre einsetzten, waren dem Zusammenspiel von internen und externen Faktoren geschuldet. Dieses Zusammenspiel gilt es allerdings in historische Perspektive zu setzen, denn es führt zurück auf die frühen 1960er Jahre, als die Dekolonisierung weite Teile des Kontinents erfasste, aber auch einen koordinierten Widerstand der bislang Herrschenden im südlichen Afrika weckte, der in eine lange soziale und militärische Auseinandersetzung führte, die sich ebenso wie der Kalte Krieg zunächst abschwächte und dann beendet wurde. Der externe Schock der Revolutionen im östlichen Europa brachte die Revolution in Afrika, die 1960 begonnen hatte, zu einem erfolgreichen Ende. Der direkte Effekt ließ sich in Südafrika beobachten, wo die Regierung die Klerik ihre Furcht vor einer sowjetisch gestützten kommunistischen Machtübernahme aufgab, während der ANC sich der Perspektive einer gemischten und global vernetzten Wirtschaft öffnete. Die anderen Staaten des südlichen Afrika folgten dem allgemeinen Trend zu liberal-demokratischen Verfassungen und Wahlen in sehr unterschiedlichem Maße und der mit der Gründung der SADC eingeleitete regionale Integrationsprozess bleibt fragil. Trotzdem kann am Ende geschlussfolgert werden, dass für die Region der Umbruch von 1989 weit bedeutsamer war als die folgenden Zäsuren des Anschlags vom 11. September 2001 und die Finanzkrise von 2008–2010.

The changes in Southern Africa that began during the 1980s were due to a specific interaction of internal and external factors. However, this interplay must be placed in a historical perspective, because it goes back to the early 1960s, when decolonisation took hold of large parts of the continent, but also encountered coordinated resistance of the hitherto ruling powers in

1 I thank Matthias Middell and Ulf Engel for wonderful collegiality over many decades.

southern Africa, which led to a long social and military conflict that, like the Cold War in general, first weakened and then came to an end. The external shock of the revolutions in Eastern Europe brought the revolution in Africa, which had begun in 1960, to a successful end. The direct effect could be seen in South Africa, where the de Klerk government abandoned its fear of a Soviet-backed Communist takeover, while the ANC opened up to the prospect of a mixed and globally networked economy. The other states of southern Africa followed the general trend towards liberal democratic constitutions and elections to a very different degree, and the regional integration process initiated with the founding of SADC remains fragile. Nevertheless, in the end it can be concluded that the upheaval of 1989 was far more significant for the region than the subsequent caesura of 9/11 or the financial crisis of 2008–2010.

In the past three decades the Southern African region has undergone enormous changes. Many of these have been the result of endogenous factors, such as the great rise in population. The transformations in South Africa in the late 1980s and early 1990s, to take one example, were driven at least as much by internal forces – most notably the mass resistance in the townships from 1984 – as by external ones. It is often virtually impossible to separate out the different influences, internal and external, on the process of change. The changes in South Africa in the decade from the mid-1980s were, as a recent writer puts it, the result of a 'perfect storm of domestic and international factors'.<sup>2</sup>

Important though internal causes of change were, there is no doubt of the impact of external influences. Difficult though it is to compare the impact of different influences, there is also no doubt that one of the greatest of these external influences was what happened in East Central Europe and the Soviet Union, associated with the year 1989. In this article I try to place the impact of '1989' on Southern Africa in historical context, relating it to earlier external influences and then offering some reflections on the '1989 moment' in the light of subsequent transformations in the Southern African region (here defined as the countries of the southern portion of the continent, south of what is today the Democratic Republic of the Congo).

Before the external shock associated with '1989', the greatest such shock for Southern Africa in the second half of the twentieth century was the '1960 moment'. This was the decolonization of tropical Africa, which began in 1957 with the independence of Ghana and reached a peak in 1960, often called 'the year of Africa', when a large number of African countries, including the Belgian Congo and Nigeria, became independent. This process, which was only in part the result of causes external to the continent, such as the decision by the Belgian government to withdraw abruptly from the Congo, had an immediate major impact on the states and people of Southern Africa then under colonial or apartheid rule. This was in two main ways. On the one hand, the decolonization of tropical Africa inspired both movements seeking non-violent change – the newly-formed Pan Africanist Congress in South Africa, for example, launched a non-violent anti-pass

2 S. Mole, review of H. van Vuuren, *Apartheid, Guns and Money*, in: *The Round Table* 108 (2019) 2, pp. 218–220.

campaign – and those who now began armed struggles to try to win their freedom, in Angola and elsewhere in the region. But the ‘1960 moment’ also saw an immediate backlash by the colonial and settler regimes, who sought to make clear that they would not surrender power, so protestors were shot down, as at Sharpeville in March 1960, resistance organisations were banned, as was the African National Congress (ANC) in April that year, and military responses were intensified in all the countries of the region then under colonial or apartheid rule. After 1960 the rulers of what became known as the ‘White Redoubt’, those who tried to resist the process of decolonization – the Portuguese territories of Angola and Mozambique, white-ruled South Africa and Rhodesia – increased co-operation to resist the pressures to decolonize.<sup>3</sup>

This resistance lasted, in the case of the Portuguese territories, until the Carnation Revolution in Lisbon in April 1974, in Rhodesia until late 1979, and in the case of South Africa to February 1990, when the white minority regime in South Africa agreed, under massive pressure, to a negotiated settlement, one that was reached in 1993 and took effect in 1994. Until the late 1980s the apartheid regime had intervened militarily and economically elsewhere in the region to try to ensure its survival by preventing the ANC from establishing an effective presence in neighbouring countries. So ‘1960’ both had immediate consequences for Southern Africa, greatly increasing conflict across the region, and cast a long shadow through the Cold War decades of the 1970s and 1980s.

In those decades, 1975 was a major turning point, with the large-scale intervention of Cuban military forces in Angola, which helped enable the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) to come to power in November that year. After 1975 the region was swept up in the Cold War, with the United States for the first time taking a major interest, trying to bring moderate regimes to power in Rhodesia and South West Africa/Namibia, so as to limit Soviet influence, while, on the other side of the Cold War divide, the Soviet Union and some of its eastern European satellite states sent personnel to join the Cuban troops aiding the Angolan government to resist the incursions of the South African Defence Force into southern Angola.<sup>4</sup>

For much of the 1980s war in the region escalated, with numerous acts of ‘destabilisation’ by the apartheid regime and an increasingly bitter conflict in southern Angola. But then came another major external shock to southern Africa in the form of the winding down of the Cold War and the collapse of the so-called Eastern Bloc, the countries under communist rule in East Central Europe and the Soviet Union itself. The influence of these events was not confined to 1989. As I have argued elsewhere, a process of fundamental change was already underway in Southern Africa some years before 1989.<sup>5</sup>

3 F. R. de Meneses/R. McNamara, *White Redoubt. The Great Powers and the Struggle for Southern Africa*, London 2018.

4 See, e.g., C. Saunders/S. Onslow, *The Cold War and Southern Africa, 1976–1990*, in: *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Cambridge 2009, pp. 222–243.

5 C. Saunders, “1989” and Southern Africa, in: U. Engel et al. (eds.), *1989 in a Global Perspective*, Leipzig 2015, pp. 349–361. John Daniel argued this in his brief piece entitled *The Impact of the Cold War and the Fall of the Berlin Wall on Southern Africa*, in: W. Hofmeister (ed.), *A Long Walk to Democracy. 20 Years After the Fall of the Berlin*

Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 had left only Namibia and South Africa under white minority rule, and in the early 1980s the governments of Mozambique and Angola began to move away from the Marxism-Leninism that both countries had proclaimed as their national ideologies in 1977.<sup>6</sup> Both countries now ceased attempting to introduce state socialist policies and accepted that their economies should be more market-orientated. They no longer saw the East European and other socialist countries as mentors whose example they should follow. Mozambique shifted policy in 1983, because of the failure of economic development under the socialist policies it had implemented and because it was not admitted as a full member of Comecon.<sup>7</sup> Its experiment of sending hundreds of children to the German Democratic Republic (GDR) for their secondary education was not renewed in 1988. By then 17,000 Mozambicans had gone to the GDR to work, but that programme too came to an end that year, though some of the workers were not to be repatriated to Mozambique until German unification.<sup>8</sup> Angola moved towards become a member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which it joined in July 1989.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, the financial sanctions imposed by foreign banks on South Africa in 1985, as a direct result of the township revolt of that year, began a new phase in relations between Western institutions and governments and the apartheid regime, with the former putting increasing pressure on the latter to undertake significant reform. By 1988 the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) had made clear that it would not follow the commitment to a 'scientific socialist' future in its political programme of 1976.<sup>10</sup> In 1988 there was much evidence that the era of regional conflict and 'destabilisation' was coming to an end, thanks to the winding down of the Cold War, for which the accession to power of Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union was key, and to the military stalemate that had developed in southern Angola by early that year. In December a Namibian settlement was reached by the governments of Angola, Cuba and South Africa, meeting under United States mediation. In parallel with the process leading to Namibia's independence, the Cuban military forces were to be withdrawn from Angola. With the earlier withdrawal of South African forces from Angola in August 1988 there was no

Wall, Johannesburg 2009, pp. 137–146. In *A Response to Guelke: The Cold War Factor in South Africa's Transition*, in: *Journal of Contemporary African Politics* 14 (1996) 1, pp. 101–102, Daniel argued that the Bush administration in the United States and the security establishment in South Africa had both recognised that the Cold War was winding down and that was "the decisive factor in the South African transition".

- 6 They had adopted those policies "hedged with contradictions, eclecticism and compromises": A. Hughes, *The Appeal of Marxism to Africans*, in: A. Hughes (ed.), *Marxism's Retreat from Africa*, London 1992, p. 9.
- 7 P. Chabal et al., *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*, London 2002, p. 213.
- 8 T. R. Müller, *Legacies of Socialist Solidarity: East Germany in Mozambique*, Lanham, Md. 2014; M. C. Schenck, *Between Hammer, Machete, and Kalashnikov: Contract Labor Migration from Angola and Mozambique to East Germany, 1979–1990*, in: *Europe now* 15 (March 2018), <https://www.europenowjournal.org/2018/02/28/between-hammer-machete-and-kalashnikov-contract-labor-migration-from-angola-and-mozambique-to-east-germany-1979-1990/>; M. C. Schenck, *Socialist Solidarities and Their Afterlives: Histories and Memories of Angolan and Mozambican Migrants in the German Democratic Republic, 1975–2015*, Ph.D thesis, Princeton University, 2017; M. C. Schenck, *A Chronology of Nostalgia: Memories of former Angolan and Mozambican Worker Trainees to East Germany*, in: *Labor History* 59 (2018) 3, pp. 352–374.
- 9 M. Webber, *Angola Continuity and Change*, in: Hughes, *Marxism's Retreat*, p. 137.
- 10 L. Dobell, *Swapo's Struggle for Namibia 1960–1991*, Basel 1998.

more ‘destabilisation’ by South Africa of its neighbours.<sup>11</sup> In Mozambique and Angola, too, 1988 saw steps being taken towards peace: in Mozambique the government’s negotiations with the rebel movement Renamo led to a peace agreement that ended the civil war there,<sup>12</sup> while in Angola the process to bring about peace with the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (Unita) was more uneven but did lead to the first democratic election, held in 1992.<sup>13</sup> The changes set in motion before 1989 were already taking the region into a new era of relative peace, in which such developments as the creation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 1992 would almost certainly have taken place whether or not the Eastern Bloc had collapsed as it did in 1989.

As 1989 began, however, the new era remained fragile.<sup>14</sup> In the course of 1989 further steps towards the ending of conflict and the promotion of negotiated settlements set Southern Africa firmly on a new path. Some of these took place before the implications of the unravelling of the socialist regimes of Eastern Europe impinged on Southern Africa, and were not influenced by that unravelling.<sup>15</sup> Soon after he took over as President, F.W. de Klerk allowed a major march in Cape Town in September, and then authorised the release from prison in early October of the remaining ANC leadership, with the exception of Nelson Mandela. It can convincingly be argued that South Africa was on a path towards a negotiated settlement before the Berlin Wall was breached on 9 November, in part, as we have already noticed, because of the increased pressures on the regime internally, above all from violence in the townships, in part because of the winding down of the Cold War and the changed situation in southern Angola as a result of the battle of Cuito Cuanavale and the movement of Cuban troops to close to the Namibian border.<sup>16</sup> The dramatic opening of the Wall on 9 November brought home to people in Southern Africa the broader process of change in Eastern Europe that year. The opening of the Wall, followed by the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime in Romania, the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union, and the very end of that state in 1991, constitute the

11 P. Johnson/D. Martin, *Frontline Southern Africa: Destructive Engagement*, New York 1988.

12 E.g., D. A. Robinson, *Curse on the Land: A History of the Mozambican Civil War*, unpublished Ph.D thesis, The University of Western Australia, 2006, chapters 9, 10.

13 See, e.g., Webber, *Angola*, pp. 132–133. After another Angolan government offensive against UNITA in late 1989, negotiations took place between the two under Portuguese mediation, leading to the Estoril Accords signed in May 1991.

14 At the start of 1989, argues J. A. Engel, American leaders ‘sceptical of the sincerity of recent calls for change throughout the Communist world, prepared for a reinvigorated Cold War of unknown duration and ferocity’, see 1989: An Introduction to an International History, in: J. A. Engel, *The Fall of the Berlin Wall. The Revolutionary Legacy of 1989*, Oxford 2009, p. 1.

15 Other external events influenced Southern Africa. One was the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, a clear sign of the diminished position of the Soviet Union.

16 Cf., say, L. Scholtz, *The Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, Cold War Angolan Finale*, Solihull, West Midlands, England 2016 and *The SADF in the Border War 1966–1989*, Cape Town 2013, chapters 14 and 15; I. Saney, *From Soweto to Cuito Cuanavale: Cuba, the War in Angola and the End of Apartheid*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 2013; and *The Cuban Revolution and the End of Apartheid*, in: *Latin American Perspectives*, 33 (2006) 5, pp. 81–117; E. Dosman, *Countdown to Cuito Cuanavale: Cuba’s Angolan Campaign*, in: G Baines/P. Vale (eds.), *Beyond the Border War*, Pretoria 2008, chapter 12.

second major external shock of the late twentieth century for the region. These European events, which probably had a greater impact on Southern Africa than anywhere else in the world outside Europe, helped to conclude the 'revolution' that had begun for the Southern African region in '1960', bringing an end to white rule in South Africa, and influencing the advent of democracy there and elsewhere in the region. The '1989 moment' meant the end of the Cold War intervention in Southern Africa that had begun significantly in 1975. The last clash between South African state forces and those of a liberation movement occurred in April 1989, when South African security forces attacked SWAPO fighters in northern Namibia, over three hundred of whom were killed. Many have said that 'the war for Southern Africa' ended in 1989.<sup>17</sup> A perceptive member of the South African Communist Party saw that the events of 1989 meant that 'the international balance of power shifted radically against us just as the viability of the domestic political forces ranged against us was recognised as untenable by capitalist powers in the West'.<sup>18</sup>

As with '1960', the '1989 moment' had both immediate consequences and longer-term ones. The most striking immediate impact was on South Africa itself, where President De Klerk explicitly drew upon the events in Eastern Europe in November 1989 to help justify his break-through speech of February 1990 announcing that the government was ready to negotiate with those who were then unbanned, and that Mandela would be released unconditionally. De Klerk was quick to realise that what his government had long feared – that a successor regime would be under the influence of the Soviet Union and would introduce socialist policies – was now rendered unlikely by the events in Eastern Europe, as well as by the Soviet Union withdrawing its support for the ANC's armed struggle.<sup>19</sup> With the 'fall' of the Berlin Wall, removing the fear of a 'communist onslaught' on South Africa, De Klerk, in the words of one commentator, 'read the writing on his own wall of apartheid'.<sup>20</sup> Today the only piece of the Berlin Wall in Africa

17 E.g., A. Wessels, *The War for Southern Africa (1966–1989) that continues to fascinate and haunt us*, in: *Historia* 62 (2017) 1, pp. 73–91. Other examples of books with titles that conclude in 1989 include R. Dale, *The Namibian War of Independence, 1966–1989: Diplomatic, Economic and Military Campaigns*, Jefferson NC, 2014 and I. Liebenberg / J. Risquet / V. Shubin (eds.), *A Far-away War: Angola, 1975–1989*, Stellenbosch 2015. On events of April 1989, when SWAPO forces were attacked in northern Namibia, see, inter alia, P. Stiff, *Nine Days of War. Namibia – Before, During and After*, Alberton 1999.

18 S. Kemp, *My Life. The Making of an Afrikaner Revolutionary in the South African Liberation Struggle*, Cape Town, South African History Online, n.d. [2018?], p. 180. Cf. S. Ellis, *The South African Communist Party and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, in: Hughes, *Marxism's Retreat*, pp. 145–159; C. Saunders, *The Ending of the Cold War and Southern Africa*, in: A. Kalinkovsky / S. Radchenko (eds.), *The End of the Cold War and the Cold War New Perspectives on Regional Conflict*, London 2011, pp. 264–276. I shall not here repeat what is said in Saunders, "1989" about, say, J. Slovo, *Has Socialism Failed?*, in: *South African Labour Bulletin* 14 (1990) 6, pp. 11–28, or about the way in which the so-called "Leipzig Option" was picked up in South African discourse in 1992. One of the few South African attempts to grapple intellectually with the consequences of "1989" was the special issue of *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory* 76 (1990) on "The Meaning of 1989", which included H. Adam, *Eastern Europe and South African Socialism. Engaging Joe Slovo*, pp. 33–43. For a polemical response to "1989", see D. Kunert, *Glasnost. New Thinking and the ANC-SACP Alliance. A Parting of Ways*, Bryanston 1991.

19 Cf. M. Light, *Moscow's Retreat from Africa*, in: Hughes, *Marxism's Retreat*, pp. 21–40. In March 1990, Eduard Shevardnadze, the Soviet Foreign Minister, met De Klerk in Windhoek: *ibid.*, p. 34.

20 P. Gundani, *Church-State Relations in South Africa, Zambia and Malawi in light of the fall of the Berlin Wall*, in:

stands, appropriately, in a pedestrian mall in Cape Town's centre, outside the building of the Mandela-Rhodes Foundation.<sup>21</sup>

The ANC, for its part, like the Namibian liberation movement SWAPO before it, now began to drop its support for socialist policies and to accept the idea of a mixed economy. When he attended a World Economic Forum meeting at Davos in 1992, Mandela was persuaded to drop any idea of nationalisation, while the radical economic ideas of the ANC's own economic research group were largely abandoned. When the ANC came into office, it adopted a set of neo-liberal policies, in the context of the apparent triumph, post '1989', of neo-liberalism and the ideas propagated by the World Bank and the IMF, including privatisation, deregulation and tariff reductions. Though neither of the main parties to the negotiated settlement, the National Party and the ANC, had shown much, if any, commitment to democracy in their organisations in the years of struggle, they both came round to supporting the interim liberal democratic constitution drawn up in the multi-party talks in 1993. That constitution was then in broad outline confirmed as the country's final constitution in 1996 by the Constitutional Assembly elected in South Africa's first democratic election of 1994.

For South Africa, '1989' and the transition from apartheid to democracy, meant both political and economic transformation. Unlike the countries of Eastern Europe South Africa had a mixed economy before 1989, but like them, it had been isolated from the global economy, not because of communism and state socialism but because of the sanctions imposed on it because of its apartheid policies. Its transition was, like theirs, a double one: in the aftermath of '1989' South Africa not only transformed politically but also began to enter the world economy in new ways, meaning liberalisation of the economy and intensified globalisation. Similarly, in Namibia, where, as the Berlin Wall was breached, the country's first democratic election was being concluded.<sup>22</sup> The collapse of socialist regimes in the GDR and elsewhere in Eastern Europe helped create the climate in which Namibia's Constituent Assembly, chosen in the election of November 1989, approved a liberal democratic constitution in February 1990. The new SWAPO government abandoned the idea of nationalising the mines and instead opened its economy much as South Africa did.

It was in the context of the '1989 moment' that Southern Africans who had been taken during the struggle decades to the GDR and Cuba for education or to work were now repatriated, some on special flights to Southern Africa in 1990.<sup>23</sup> Both the so-called 'GDR kids' of Namibian parents and the labourers from Mozambique who had been put to work in GDR factories and paid minimal wages on the grounds that they were helping pay off their country's debt to the GDR, retained a separate identity once back in south-

Hervormde Teologiese Studies 74 (2018) 1, p. 5, quoting T. Leon, *The Accidental Ambassador*, Cape Town 2013, p. 13.

21 It was presented as a gift to Mandela in 1996, when he was in Germany on a state visit.

22 Leading foreign correspondents, in Windhoek for the election, left immediately for Berlin when they heard the news.

23 H. G. Schleicher / I. Schleicher, *Special Flights to Southern Africa*, Harare 1998.

ern Africa. While the GDR kids kept a relatively low profile in Namibia, however, the so-called 'Madgermanes' in Mozambique continued to campaign actively for decades for the government to pay them for the work they did in Germany, so far without result.<sup>24</sup> While the immediate influence of '1989' on the way apartheid came to an end in South Africa and Namibia is clear, the longer-term impact of '1989' on the rest of the Southern African region in the 1990s is much more difficult to measure, for the consequences of '1989' were often ambiguous. Southern Africa only to some extent participated in Samuel Huntingdon's third wave of democratisation in the early 1990s as an outcome of the '1989' moment, interpreted to mean the collapse of communism in the Eastern Bloc and the disappearance of the Soviet Union itself in 1991.<sup>25</sup> Both direct connections and more subtle influences need to be considered. While the grisly death of Ceausescu in Romania in December 1989 encouraged some rulers to bow to popular demands for democratization and market reforms, other autocrats, including Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire and Mugabe in Zimbabwe, sought new ways to hold on to power. In Zaire over 5,000 petitions were received for a multi-party system, and in March 1990 civil servants, calling for Mobutu's resignation, said that he might otherwise experience the same fate as Ceausescu.<sup>26</sup> Though opposition parties were now legalised, Mobutu clung to power.<sup>27</sup> In Mozambique, partly under the influence of the developments in Eastern Europe, President Chissano did now accept the need to hold what was his country's first democratic election, under United Nations supervision. In Zambia the government had had to accept IMF and World Bank loans given on conditions that included the removal of state subsidies for education, health care and food. Food riots and growing political dissent, in the context of the '1989 moment', led to the emergence of multi-party democracy. Kaunda at first tried to resist change but came under such pressure that he had to allow the introduction of a multi-party system, which swept him from power in 1991.<sup>28</sup> What happened in Zambia had repercussions in next-door Malawi, where in 1992 the Catholic Church played a leading role in facilitating the transition from the authoritarian dictatorship of Hastings Banda to the birth of multi-party democracy in

24 A conference was held in Germany in February 2019 on the issue of the German government paying some of the money the Madgermanes sought: <https://www.deutschlandfunknova.de/beitrag/mosambikaner-in-ddr-die-madgermanes-warten-bis-heute-auf-ihr-geld>.

25 Books that use 1991 as the end of an era in southern Africa include P. Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom*. Havana, Washington, Pretoria and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976–1991, Chapel Hill 2013.

26 *Presence Africaine* 157 (1998), p. 76.

27 J. Mark et al., 1989: Eastern Europe and the Making of the Modern World, Cambridge University Press 2019 (forthcoming). I thank James Mark for sending me an extract from this.

28 For details see P. Nordlund, *Organising the Political Agora*, Uppsala 1996; J. Ihonvbere, *Economic Crisis, Civil Society and Democratization: The Case of Zambia*, Africa World Press 2000, esp. p. 105. Kaunda said in March 1990 that "economically and politically perestroika and glasnost are moving [...] to the very position where we in Zambia stand today" (*Daily News*, 16 March 1990) and, with respect to human rights, "How can any sane person compare the Zambian experience with that of the Soviet Union or with that of other Eastern European countries?" (*Times of Zambia*, Lusaka, 15 March 1990), quoted D. G. Anglin, *Southern African Responses to Eastern European Developments*, in: *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 28 (1990) 3, pp. 431–455, at p. 433, n. 6.

1994.<sup>29</sup> As in Zambia, Malawi's new constitution provided for respect for human rights, public accountability and human dignity.

But while '1989' helped lead to democratisation in several Southern African countries, it had relatively little impact on Angola and Zimbabwe, let alone on the small countries of Lesotho and Swaziland, whose absolute monarchy remained unaffected. Despite ongoing violence in South Africa between 1990 and 1994, much of Southern Africa moved into a new era of relative stability in the early 1990s, an outcome, as we have seen, of developments in 1988 as well as in 1989, but the new wave of democratisation in Southern Africa, seen in the emergence of multi-party systems in Namibia in 1990, Zambia in 1991, and Malawi, Mozambique, and South Africa in 1994, was not then carried further in the region.

While the period of relative peace in Angola at the end of the 1980s was not sustained – in the aftermath of the 1992 election the country again fell into a civil war that did not end until 2002 – '1989' did mean the end of direct foreign military intervention in the region.<sup>30</sup> After the United Nations (UN) mission to Namibia succeeded in taking that country to independence in March 1990, other UN missions were sent to Mozambique and Angola to promote peace and allow for multi-party elections, but though competitive elections have been held in all the countries of the region except Swaziland/eSwatini, which remains an absolute monarchy, democracy remains elusive in most. In none of the countries where liberation movements that fought armed struggles came to power – Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa – has there been a change of government since independence, and only in South Africa is there a prospect of a change of government at the next election. Since a thinly disguised military coup ousted Robert Mugabe in November 2017, Zimbabwe has remained under the effective dictatorship of its ruling party, ZANU-PF.<sup>31</sup> The popular support shown for Mugabe's ouster has not continued in massive street protests for a more democratic and civilian-led order, as seen in North Africa in 2011 and in 2019 in Algeria and Sudan. Though the political scene in both Botswana and Malawi is, in mid-2019, relatively fluid, Zambia, which had become a vibrant multi-party democracy following '1989', has lapsed into a form of authoritarianism under Edgar Lungu. Though Joseph Kabila was eventually persuaded in 2018 not to run for a third term in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the largest UN peacekeeping force remains in place, the election that brought Felix Tshisekedi to power in January 2019 was severely flawed.

29 Gundani, *Church-State Relations*, pp. 6–7.

30 In the 2000s, Russian influence in the region revived somewhat, with South Africa becoming a member of what then became BRICS in 2009, but Russian influence was much less than Chinese. Western influence continued to decline.

31 E.g., M. Abey, *Southern African Arrested Development Community? Enduring Challenges to Peace and Security in Southern Africa*, Nordic Africa Institute Policy Dialogue Report, Uppsala 2019. Kaunda's successor, Frederick Chiluba, soon moved in an authoritarian direction: K. Somerville, *Africa After the Cold War Frozen Out or Frozen in Time?*, in: L. Fawcett / Y. Sayigh (eds.), *The Third World Beyond the Cold War Continuity and Change*, Oxford 1999, p. 157.

How can the impact of the '1989 moment' – the collapse of state socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and the ending of the Cold War – be related to subsequent transformations in the region? How does that external influence compare with the other many and very varied such influences that followed? To take one example, the European Economic Community was to some extent a model for the members of the Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference when they decided in 1992 to create a treaty-based organisation, SADC, and subsequent European Union models helped influence the way SADC proceeded to work, though implementation lagged far behind the stated goals of the organisation.

The past three decades have seen a great increase in population in the region, despite the spread of HIV which caused more deaths per head of population in South Africa and Botswana than anywhere else in the world. By 2019 an estimated two million people had left Zimbabwe for South Africa, helping to boost that country's population to 58 million. During these three decades Southern Africa has become tied much more closely to the world economy, thanks in particular to the internet and World Wide Web, with the social media revolution it has brought with it. Moreover, Southern Africa has experienced many of the same trends as elsewhere in the world, from the growth of consumerism to, say, the decline of manufacturing jobs because of competition from China, in, for example, the textile industry in South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. Twenty-five years after the advent of democracy in South Africa, socio-economic inequalities remain as great as ever, even if, say, there have been significant advances in the roles played by women, who now constitute half the cabinet.<sup>32</sup>

Any generalisations about the region as a whole must of course be treated with great caution. In South Africa democratisation in political terms meant not only the extension of the vote from minority racial categories of people to the entire population, but also a great spread in the provision of welfare (18 million social grants were paid out in 2019) and in state-supplied schemes such as electrification and the provision of potable water. By 2019 these state initiatives, coupled with the failure of the state-owned enterprises, had helped produce a grave fiscal crisis and the country's rapidly rising debt burden was rapidly becoming unsustainable. Elsewhere in the region, in countries much poorer than South Africa, the provision of social services and social protection has declined in recent decades and they have often had to look to the World Food Programme and other global initiatives for support and aid. In mid-2019 Zimbabwe looked to the international community to provide food for a third of the country's population.

Turning to specific external influences, neither of the two most important shocks originating in the global North this century was, I believe, as important as '1989'. The first of these twenty-first century external shocks to consider is 9/11. Though this opened a new era of conflict globally, it had relatively little direct impact on southern Africa. The 'war

32 The number unemployed, estimated at 3.7 million when the ANC came to power, is now estimated at almost ten million: R.W. Johnson, *South Africa's Fragile Democracy*, 30 May 2019: <https://www.politicsweb.co.za/opinion/south-africas-fragile-democracy>.

on terror' that followed the terrorist attacks on the United States led to a great increase in the activities of the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) in many African countries,<sup>33</sup> but while the American over-reach affected much of the northern half of the continent, as well as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there were few incidents of 'terrorism' in the other SADC countries in the decades after 2001.<sup>34</sup> Much more difficult to assess is the psychological and other consequences of 9/11 on the Southern African region. There is little doubt that it increased concerns about security and aided the growth of ideas related to Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilisations', with Muslims and other minorities regarded as separate and often inferior.

The second major external influence in the early twenty-first century was the global financial crisis of 2008. This crisis, 'North Atlantic in its genesis',<sup>35</sup> had a greater impact on Southern Africa than 9/11, though its impact was, like that of 9/11, more indirect than direct. South Africa's financial sector had been little affected by previous crises in other emerging markets, such as that in Argentina in 2001, and was better regulated than that of most countries in the global North. The impact of the 2008 crisis was not as severe initially as elsewhere in the developed world, though the mining sectors in Botswana, Mozambique, and Namibia were negatively affected, as investment declined, while Lesotho and Swaziland, both of which were dependent on the export of clothing and textiles, suffered from reduced export returns and shrinking employment.<sup>36</sup> Though there was a significant decline in economic growth in South Africa following 2008, there is debate as to how much of that was a result of the global financial crisis, or was instead a consequence of the disastrous presidency of Jacob Zuma, who took over as president in 2009. There followed nine years of looting, corruption, policy paralysis and state capture, which some have estimated cost the country over R100 billion. Foreign investment declined severely, and unemployment rose to extremely high levels. In his masterly book *Crashed. How a Decade of Financial Crises Changed the World*, Adam Tooze traces the long-term effects of the 2008 crash. When the head of the United States Federal Reserve announced in 2013 that the bond-buying programme it had initiated after the crash would end soon, the exchange rates of what were called 'The Fragile Five' – South Africa, along with Turkey, Brazil, India and Indonesia – suffered severely. What Tooze calls the two countries that had been economic success stories of the new millennium, Brail and South Africa, now in his words, 'crash-landed'.<sup>37</sup>

33 See generally <https://www.africom.mil/>.

34 Cf. Abey, Southern African. In April 2019, ISIS announced that for the first time it had been involved in actions in the DRC (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Media Review, 19 April 2019) and in June it was reported that the South African National Defence Force had clashed with a group supported by ISIS in the northern DRC (Weekend Argus, 1 June 2019).

35 A. Tooze, *Crashed. How a Decade of Financial Crises Changed the World*, London 2018, p. 6.

36 Vision 2050. SADC Ponders Future, in: *Southern Africa Today* 14 (2012) 4, p. 1. Namibia's economy, heavily dependent on mining for export revenues, was contracting by 2016 and entering a recession that lasted for years: see, e.g., <https://www.namibian.com.na/159400/archive-read/Namibia-goes-into-technical-recession>.

37 Tooze, *Crashed*, pp. 477, 601.

Since then the country's economic decline has continued, despite Cyril Ramaphosa becoming President in February 2018. He made efforts to reign in corruption and mismanagement, especially in the state-owned enterprises, but they were half-hearted and were often ham-strung by opposition from those who, for one reason or another, did not want them to succeed. A report in April 2019 found that South Africa's performance, on a range of social, economic and governance measures, had deteriorated more in the past twelve years than any other country not involved in some form of conflict, slumping from 31<sup>st</sup> place in 2006 to 88<sup>th</sup> place out of 178 in 2018.<sup>38</sup> As the country commemorated twenty-five years of democracy in April 2019, its weak economy and major structural problems suggested to some that it was on the way to becoming a failed state.<sup>39</sup> If that proved to be the case, South Africa's failure would almost certainly drag down the rest of the region with it. Some held out hopes that the discovery of vast gas fields off the coast of Mozambique and of oil off the coast of South Africa, the latter announced in February 2019, would help turn the fortunes of the region around eventually, but both were at best long-term prospects.

In the long sweep of history, we may conclude, the '1989 moment' is likely to remain among the most important external influences on the region of the past half-century. As we have seen, the end of the Cold War in Southern Africa had major consequences for South Africa and significant, if lesser, ones for other countries of the region. The diffuse impacts of subsequent external shocks, such as 9/11 and the global financial crisis, remain difficult to assess.<sup>40</sup>

38 <https://www.fin24.com/Economy/sas-decline-worst-of-nations-not-at-war-model-shows-20190417>.

39 Cf. R. W. Johnson, *Fighting for the Dream*, Johannesburg 2019.

40 No historian of Southern Africa has yet tackled these impacts. They are not dealt with in, say, R. Skinner, *Modern South Africa in World History. Beyond Imperialism*, London 2017 or A. S. Mlambo/N. Parsons, *A History of Southern Africa*, London 2018. When the South African Minister of Trade and Industry was asked about the impact of the financial crisis, he admitted that it had not been researched: Rob Davies to the author, email, 27 March 2019.

# Post-1989 Cold War Diplomatic Shifts in Southern Africa<sup>1</sup>

Timothy Scarnecchia

## ABSTRACTS

Dieser Artikel wertet erstmals Materialien aus britischen und US-amerikanischen Archiven aus, die jetzt zugänglich geworden sind und die diplomatischen Verhandlungen über das Ende der Konflikte in Namibia, Angola und Mozambique sowie das Ende der Apartheid in Südafrika betreffen. Dabei werden ältere Interpretationen, die den Rückzug der Sowjetunion als einen Verrat an den alten Bündnispartnern innerhalb der kommunistischen und Befreiungsbewegungen im südlichen Afrika ansehen, ergänzt um eine nuanciertere Sicht, die den Beginn dieses Wandels im Jahr 1988 und in den Verhandlungen um den Rückzug kubanischer Truppen aus Angola und um die namibische Unabhängigkeit lokalisieren. Das Ziel der sowjetischen Außenpolitik war nun nicht mehr die bedingungslose Unterstützung ihrer Alliierten, sondern eine Beruhigung und Stabilisierung der politischen Lage, um der angestrebten neuen Weltordnung zum Durchbruch zu verhelfen. Damit rückte auch eine demokratische, von einem Mehrheitsvotum der Wähler getragene Regierung für Südafrika in den Fokus sowjetischer Politik, was wiederum Ängste auf US-amerikanischer Seite vor einem sozialistischen Einparteiensystem reduzierte. Aus den britischen und US-amerikanischen Quellen lässt sich ebenfalls ablesen, dass die sowjetischen Unterhändler in einem komplizierten Annäherungsprozess Sympathien für eine kapitalistische Entwicklung in Südafrika entwickelten und darin auch Chancen für ihr eigenes Land sahen.

This article evaluates new materials from British and US-American archives that have now become accessible and concern diplomatic negotiations on the end of the conflicts in Namibia, Angola and Mozambique as well as the end of apartheid in South Africa. Older interpretations that view the withdrawal of the Soviet Union as a betrayal of the old allies within the commu-

1 Some of the evidence in this paper was initially presented at the "Reflections on 1989 Conference," Leipzig University, 14 June 2019. I wish to thank the organizers of the conference for all their assistance and support.

nist and liberation movements in southern Africa are supplemented by a more nuanced view that locates the beginning of this change in 1988 and in the negotiations over the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola and Namibian independence. The aim of Soviet foreign policy was no longer to give unconditional support to its allies, but rather to calm and stabilise the political situation in order to help the new world order that was seeking to break through. As a result, a democratic government for South Africa, supported by a majority vote of the electorate, also moved into the focus of Soviet policy, which in turn reduced fears on the US side of a socialist one-party system. From the consulted British and US sources it can also be seen that in a complicated process of rapprochement, the Soviet negotiators developed sympathies for capitalist development in South Africa and also saw opportunities emerging for their own country.

The Fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the end of the Soviet Union by 1991 were major global events in the history of Southern Africa. The most important impact was the end of Soviet support for liberation movements in Southern Africa, which in turn helped to end major Cold War conflicts in Angola, Namibia, and South Africa itself. Looking at the region in the years following 1989, it is possible to see a rapid de-escalation of conflicts in the region, starting with the independence of Namibia (21 March 1990) and the Rome General Peace Accords in Mozambique (4 October 1992). Perhaps the most dramatic impact post-1989, however, was the influence events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union would have on the timing and nature of the negotiated end of apartheid in South Africa in the early 1990s. Conversely, it would be a mistake to anachronistically give too much credit to the changes in the Soviet Union and the events in Eastern Europe as the main catalyst for all of the transformations in Southern Africa from the late 1980s to the early 1990s. As experts on Angolan and Namibian political history would quickly point out, the international diplomacy necessary to unwind these conflicts had already begun before 1989. Still, it would be naïve to completely isolate the Angolan and Namibian negotiations from high level moves in Moscow that would transform the way the Soviet Union interacted with the Western powers and Southern African states before 1989.<sup>2</sup>

It would be convenient to be able to point to a specific “turning point” in this history, but the regional and international contexts of these transformations across a number of interrelated conflicts and negotiations makes the story much more nuanced. This article presents a limited examination of new evidence available in US and UK archives to suggest some possible trends in this history. Given that the sources are primarily diplomatic, the following discussion describes how Western diplomats reported the changes

2 For a much more detailed discussion of this process, see Ch. Saunders, 1989 and southern Africa, in: U. Engel/F. Hadler/M. Middell, 1989 in a Global Perspective, Leipzig 2015; also M. Webber, Soviet Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Final Phase, in: *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 30 (1992) 1, pp. 1–30. For detailed treatment of the relationship between Eastern Europe social movements and South Africa, see P. Betts/J. Mark/I. Goddeeris/K. Christiaens, Race, Socialism and Solidarity: Anti-Apartheid in Eastern Europe, in: A. Konieczna/R. Skinner (eds.), *A Global History of Anti-Apartheid*, London 2019, pp. 151–190.

in Soviet policies toward South Africa. Limited access to sources for this time period, and limiting the source to English language archives, is a real constraint on reaching definitive historical conclusions over the plausibility of just how significant these changes in 1989 were for South Africa, so what follows remains cursory and cautious in this regard. The sources are primarily recently declassified British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) files, and US State Department files declassified through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Therefore, the materials are limited and mediated by Anglo-American concerns. Still, I do believe these sources can provide us with some useful evidence as we continue to examine the impact of 1989 as a global event.

The most heated debate over the removal of support of Southern African liberation movements centres around South Africa and competing historical narratives about negotiations within the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist Party, and the Soviets themselves. Former Soviet diplomat, and since an important Russian Africanist scholar, Vladimir Shubin, has perhaps written the most on this topic. Having been part of these negotiations himself, Shubin has written detailed accounts of how the Soviets handled, or at times mishandled, their removal of support for the ANC and to the ANC's military organization, *uMkonto weSizwe* (Spear of the Nation, or "MK"). Shubin tends to view the period as one where the top Soviet leaders, including Gorbachev himself, had let down the ANC. He argues that Gorbachev had continued to promise support for the ANC through Oliver Tambo and others, but in the end, it was Gorbachev who decided to sacrifice his relations with the ANC for better relations with the West. By 1991, with the coming to power of Boris Yeltsin, the "sellout" of the ANC was complete, from Shubin's perspective, as Nelson Mandela was not received in Moscow as the leader of the ANC but as an international human rights leader, and Yeltsin invited South African President F. W. de Klerk to Moscow to open up formal relations between South Africa and the new Russia.<sup>3</sup>

From a distance, it is obvious that the events of 1989 in Eastern Europe had a substantial impact on the region, although those involved in diplomacy in Southern Africa in the late 1980s would make it clear that the thawing process had already occurred between the Americans and the Soviets over Angola and Namibia well before 1989.<sup>4</sup> The most tangible influence of the dramatic events of late 1989 are visible in the sudden shift made by the new South African President, F. W. de Klerk, in early 1990, as he capitalized on the political space created by events in Eastern Europe to denounce communist economic and political systems, while at the same time using this space – and the lessening

3 V. Shubin/M. Traikova, There is No Threat from the Eastern Bloc, in: South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, vol. 3: International Solidarity, part II, Pretoria 2008, pp. 985–1067. Shubin writes of Yeltsin and his group, "The political renegades and sell-outs who controlled the country and its foreign affairs during that period did their best to distance themselves from the ANC (just as from other old friends of Moscow) and embrace Pretoria." V. Shubin, *The Hot "Cold War": The USSR in Southern Africa*, London 2008, p. 263; V. Shubin, *The Soviet Union/Russian Federation's Relations with South Africa*, with Special Reference to the Period since 1980, in: *African Affairs* 95 (1996) 378, pp. 5–30.

4 See H. Melber/Ch. Saunders, *Transition in Southern Africa – Comparative Aspects*, Discussion Paper, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala 2001.

of the threat from the Soviet Union – to unban the ANC and take the initiative on negotiations with the ANC. There can be debates over who “sold out” whom in the process, but the fundamental influence cannot be denied. As expressed in diplomatic records, it soon became possible for Soviet diplomats to compare Gorbachev with South African president de Klerk (and at times Mandela), in order to make the point that the changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union offered the right conditions for a negotiated transition. The South African case saw a move away from formal apartheid and the “total strategy” of former President P. W. Botha and his fellow hardliners who had previously used Soviet support of the ANC as the main impediment to avoid any serious negotiations with the ANC.<sup>5</sup>

This article examines, in a tentative manner, some of the ways American and British diplomats interpreted the new Soviet view towards South Africa. Western diplomats were, at times, surprised by the sort of opinions shared with them from their Soviet counterparts on South Africa and the ANC. This was an interesting shift in positions, as diplomats from former Cold War adversaries were now expected to find common ground in their views of African politicians and leaders.

According to Chester Crocker, Ronald Reagan’s Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs during the 1980s, the Soviets had been slowly rethinking their approach to Southern Africa since 1986, and then the process was “accelerated in 1987 due to a variety of factors, including the cycle of war in Afghanistan and the priorities of US-Soviet ministerial and summit diplomacy during Reagan’s final eighteen months.” According to Crocker, “[t]he takeover of Moscow foreign policy machinery by Shevardnadze and his ‘new thinkers’ did not all happen in one day. The military and intelligence bureaucracies, and above all the Communist Party had long played a dominant role in shaping African policy.”<sup>6</sup> Crocker explains that in “May 1988, the endgame began, U.S. and Soviet priorities were no longer mutually incompatible.” He writes, “by late 1987 and early 1988, Soviet diplomats, academics and media elites were increasingly frank in distancing themselves from policy commitments driven by the Party and the armed forces.”<sup>7</sup> Crocker concludes his discussion of the Soviet role in reaching an agreement with the Angolans that would pave the way to Namibian independence:

*At the December 1988 signing ceremonies in New York and Brazzaville, George Schultz and I made generous public remarks about the Soviet contribution. This was not only the gracious thing to do; it was tactically important to salute [Anatoly] Adamishin, [Vladil-*

5 Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*, Philadelphia 1994, p. 548. Mandela notes that the first formal meetings he held with the South African Government were in May 1988.

6 Ch. Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighborhood*, New York 1992, p. 409.

7 Crocker emphasizes that the Soviets were eventually forced to realize the benefits of the American plan: “Soviet realists came to see that Angola was an unmitigated military disaster: no amount of hardware and advisers could bring victory to the MPLA. Gradually, the ‘new thinkers’ accommodated themselves intellectually to some elements of our settlement.” *Ibid.*, p. 410.

len] Vasev, and their colleagues who had worked with us during the endgame. We had created a powerful precedent.<sup>8</sup>

Providing an alternative reading of the end of the Angola conflict, Piero Gleijeses, in his assessment of the negotiations over Cuban withdrawal from Angola and linkages, gives a much different interpretation of what caused progress on Angola: “It was not Gorbachev’s new policy or the presidential elections in the United States, it was not constructive engagement nor linkage, that overcame South Africa’s resistance.” For Gleijeses, given his overall project to emphasize the paramount importance of Cuban military intervention in Angola: “It was, rather, forces that Crocker and the Reagan administration abhorred; black militants in South Africa waving the flag of the ANC, the threat of sanctions, and Fidel Castro.”<sup>9</sup>

Archival sources show that Crocker’s efforts and those of his Soviet counterparts to negotiate Cuban withdrawal had an impact on the highest levels of US-Soviet talks. In 1988, news of progress in the Angolan talks had been well-received before the Moscow Summit between Gorbachev and US President Ronald Reagan (29 May to 2 June 1988). The British archival documents dated just prior to the meeting only briefly mention Southern Africa. However, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher wrote to Gorbachev to encourage progress on a number of issues at the summit, mostly on arms control, but did make mention of Southern Africa. “I am encouraged by the opening of talks between Angola, Cuba, the US and South Africa on the implementation of UN SCR 435 on Namibia and on Cuban troop withdrawals.”<sup>10</sup> Just before the Summit, the British noted that Southern African issues had “moved up sharply on the Agenda before the talks.”<sup>11</sup> There is not space here to enter into an analysis of the Angola talks and the historical debates around them, but it is important to note that the cooperation of the Soviets and Americans over Angola had established a repertoire that would carry over into diplomatic discussion of South African negotiations after 1989.<sup>12</sup>

8 Ibid, p. 424.

9 P. Gleijeses, *Vision of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for South Africa, 1976–1991*, Chapel Hill 2013. Gleijeses goes on to say that “the answer is abundantly clear in the U.S. and South African archives. It was Cuban military might” (p. 508).

10 British National Archives (BNA), British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), FCO 82/1992, From Washington to FCO, “Thatcher to Gorbachev”, 23 May 1988, item 28.

11 British National Archives (BNA), British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), FCO 82/1992, From Washington to FCO, “Moscow Summit Preview”, 15 May 1988, item 9.

12 Perhaps a more valuable account of this interaction than in Crocker’s account in his book, is his detailed discussion of cooperation with his Soviet counterparts provided in a 2006 interview. He provides a compelling narrative of how cooperation came to be, and how strange it was for both sides to get to know each other and to develop working relations. See, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, Assistant Secretary Chester Arthur Crocker, interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy, Initial Interview date: June 5, 2006 (2011). <https://adst.org/oral-history/> (accessed 23 May 2020).

## 1989 and the End of Soviet Public Support for the South African ANC as a Liberation Movement

The thaw between the apartheid state in South Africa and the Soviets had already started before the Fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. In April 1989, the *New York Times* reported the arrival in Pretoria of the first “public diplomatic mission to South Africa since the two countries broke off relations 33 years ago.” The delegation was in South Africa to further the negotiations between Angola, South Africa, and Cuba. The Americans and Soviets were there as observers. The *New York Times* reported that earlier in April, “Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoly L. Adamishin, a ranking expert on southern Africa, secretly came here for visits with senior South African officials.” The article gave credit for this thawing of relations to Gorbachev:

*The decision of Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the Soviet leader, to encourage stability over adventurism abroad to save resources for economic changes at home has made Moscow seem less threatening to Pretoria. The South Africans have also been encouraged by Soviet advice to the African National Congress to seek a negotiated settlement with the white Government rather than its violent overthrow.*<sup>13</sup>

A more detailed explanation of Soviet thinking about South Africa and the end of support for liberation wars can be found in an article by Vladimir I. Tikhomirov translated into English and published in *Africa Report* at the end of 1989. This article would have been circulating around the time of the political upheavals in Eastern Europe. The author, Vladimir Tikhomirov, was described as “a research coordinator at the Institute for African Studies of the USSR Academy of Science, Moscow.” Tikhomirov, like Crocker, locates the changes in Soviet policy “in the Angola-Namibia settlement process in 1988.”<sup>14</sup> Tikhomirov then indicated the shift in approach happening among Soviet Africanist specialists: “...though formally never abandoning its principal support for the governments, organizations, and movements which traditionally received help from the Soviet Union, Soviet diplomacy, particularly in southern Africa, was recently reoriented toward achieving a more stable situation in the region.” This seems to be hedging a bit, and a more realistic and specific description of the transformation of Soviet policy is given for their relations to the ANC-South African Communist Party (SACP):

*Although support for the ANC-SACP continues to be a very important feature of Soviet policy toward South Africa, there have been certain changes in Soviet attitudes regarding the prospects for southern African conflict resolution. The policy of ‘new thinking’ has demanded independent assessments of the situation in different parts of the world and has led to the development of a broader outlook on South African problems among Soviet*

13 “Soviet Diplomats in South Africa After Three Decades of Hostility”, in: *New York Times*, April 27, 1989, Section A, p. 8.

14 BNA, FCO 105/3798, USSR/South Africa Relations 1990, V. Tikhomirov: The USSR and South Africa: An End to “Total Onslaught”?, *Africa Report* November/December 1989, p. 58.

*scholars and policy-makers. This means that nowadays academics and politicians in the USSR do not see the ANC-SACP alliance as the only 'true representative' of the people of South Africa, but realize the complexity of the problems that country faces."*

Elaborating further, Tikhomirov explains that the ideological solidarity with the ANC-SACP was also to be discarded, as the new thinking "also means the abandonment of the former one-sided approach to the problem of apartheid as an issue in the context of global East-West confrontation, the solution to which could lie only in the national democratic and/or socialist revolution." Tikhomirov argues that "there is a growing concern for the crisis developing in South Africa, a crisis leading to a destructive and bloody civil war rather than to the creation of a society with racial and social harmony." This new perspective argued that the Soviets were now focusing solely on the push for majority rule in South Africa:

*The new Soviet tendency of taking ideology out of global politics means in the South African context that the USSR is prepared to recognize any future South African government elected by the majority of the people. In other words, the Soviet Union is not seeking to establish a socialist one-party state in South Africa, nor, of course, is it pressing for the development of a capitalist multi-party system. This issue should be solved through a negotiated process with the participation of representatives not only from the present government and the ANC, but from all South African parties.<sup>15</sup>*

Tikhomirov also questioned the future supply of weapons to the ANC's military wing, without suggesting the weapons would be completely cut off.

*Though the Soviet Union continues to be one of the major arms suppliers to the national liberation movement, it is now paying more attention to finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict. This objective of creating a just and democratic society in South Africa through a settlement constitutes the essence of the new Soviet policy toward South Africa.*

He concludes by pointing out that the new Soviet Union was also facing their own problems with ethnic revolts:

*Experiencing deep national problems at home, the USSR has become very sensitive to ethnic conflicts in general. Consequently, Soviet officials today have become much more realistic in their attitudes concerning the prospects of solving the national and racial problems in South Africa.<sup>16</sup>*

We will return to Tikhomirov again, as he would encounter considerable criticisms from ANC leaders for this "new thinking".

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

## South African Negotiations and the Eastern European Moment

About a month before South African President F. W. de Klerk's famous 2 February 1990 speech in which he official unbanned the ANC and other banned parties, Pik Botha was discussing the dramatic changes taking place in Southern Africa with the British, noting that "it was a pity that the full impact of Namibian independence was being dwarfed by the far-reaching developments in South Africa itself. The Namibian settlement had been a very important step towards creating the climate for negotiations on South Africa's future." Pik Botha looked back on the recent past and believed that "...the breakthrough had been achieved because of Gorbachev's leadership of the Soviet Union." He also recalled that the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, Anatoly Adamishin,

*had told him back in 1986 that the Soviet Union was distancing itself from violence as a means of achieving change. It was this new approach which had led to the timetable for Cuban withdrawal which, as Crocker had always argued, proved to be the key to Namibian independence.*<sup>17</sup>

It is interesting that Botha refers to Crocker's linkage strategy here, but compared to Crocker, Botha gives a bit more of the credit to the Soviets for making Cuban troop withdrawal possible.

South African President F. W. de Klerk's groundbreaking speech on 2 February 1990 made significant references to the changes taking place in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe. Addressing the growing interaction of South Africa in international relations after years of isolation, de Klerk stated, "I hope this trend will be encouraged by the important change of climate that is taking place in South Africa." He went on to relate these internal changes to trends elsewhere in the world:

*For South Africa, indeed for the whole world, the past year has been one of change and major upheaval. In Eastern Europe and even the Soviet Union itself, political and economic upheaval surged forward in an unstoppable tide. At the same time, Beijing temporarily smothered with brutal violence the yearning of the people of the Chinese mainland for greater freedom. The year of 1989 will go down in history as the year in which Stalinist Communism expired. These developments will entail unpredictable consequences for Europe, but they will also be of decisive importance to Africa. The indications are that the countries of Eastern and Central Europe will receive greater attention, while it will decline in the case of Africa.*<sup>18</sup>

De Klerk also viewed the demise of the Soviet-era economies in Eastern Europe as a warning to the ANC and SACP: "Those who seek to force this failure of a system on

17 BNA, FCO 105/3798, USSR/South Africa Relations 1990, From Pretoria to FCO, 9 January 1990, "South Africa/Namibia", item 1.

18 Source: FW de Klerk's speech to Parliament, 2 February 1990; <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/fw-de-klerks-speech-parliament-2-february-1990> (accessed 23 May 2020).

South Africa, should engage in a total revision of their point of view. It should be clear to all that is not the answer here either.” de Klerk argued that continued dependence on outsiders would not work either:

*The new situation in Eastern Europe also shows that foreign intervention is no recipe for domestic change. It never succeeds, regardless of its ideological motivation. The upheaval in Eastern Europe took place without the involvement of the Big Powers or of the United Nations.*

It is within this global context made possible by events in Eastern Europe that de Klerk found the political space to offer a new program for a new Southern Africa:

*Southern Africa now has an historical opportunity to set aside its conflicts and ideological differences and draw up a joint programme of reconstruction. It should be sufficiently attractive to ensure that the Southern African region obtains adequate investment and loan capital from the industrial countries of the world.*

He was foreshadowing the debates to come within the ANC over nationalization and socialism that would eventually accept a neo-liberal order to attract much needed FDI to South Africa, and warned: “Unless the countries of Southern Africa achieve stability and a common approach to economic development rapidly, they will be faced by further decline and ruin.”<sup>19</sup>

A few months after de Klerk’s historic speech, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze made a trip to sub-Saharan Africa, the first by a Soviet foreign minister, in order to speak directly with those leaders to whom it must have been clear that the Soviet Union was dropping most of its commitments across Africa. Shevardnadze would also meet with de Klerk and Mandela in South Africa. American diplomatic accounts of Shevardnadze’s trip naturally focus on what they could gather about the end of Soviet assistance to former Soviet client states and liberation movements. One account states:

*Shevardnadze’s trip to sub-Saharan Africa reflects a re-focusing of Soviet priorities in Africa and in the third world in general, including: a more pragmatic approach to economic relations, i.e., the phasing out of Soviet handouts to nominally “Marxist-Leninist” regimes and attempts to increase trade ties with countries having something to offer (e.g., Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and a future South Africa). However, no significant economic agreements were reached during this trip.*<sup>20</sup>

The same summary noted that “Shevardnadze’s meeting with de Klerk is seen as perhaps the most important event of the trip, a significant psychological breakthrough – more interest than ever in working closely with the U.S. to solve regional problems.” His trip also came at a

19 Ibid.

20 From American Embassy Moscow to Secretary of State Washington, DC, “Shevardnadze Trip Reflects Changing Soviet Priorities in Africa”, 29 March 1990, U.S. Department of State Archive, FOIA Case No. F-2016-00610, Doc. No. C06020922, Date: 12/14/2017.

*time when many observers here [Moscow] see Africa's importance to the Soviets at an all-time low. One of the primary purposes of the trip was to reassure Africans that Soviet interest in the continent will continue after the end of the cold war, and to explain that perestroika in the Soviet Union does not mean the end of the socialist model of development.*

American diplomats in Moscow questioned Shevardnadze's promises of a continued role for the Soviet Union in Africa as "a necessary component of *perestroika*." The reporting officer noted, in contrast, an editorial by Alexei Vasiliev [Vasil'yev], deputy director of the African Institute in Moscow, published in the 6 February issue of *Izvestiya*, where "Vasil'yev's strikingly frank appraisal of this issue ends up emphasizing above all the daunting obstacles facing the Soviets in transforming their Africa policy." Vasil'yev, according to the American Embassy's translation and interpretation of the article,

*notes that the day is past when "every revolutionary-authoritarian dictator" has the right to expect our unconditional political, moral, and material support just because he pronounces "Marxist-Leninist slogans or demonstrates in words his anti-imperialism".*<sup>21</sup>

Such dramatic language in the mainstream media was part of the dramatic changes occurring under Gorbachev and Shevardnadze's shift from the old, Cold War era, Soviet positions. Reflecting on the restructuring achieved under *perestroika*, and after Shevardnadze's meeting with de Klerk, the Soviet media began comparing de Klerk to Gorbachev. The summary of such media coverage noted that "[t]here is a great deal of interest in de Klerk here in the Soviet Union. Many people see him as another Gorbachev."<sup>22</sup> By August 1990, the comparison between the de Klerk government and the new Soviet government became more common, as were Soviet commentaries on the similarities between the Soviet Union and South Africa. One British political officer in South Africa, Shaun Cleary, wrote from Pretoria, "As both countries struggle through their respective *perestroikas*, there seems even to be a sense of a certain common feeling. After all, both countries have faced a serious 'nationalism' question, and neither have found a solution."<sup>23</sup>

A month after de Klerk's speech to the South African parliament, prominent Soviet diplomats began approaching the Americans to discuss possible joint projects with the United States. On March 1, 1990, Vladimir Lebedev of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told the American diplomats in Moscow:

*[...] the Soviets wished to exercise their 'responsibility' as a great power in a 'positive' way, not simply as a counterweight to the U.S., as may have been the case in the past. 'We are thinking about ways to push all sides to reach a solution.' Lebedev said the Soviets*

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 BNA, FCO 105/3798 USSR/South Africa Relations 1990, From Pretoria to FCO, "South African/Soviet Relations", 15 August 1990, item 48.

*do not see their objectives in the region as differing from those of the U.S., and would greatly appreciate any assessments the U.S. could share regarding the internal situation in South Africa.*<sup>24</sup>

US officials in Moscow also noted a shift in Soviet thinking about South Africa, as they began to foresee future investment opportunities in a capitalist South Africa. “The Soviets are now encouraging, and expecting, any new South African government to preserve many capitalist elements in the economy.” The report goes on to relate a discussion the Political Officer had with “Mikhail Vishnevskiy of the Africa Institute, [...] who can be depended upon to faithfully reflect official concerns.” Vishnevskiy questioned the

*Poloff [Political Officer] quite intensely on the possibility of Soviet-American joint commercial ventures in the extraction of southern African minerals. He implied that the Soviets, despite their own mineral wealth, were anxious to obtain a share of southern Africa’s mineral resources.*

Based on this discussion, the American Political Officer concluded: “These changing Soviet priorities, along with their desire to play the role of a ‘responsible’ world power, suggest that Moscow can be expected to press the ANC to moderate its positions and come to the conference table.”<sup>25</sup> Such views indicated the willingness of Soviet contacts to engage in business deals with the South Africans, but it may have seriously overestimated the power the Soviets had to influence the ANC after the shift away from direct support of the liberation struggle.

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze ended his Africa tour with a two-day visit to Nigeria. At a banquet hosted in his honour and at a press conference held afterwards at the Soviet Embassy, he reflected on his tour of Africa. He acknowledged that the Soviet Union could no longer be as involved in Africa as in the past. He wanted the Soviet Union to now “concentrate on moving from confrontation to dialogue over the handling of regional conflicts, the arms race, and the international economic order”. Shevardnadze reportedly also said,

*We know that no-one gains from confrontation – not ourselves, nor the Africans, whichever “camp” they claim to represent [...] turning entire continents into east/west battle grounds under the banner of ideological intransigence not only victimises the nations of those continents but harms the vital interests of people in both the east and the west.*

Shevardnadze seemed to have taken in the suffering caused by the Cold War proxy wars in Africa:

24 From American Embassy Moscow to Secretary of State Washington, DC, “Soviets reviewing policy on South Africa”, 05 March 1990. U.S. Department of State Archive, FOIA Case No. F-2016-00610, Doc No. C06020925, Date: 12/14/2017.

25 Ibid.

*On Southern Africa, Shevardnadze implicitly criticized armed struggle in the region. He had seen "how tired people are of the wars that are robbing their national economies of dozens of billions of dollars. [...] The best defence is not weapons but dialogue, particularly in situations where there is no solution to internal problems, as we were told in Angola and Mozambique".*<sup>26</sup>

This is a pretty remarkable commentary coming from the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union after years of financial and military support for such conflicts.<sup>27</sup>

During a 15 March 1990 meeting with Boris Asoyan, the Deputy Head of the MFA's African Countries Directorate, British diplomats discussed the future plans for negotiations in South Africa. "Asoyan believed that the ANC and de Klerk were ready for negotiations, but pressure must be kept up", Asoyan thought talks could begin "before summer", and Asoyan "was insistent that violence and the armed struggle are out of the question now that the ANC are legalised and in South Africa." In terms of the economic plans of the ANC, Asoyan "believed that Mandela would move from his current (public) position on nationalisation towards support for market economics."<sup>28</sup>

A punchy dispatch from a British diplomat in Cape Town, Louise Alliott, dated 27 March 1990, reports of a secret meeting between Romanian Foreign Minister Sergiu Celac and South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha in Cape Town. According to the account given by a member of the South African Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the whole trip was disappointing to the Romanians. They had secretly landed on an airstrip outside of Cape Town, flying in the private Boeing 707 airliner of the recently assassinated Romanian dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu, and then driving into Cape Town. They were annoyed to have gone to such trouble only to find out later that Pik Botha had made their visit public knowledge. The South African DFA official, John Mare, was also reportedly "irritated by Botha's handling of the dinner. He had behaved in a rather aggressive manner, demanding of his guests why they had killed Ceausescu on Christmas day of all days." After telling the British "that the only successful thing about the meeting was that it had taken place," Mare then "attributed Botha's uncharacteristic behaviour to 'stress', induced partly by recent reports in the Afrikaans press suggesting that he has kept mistresses in the Cape and Pretoria."<sup>29</sup> It is interesting to consider why this newly minted post-Ceausescu Romanian government found it necessary to send their Foreign Minister in an attempt to make direct ties with South Africa only a few months after coming to power. The answer may be found in what Mare also told Alliott, that there were many

26 BNA, FCO 105/3798 USSR/South Africa Relations 1990, From Lagos to FCO, 27 March 90, "Visit of Soviet Foreign Minister to Nigeria", item 18.

27 "On South Africa, Shevardnadze said of President de Klerk, 'My impression is that he sincerely wants racial peace for his country.' Of Mandela, 'My conversation with that remarkable man, an acknowledged leader of his people, is that apartheid can be abolished solely through dialogue and with mutual respect for the rights of all concerned.'" Ibid.

28 BNA, FCO 105/3798, USSR/South Africa Relations 1990, "Call on Africa Directorate, MFA", 16 March 1990, item 16.

29 BNA, FCO 105/3798, USSR/South Africa Relations 1990, Louise Alliott, to P. H. Tibber Foreign & Commonwealth Office "South Africa/Soviet Bloc", 27 March 1990, item 17.

“South African businessmen wanting to do trade with Eastern Europe.” He continued: “There was a constant stream of enquiries. One of the more enthusiastic entrepreneurs was [former State President] P. W. Botha’s son.”<sup>30</sup>

Returning now to African expert Vladimir Tikhomirov, described by American diplomats in Moscow as the “the top South Africa specialist at the Africa institute”, who came to talk with the Americans in Moscow on 5 April 1990 after completing a ten-day visit to South Africa. According to the American political officer reporting on their conversation,

*Tikhomirov said that local ANC representatives were extremely upset about his trip, and warned that he would encounter hostility from ANC cadres in South Africa. Tikhomirov was told there would be “mass meetings” protesting his visit and that his safety in South Africa ‘could not be guaranteed.*

He went on to describe how difficult it was to make any headway with Pallo Jordan of the ANC, who he met in Harare, stating that “Jordan was ‘impossible to reason with.’ Tikhomirov noted that due to the ANC threats, he maintained a low profile during his visit, but encountered no actual hostility. Tikhomirov, said his visit was the first of its kind not to have been ‘cleared’ with the ANC.”<sup>31</sup> Clearly, the “new thinking” of the Soviets Tikhomirov had so carefully detailed in his *Africa Report* article at the end of 1989 had not gone over so well with the ANC leaders in Harare or in South Africa.

Given this poor reception, Tikhomirov was not very generous in his description of the ANC in South Africa after he returned to Moscow. He told the Americans that he thought “...that the ANC and UDF were ‘losing ground’ rapidly in wake of the ANC’s unbanning and Mandela’s release.” His anecdotal evidence was his description of an

*ANC-backed “rainbow concert” he attended in Johannesburg, which drew only 10,000 people in a stadium seating many times that number. He attributes this decline of influence to the ANC/UDF’s lack of organizational structures on the ground, and their reliance on “authoritarian methods”.*

He also suggested that “many people walked out of Mandela’s initial speech in Soweto, ‘because most of those attending had been forcibly rounded up at ANC roadblocks in the township.” Tikhomirov then provided the Americans with his “two main impressions from his trip; first, that everyday relations between the races were much better than he had expected – not nearly as bad as relations between the various nationalities in the Soviet Union; and second, that both the national party and the ANC were essentially authoritarian organizations.” He went on to say, “many people, black and white, simply see two authoritarian groups starting to negotiate, with no prospect for real democ-

30 Ibid.

31 From American Embassy Moscow to Secretary of State Washington, DC, “Soviet Views on Developments in South Africa”, 12 April 1990, U.S. Department of State Archive, FOIA Case No. F-2016-00610, Doc No. C06020921, Date: 12/14/2017

racy.” Tikhomirov seemed most bothered by his talks with Jay Naidoo of COSATU. He characterized Naidoo’s style as someone, “while speaking of ‘unity,’ actually means that everyone should follow the dictates of the leadership.” Tikhomirov said that “ironically, he found black consciousness groups such as PAC and AZAPO more sensitive to white concerns than uncompromising leaders such as Naidoo.”<sup>32</sup> Perhaps most of the above should be attributed to Tikhomirov’s unusually poor reception by his ANC contacts. Still, it is interesting to see how candid he was with his American counterparts about what he witnessed in South Africa in early 1990.

A breakdown in communication between Soviet diplomats and the ANC was also communicated by the Head of the Africa Directorate in the MFA, Yuri Yukalov, who told the British at a meeting on 30 July 1990 that the Soviet government was having “‘serious difficulties’ in communicating with the ANC. The ANC representative was away from Moscow. His deputy was too junior to be a useful interlocutor. It was also useless these days to talk to the ANC in Lusaka.” According to Yukalov, there was discussion of opening a direct “channel of communication to South Africa”, and this was likely to happen “as a result of the Shevardnadze/de Klerk meeting in Windhoek and of other contacts in third countries.” Yukalov said that the Soviets were relying on public statements to communicate with the ANC, and these statements were calling for restraint.<sup>33</sup> The British asked

*whether the Russians were using CPSU channels to press restraint on the SACP, Joe Slovo and the MK. Yukalov gave a fuzzy answer. He acknowledged that Slovo had been a frequent visitor to Moscow and had often holidayed in the Soviet Union. He claimed that Slovo had moderated his line, and jocularly represented Slovo as Boris Yeltsen to the Gorbachev role jointly played by Mandela and de Klerk.*

The British diplomat commented that “Yukalov did not seek to underplay the seriousness of the MK’s activities, or to question the SAG’s allegations. Indeed, at one point he drew a comparison with SWAPO’s ill-fated incursion into Namibia in April 1989. He readily agreed that extremist behaviour by elements within the ANC would play into the hands of de Klerk’s opponents on the far right. However, he was careful to make no commitment that the Soviet Government would intercede with the ANC.”<sup>34</sup>

To conclude, it is worth considering how contested the transition in South Africa was in the years following 1989. There was no way to simply “turn off” the momentum and ideologies of many in the ANC. An example of this comes in the form of President de Klerk’s complaints to the Americans in late 1991. On 19 November 1991, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen, Crocker’s successor in the George H. W. Bush administration, met with de Klerk in Pretoria. By this time, nearly two years

32 Ibid.

33 BNA, FCO 105/3798, USSR/South Africa Relations 1990, From Moscow to FCO, “Your Telno 126 to Pretoria: SACP arrests”, item 91.

34 Ibid.

into negotiations with the ANC and other parties, de Klerk vented his frustrations with the ANC, claiming they “had ‘reneged on its undertakings in the Pretoria minute’ on several important issues. He charged that the ANC keeps arms caches, shows bad faith by refusing to renounce permanently the armed struggle, still conceives itself as a ‘liberation movement’ rather than accepting party status, and is employing a ‘steam roller strategy’ to get what it wants.”

De Klerk was also critical of “the ANC leadership for undermining business confidence in South Africa’s future, citing Mandela on nationalization, [Cyril] Ramaphosa on possible debt repudiation and [Chris] Hani on the armed struggle.” He complained of “personal verbal attacks by Mandela” and concluded that

*“I am not an egotist, [...] but neither am I prepared to hand the country over to chaos or a Marxist/Socialist state.” His goal was to create a new constitution for South Africa [that] will protect “the values that you and we believe in.” He opposed any plans for redistribution of property “from people who have legal title to their possessions.” He concluded his message to the Americans, “We deserve international support on this. Otherwise, South Africa will not be a stable country.”<sup>35</sup>*

Assistant Secretary Cohen also spoke with South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha on the same day. According to the account available, Botha, like de Klerk, asked the US to help convince the ANC that they needed to drop their commitments to socialism and communism. “Pik said the US and other governments needed to remind the ANC that its economic policies were wrongheaded and that its alliance with the communist party was a serious liability.” To make his point, he described “a recent lunch he’d had with Joe Slovo, Jeremy Cronin and two Black and one Indian communists. ‘Only the two whites really believed in communism,’ he claimed.” Botha told the Americans that

*unfortunately [...] there was little likelihood of the ANC severing its alliance with the SACP in the short term: “Mandela depends on Slovo for tactical advice and trusts him completely.” The most outsiders could do, Pik thought, was to urge the ANC to be “less reliant” on the SACP.<sup>36</sup>*

There is still a lot of research to be done about the decisions and the internal and external pressures on the ANC to accept the neo-liberal constitution and economic policies that became realities after coming to power in 1994. The above examination of some of the available American and British diplomatic sources from this key period seems to confirm that many of the Soviet diplomats and experts were interested in aligning with the capitalist classes in South Africa. As time would tell, similar interests could be found in the

35 From American Embassy Pretoria to Secretary of State Washington, DC, “Assistant Secretary Cohen’s Meeting with State President de Klerk”, 22 November 1991, U.S. Department of State Archive, FOIA Case No. F-2016-00610, Doc No. C06020858, Date: 12/14/2017.

36 From American Embassy Pretoria to Secretary of State Washington, DC, “Assistant Secretary Cohen’s Meeting with Foreign Minister Botha”, 22 November 1991, U.S. Department of State Archive, FOIA Case No. F-2016-00610, Doc. No. C06020857, Date: 12/14/2017.

subsequent shedding of more radical positions for many in the ANC leadership as well. As this diplomacy in 1991 shows, de Klerk relied on the Americans to put pressure on the ANC to drop their more radical ideas. By 1991, any notion that the ANC and SACP were still tied to the Soviets was a non-starter, and most of the ex-Soviet experts, with some notable exceptions, were in the same camp with de Klerk and the Bush Administration diplomats when it came to the future of South Africa.

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## REZENSIONEN

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**A. K. Sandoval-Strausz / Nancy H. Kwak (eds.): Making Cities Global. The Transnational Turn in Urban History, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2018, 340 p.;**  
**Nicolas Kenny / Rebecca Madgin (eds.): Cities Beyond Borders. Comparative and Transnational Approaches to Urban History, Farnham / Burlington: Ashgate 2015, 251 p.**

Reviewed by  
Markus Bierkoch, Berlin

Bespeaking of the transnational turn that has, at last, also found its way into urban history circa within the last ten years, both volumes attempt to shift the focus from the history of a particular city to an inquiry of connections, comparisons, and transfers between cities, not only in North America and Europe but in a global perspective. While this premise certainly lies at the heart of both volumes, nonetheless, they offer different methodological approaches as well as varying degrees to which the respective geographical scope actually encompasses studies from all around the world. Thus, a reader of these two volumes is confronted with a whole

range of cases and dissecting instruments that offer multiple strategies and ways to conduct studies in urban history with a transnational or global angle.

The editors of *Cities Beyond Borders*, Nicholas Kenny and Rebecca Madgin, are clearly indebted to the work done by Pierre-Yves Saunier on transnational urban history as they also point out in their introduction to the volume. Saunier's work was instrumental in researching the connections and transfers between cities.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, Saunier committed himself to link new approaches of transnational history with methodologies of different sub-disciplines, namely of comparative history.<sup>2</sup> It is also through this background that the book emphasizes the possibility to compare cities with each other in order to trace connections, similarities, or differences. Since studies in transnational history often examine the exchanges between two societies and, thus, possess a "bilateral structure",<sup>3</sup> linking the comparison between two cities with the framework of transnational history is fitting. However, with it comes a constraint of the connections a city might have had and a geographical constriction that may fall trap to leaving a global perspective out of the inquiry.

To an extent, this is traceable since the volume largely focusses on Europe and North America. That is not to say that the essays

collected in the volume pursuing a transnational history or a comparative history of cities on both continents are obsolete – quite the opposite. For instance, Dan Horner's study on how Montreal and Liverpool organized the massive 19th-century Irish immigration, or Janet Polasky's essay on urban reform in London and Brussels are striking examples of how cities coped with phenomena like mass migration and urbanization by adapting to practices and knowledge that were constantly fluctuating between the respective cities. In this context, comparative history becomes an effective method of exemplifying how transnational processes travel vice-versa. However, complemented by such texts as Jeffrey Diefendorf's essay on the rebuilding of European cities destroyed in World War II or Stefan Coperus' and Shane Ewen's essay on the *Union Internationale des Villes* attempts to spread socialist notions of modern urban life, in the end, *Cities Beyond Borders* tells a very European transnational urban history.

A welcomed exception from this feature, alongside Nikhil Rao's essay on town planning in late colonial Bombay and Harold L. Platt's take on the global spread of gated communities, is Carl Nightingale's reflection on his research on racial segregation in cities all around the globe which yielded the much-lauded 2012 book *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities*.<sup>4</sup> Looking back on the fruits he harvested from his research, Nightingale highlights the possibilities available for researchers when engaging in a global perspective. Without the latter, it would have indeed been impossible to conclude that segregation "spread, and deliberate action was involved in making it spread",<sup>5</sup> not only

on one continent but all around the world. Deriving from these insights, Nightingale convincingly argues for the advantage that lies at the heart of a global perspective in urban history: "to abjure any tacit or active support for ideologies of national exceptionalism."<sup>6</sup> Aside from this essay and its two like-minded others, the geographical scope of *Cities Beyond Borders* falls a bit short on going beyond the northwestern hemisphere, something that the editors actually address when they admit that they cover "primarily Europe and the Americas."<sup>7</sup> It is, however, a confession that relativizes the claim of the volume to be "global in scope".<sup>8</sup>

In contrast, *Making Cities Global* goes further in exploring global dimensions of urban history by focusing largely on South America and South and East Asia at the same time offering studies of the "usual suspects" group of North America. While the latter may seem like a rather ordinary choice for urban history and not really an outcome of a global perspective, the essays collected in this volume dealing with North America bring a fascinating angle to this space by emphasizing urban change and conflict through settlement patterns and consumer cultures of migration groups. For instance, Arijit Sen analyzes how city spaces in Chicago were affected by the presence of Indian and Pakistani migrants, the conflicts between them, and how, in turn, transformed localities shape transnational identities. By focusing on parades that were organized by ethnic associations on the occasion of India's Independence Day, Sen emphasizes that urban spaces and local politics influence the self-perception of an immigrant community while at the same time being under the

constant influence of transnational politics. This is just one example of how the volume attempts to open urban history to a global perspective. Avoiding most of the time the explicit use of comparative history, the essays in this volume rather examine urban environments' connections to knowledge and people fluctuating between multiple cities around the globe.

By this, the search for connections is not restricted to a bilateral relationship between cities in two nation-states but, rather, a much more open and flexible methodology is used in order to unpack the exceptionalism of one city's history. Thereby a multitude of connections is grasped that is not restricted to a specific nationhood or nation-state set up by the imperative of a comparison. The essays combine a detailed analysis of local conditions with a history of thought concerning globally circulating urban planning ideas and, thus, offer a striking strategy on how to open a city's history to a global perspective. While comparisons are not disregarded they are rather enmeshed within the overall analysis. At the same time, by putting thematically similar essays side by side the reader automatically develops modes of comparisons for his own understanding, a way which might leave more freedom and enjoyment to the individual reader.

While it is said that global history in contrast to transnational history is going beyond the historical existence of nation-states and theoretically encompasses more than the last five hundred years,<sup>9</sup> *Making Cities Global* chose to confine its approach mainly to the post-World War II period. The reason for this somewhat temporal fasting is that the volume wants to highlight how capitalist surges began

to spread globally at that time, affecting urban spaces of work and living in many parts of the world. For example, two essays deal with the Alliance for Progress, a US-funded project that aimed to create affordable housing in South American cities for tenths of thousands of members of a developing middle class. Put in the context of international politics and the Cold War, these housing projects deeply affected the respective urban space. At the same time, both essays show that theoretical ideas mapped out on an international level by city planners and US-academics almost always were confronted with local practices different to significant degrees from what they had sketched out. In the end, the local population took it upon itself to deal with the housing offered by the state, adapting it to the conditions and needs of their daily lives.

Tracing how capitalist imaginations of urban space began to spread and affect cities in the second half of the 20th century stands out in other essays of the volume as well. For instance, an essay by Nancy H. Kwak explores how slum clearance began to develop as a mutual aim of global actors such as the World Bank. In addition, while Carola Hein's essay on globally migrating urban experts and their advisory function in city planning in South East Asia is closely linked to Kwak's topic, the essay by urban historian Matt Garcia highlights how first race created and later the spatial expansion of a university college threatened the existence of a considerable Mexican neighborhood at the outskirts of Los Angeles. Garcia's study puts the main focus of the volume in a nutshell by showing that the spatial expansion of the university college was capitalist-driven in the context

of a competitive situation for rich students from all around the globe. All in all, the volume makes for a strong case of how urban spaces became fully part of global economic entanglements after World War II. Through this, while not explicitly referring to it, *Making Cities Global* pursues a set of inquiries shared with the so-called New Urban Sociology<sup>10</sup> which emerged first in the early 1990s and which has its roots in the work of Henri Lefebvre who, already in the 1960s, famously made the diagnosis of a worldwide expansion of “urban society” shaped by a global economy.<sup>11</sup>

Ultimately, two major aspects that reach far beyond the focus on the urban deserve extra mentioning. First, both volumes effectively demonstrate by the respective inclusion of Jordan Stanger-Ross’ and Carl Nightingale’s take on the possibilities of digitization in urban history, how the field has adapted fruitfully to the technological progress done in the last thirty years. While it is bemoaned by some historians that the study of history has in general only hesitantly adapted to these developments,<sup>12</sup> urban history may be a step ahead. The combination of historical sources offering residential patterns or individual-related data, for instance from census material, and GIS software has opened the door to an in-depth and at the same time extensive study of how people moved in time and space, something seemingly impossible without the use of modern software equipment. Beyond the essays in both volumes, there are several research projects currently conducted dealing exactly with these technological possibilities. A prominent example for this kind of development is the “The Urban Transition Historical GIS Project” organized at Brown University.<sup>13</sup>

While not being a panacea, erasing the need for complex historical interpretation, such a use of technology helps to locate general aspects of historical inquiries like consumerism, racial or ethnic segregation, class, or networks within specific urban spaces. One could argue that such a combination of space, time, and human conditions was indeed attempted in sociology or economics but was largely missing in historical studies up until recent times.<sup>14</sup> Urban history with all its expertise in digital history offers impressive solutions for how to handle the digital in historical studies.

The second proposal both volumes clearly agree upon are the remedies urban history might offer for potential shortcomings of global history studies by bringing a focus of place back into the discussion. For instance, the editors of *Making Cities Global* identify “pitfalls of the study of globalization [...] that are based on the exigencies of model building or theory rather than empirical inquiry.”<sup>15</sup> Through this, it is disregarded that “local conditions build and shape transnationalism – that, in fact, local imperatives influence cross-border movements even as transnational flows transform the local.”<sup>16</sup> Much in the same vein, the editors of *Cities Beyond Borders* promote urban history’s utility in providing “possible remedies to globalization studies that are often criticized for making universalistic generalizations at the expense of attention to local variations [...]”<sup>17</sup> Thereby, in fact, the editors of both volumes point to an aspect that has been identified as a potential pitfall of global history when done only superficially. As one influential global historian has indicated, “the privileging of large scales may come at the price of downplaying local agency.”<sup>18</sup> In this

context, urban history with all its affinity for detailed analyses of local conditions may offer manifold empirical evidence for global history's expanding field.

#### Notes

- 1 P.-Y. Saunier/S. Ewem (eds.), *Another Global City. Historical Explorations into the Transnational Municipal Moment, 1850–2000*, New York 2008.
- 2 P.-Y. Saunier, *Going Transnational? New from down under: Transnational History Symposium*, Canberra, Australian National University, in: *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung* 31 (2006) 2, pp. 118–131, here p. 128.
- 3 S. Conrad, *Globalgeschichte. Eine Einführung*, München 2013, p. 17.
- 4 C. H. Nightingale, *Segregation. A Global History of Divided Cities*, Chicago 2012.
- 5 C. H. Nightingale, *The Seven Cs. Reflections on Writing a Global History of Urban Segregation*, in: N. Kenny/R. Madgin (eds.), *Cities beyond Borders. Comparative and Transnational Approaches to Urban History*, Farnham Surrey, Burlington VT 2015, pp. 27–42, here p. 36.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 41.
- 7 N. Kenny/R. Madgin, 'Every Time I Describe a City'. *Urban History as Comparative and Transnational Practice*, in: N. Kenny/R. Madgin (eds.), *Cities beyond Borders. Comparative and Transnational Approaches to Urban History*, Farnham Surrey, Burlington VT 2015, pp. 3–23, here p. 4.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 5
- 9 J. Osterhammel, *Global History*, in: M. Tamm/P. Burke (eds.), *Debating New Approaches to History*, London 2019, pp. 21–34, here p. 29.
- 10 Cf. D. A. Smith, *The New Urban Sociology Meets the Old*, in: *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 30 (1995) 3, pp. 432–457
- 11 Cf. N. Brenner, *The Urban Question as a Scale Question. Reflections on Henri Lefebvre, Urban Theory and the Politics of Scale*, in: *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24 (2000) 2, pp. 361–378.
- 12 G. Koller, *Geschichte digital. Historische Welten neu vermessen*, Stuttgart 2016, pp. 11, 36.
- 13 Cf. <https://www.brown.edu/academics/spatial-structures-in-social-sciences/urban-transition-historical-gis-project>.
- 14 S. Gunn/L. Faire, *Introduction: Why Bother with Method?*, in: S. Gunn/L. Faire (eds.), *Research Methods for History*, Edinburgh 2016 (second edition, p. 3f.)
- 15 A. K. Sandoval-Strausz/N. H. Kwak, *Introduction. Why Transnationalize Urban History?*, in: A. K. Sandoval-Strausz/N. H. Kwak (eds.), *Making Cities Global. The Transnational Turn in Urban History*, Philadelphia 2018), pp. 1–16, here: p. 6.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 17 Kenny/Madgin, "Every Time I Describe a City", p. 22.
- 18 S. Conrad, *What is Global History?*, Princeton 2016, p. 224.

**Diana Mishkova/Balázs Trencsényi (eds.): European Regions and Boundaries. A Conceptual History (European Conceptual History, vol. 3), New York: Berghahn Books 2017, 410 p.**

Reviewed by  
Kiran Klaus Patel, München

Conceptual history belongs to those fields of historical enquiry where the full impact of the spatial turn has only recently started to be felt. While for the longest time, research questions mainly addressed the national level, this book contributes to this new current by analysing how "European transnational (meso)regions have been, and are being, conceptualized and delimited over time, across different disciplines and academic traditions, in different fields of activity and national/regional contexts." The volume, which mainly discusses the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, presents the results of a multi-year research project hosted at the Center of Advanced Study Sofia. The

book's introduction offers a succinct summary of the chosen approach. At the most general level, the project seeks to reveal the historicity of mesoregions as spatial categories which their users often naturalized and objectified (in parts of the literature, the term mesoregion is applied only to sub-national units; here, the term means transnational regions that span several nations or even empires, while also demonstrating that certain entities, such as the Baltics, have been re-conceptualized in the course of time from the subnational to the supranational). In doing so, the various chapters do not just analyse the uses of a given terminology and its contexts, but also seek to factor in boundaries, delimitations, discourses of othering and counter-concepts.

The book has two main parts. In the first set of contributions, each chapter deals with the uses of one key concept, such as "Western Europe", "The Baltic", "Iberia" and "Eurasia". While other European mesoregions, for instance, the Benelux, could have been added to the list, the volume does assess the most important spatial concepts of this genre. The second part scrutinizes the key disciplinary traditions of regionalization. Chapters in this section discuss the contributions of fields such as linguistics, political geography/geopolitics, historical demography. The book's structure and composition are highly convincing and reflect a well-conceived project that brings together various lines of research that have not been in a real dialogue thus far. This approach is all the more impressive given the tremendous imbalances in the state of the art: while some of these concepts, such as "Central Europe" or "The Balkans", have already at-

tracted considerable research, this is much less true for others such as "Iberia". Moreover, the multidisciplinary composition of the chapters, with several contributions by non-historians particularly in the book's second part, is very welcome.

Overall, the book underscores how regional categories always been volatile and subject to change. Their geographic scope has varied massively, as has their relevance in terms of groups and historical phases. For example, regionalist terminology was on the rise during the late nineteenth century, and increasingly undergirded by academic input from various disciplines, but in many cases faded during the Cold War years. Moreover, terms often appeared in clusters of concepts, such as the Balkans/Southeastern Europe and *Südosteuropa*, a conceptual issue further complicated by the linguistic richness of the various debates. These are only two of the overarching conclusions, which the book's introduction draws together very convincingly. While the overall composition of the book is impressive and several of the chapters are written by leading experts in their respective fields, the dialogue between the contributions could have been stronger. Given that regionalist concepts often overlapped (as the authors readily admit) and interacted with each other, cross-references and links would have deserved even more attention. There is also a tension between some of the chapters' claims. To give a concrete example: The chapter on "Eastern Europe" convincingly argues that this concept has almost always been a term denoting an "other"; that it was not a term used by people in the region itself. However, it also claims that this was "(c)ontrary to most other concepts of European mesoregions"

(p. 189) – yet several other chapters, for example on the Balkans, the Mediterranean, and Iberia, arrive at similar conclusions. A stronger editing hand would also have been useful for other issues. For instance, a longish quote from Halford Mackinder crops up in two of the chapters (pp. 215, 262), and to make matters worse, they quote the same passage in slightly different ways. And while the multidisciplinary nature of the project has to be applauded, some of the authors have evidently struggled with the conceptual history approach. The piece on economics, for instance, often falls into a mere description of present-day models of regionalization. Some of the chapters that do live up to the book's agenda restrict themselves to what in German would be called *Höhenkammdebatten* (concentrating on prominent intellectuals at the expense of socially wider uses of a concept). Moreover, the concepts and the individuals contributing to their intellectual and political implementation tend to get much more space than the social and institutional backgrounds. The book thus offers conceptual history without further embedding the findings in the history of knowledge. Asking for more of the latter would probably have been too much. The book as it stands provides many fresh and fascinating insights and owes a lot to the editors' efforts to come up with shared questions and summarize the main findings. For anyone interested in the field, this book will be an indispensable reference for years to come. At the same time, it demonstrates how much there still is to discover.

**Jean-Christophe Merle / Alexandre T. G. Trivisonno (eds.): Kant's Theory of Law. Proceedings of the Special Workshop "Kant's Theory of Law" held at the 26th World Congress of the International Association for Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy in Belo Horizonte, 2103 (= Archiv für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie Beiheft 143), Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft 2015, 138 S.**

Rezensiert von  
Helmut Goerlich, Leipzig

Der Band, mit einer Ausnahme in englischer Sprache gehalten, enthält sieben Beiträge zur Rechtsphilosophie von Immanuel Kant. Er zeigt, dass Kant weltweit unverändert ein Thema der Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie ist. Und wer an der Debatte um diesen Autor teilnehmen will, sollte nicht nur die Fachsprache der einschlägigen Philosophie in ihrer deutschen Fassung kennen, sondern darüber hinaus die englische Entsprechung, derer sich hier auch Autorinnen und Autoren bedienen, die von Hause aus eher Spanisch oder Portugiesisch publizieren. Der schmale Band erscheint in der Reihe, die regelmäßig die Tagungsberichte der Internationalen Vereinigung für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie enthält. Er ist sorgsam ediert und zugänglich, sieht man einmal vom Preis für das Heft im Buchhandel ab.

Am Anfang steht ein Beitrag von Fiete Kalscheuer zu „Human Dignity as Justice

in the Face of Injustice. On Kant's Supplementary Function of Human Dignity in Law“, der in einer etwas anderen Fassung in Koautorenschaft mit Felix Lüdecke schon zuvor unter dem Titel „Menschenwürde als Recht im Unrecht. Zur Ergänzungsfunktion der Menschenwürde im Recht bei Kant“ veröffentlicht wurde.<sup>1</sup> Dieser Beitrag will nachweisen, dass Kant's Begriff von Würde noch immer im Recht bedeutsam ist, allerdings in einer Art Reservefunktion. Der Zusammenhang zwischen kategorischem Imperativ, Rechtslehre und allgemeiner Handlungsfreiheit wird verdeutlicht. Das zeigt der Beitrag auch an dem bekannten Beispiel der Freiheit, zu Pferde in dem Tier angemessenen Gangarten durch Wälder zu streifen, obwohl dies für den Wegebau dort hohe Anforderungen nach sich zieht und daher schwerlich Teil einer allgemeinen Gesetzgebung wird sein können.

Es folgt ein Beitrag eines spanischen Autors mit katalanischem Namen, José Luis Colomer, der von Kant's Theory of Law and the Principle of Freedom handelt. Er sucht ebenfalls nachzuweisen, dass Kant unverändert für Rechtstheorie und Verfassungsrecht von Bedeutung ist. Colomer stellt den Zusammenhang von Gleichheit, Staatsbürgerschaft und prinzipieller Freiheit her, auch um Grenzen externer Freiheit trotz entgegenstehender äußerer sozialer Werte und politischer Ziele besser bestimmen zu können. Dabei spielt auch die Unabhängigkeit der Urteilskraft eine erhebliche Rolle, deren Gebrauch sicherstellt, dass die Prinzipien gewahrt werden können. Ohne den rechten Gebrauch der Urteilskraft besteht die Gefahr fehlerhafter Schlüsse angesichts solcher Werte und Ziele – und damit auch die Gefahr fehler-

haften Verhaltens unter Inanspruchnahme äußerer Freiheit.

Maria Lúcia de Paula Oliveira prüft die Vereinbarkeit der moralischen Grundlagen des Rechts mit der Theorie reflektierten, d. h. allgemeinen, nicht nur ästhetischen oder sonst empfundenen Urteils, wie es sich in der Wahrnehmung der Hinrichtung eines Königs, also etwa von Karl I. oder von Ludwig XVI. manifestiert, und der kantischen Theorie der Revolution. Dabei wird der enge Zusammenhang zwischen der Relevanz der *volonté générale* und individuellen Urteilskraft besonders deutlich, der von Kant auch in der Rezeption von J. J. Rousseau nicht vernachlässigt wird. Mit großer Sensibilität findet man die kantischen Kommentare zu den Empfindungen der Zeitgenossen der Französischen Revolution nachgezeichnet, die schließlich nur durch die Berichterstattung vermittelt sagen konnten, sie seien dabei gewesen. Das ermöglicht Distanz auch im Urteil und zugleich eine Anerkennung der Geschichtlichkeit der Ereignisse. Der Reiz der neuen Ordnung ergibt sich aus einem ästhetischen Urteil zu ihren Gunsten.

Jean-Christophe Merle handelt vom Brett des Karneades, also dem Brett zweier Schiffbrüchiger auf hoher See, das nur einen von ihnen tragen kann, und damit jenem Klassiker des Notrechts, der immer wieder Gegenstand philosophischer Erörterung und rechtlicher Würdigung war, sowie vom Fall des Boots auf hoher See, dessen Insassen nur insoweit überleben können, wie sie in kannibalischer Weise mit einander umgehen, d. h. einen oder mehrere von ihnen töten und verzehren. An diesen Fällen zeigt sich, dass innere Verpflichtung zu überleben oft mit dem äußeren Recht des Respekts für das Leben

nicht übereinstimmen und dennoch nach einer Seite zu entscheiden statthaft sein soll.

Kenneth R. Westphal, der hier in deutscher Sprache veröffentlicht, handelt von Vernunftkritik, Moralkonstruktivismus und Besitzrecht bei Kant. Der Beitrag will nicht nur eine historische oder hermeneutische, sondern auch eine philosophische Leistung darstellen. Sie soll zeigen, wie Kant rein empirische Begründungen zu begründen sucht, im Anschluss an Rousseau und Hume. Dabei dient das Besitzrecht als exemplarischer Fall, in dem die empirisch-kritische Methode eingesetzt werden kann. Diese Analyse will der Autor gleichzeitig dazu nutzen, der Moralphilosophie wieder in klassischer Weise Ethik und Recht zu unterstellen, anders als es im angelsächsischen Sprachraum üblich geworden ist, wo die Ethik führt und das Recht nur beiläufig der Moralphilosophie zugehört. Dabei stützt sich Westphal auch auf Michael Wolff, den Bielefelder Kollegen, um das Verhältnis zwischen Analyse, Empirie und rationaler Rechtfertigung neu zu justieren. Präzise Begriffe bietet allenfalls die Mathematik, andere Begriffe erscheinen beliebig und willkürlich geschaffen. Dennoch gibt es Begriffe, die gemeinsam sind und zugleich keiner hinreichenden Präzision fähig sind. Als solche sind sie als allgemeine Begriffe möglicher Gegenstand von „Naturrecht“, das nur gelten kann, weil es allgemein angetroffen wird, wobei diese Sicht wesentlich von David Hume beigetragen worden ist. Diese Allgemeinheit muss rekonstruiert werden, was mit dem kantischen Konstruktivismus möglich erscheint, der daher nicht als bloße Metapher zu gelten hat, sondern die rationale Konstruktion anspricht. Die-

se Konstruktion führt die Studie dann am Besitzrecht vor, so wie Kant sie im Wege einer Analyse, einer Rechtfertigung, einer Verallgemeinerungsprobe und dann in einer Abbildung gerechter Verteilung durchgeführt hat. Damit trägt Westphal wesentlich bei zu einer innerweltlichen, sozusagen säkularen, der kritischen Theorie genügenden Konstruktion von Ethik und Recht als Teil der Morallehre der Philosophie, die zudem das Recht umfasst, auch in unserer Zeit.

Dietmar von der Pfordten behandelt hingegen ein gängigeres Thema, nämlich Kants Haltung zum Widerstandsrecht. Nach Einführung in herkömmliche Deutungen von Kants vermeintlicher Ablehnung des Widerstandsrechts zeigt er, dass Kant ebenso wie John Locke ein Widerstandsrecht gegen rechtlose, unrechtmäßige und in diesem Sinne schlechthin rechtlose Herrschaft bejaht. Damit erweist sich die gängige Deutung von Kant insoweit als eine Fehlinterpretation, die durch die Besonderheiten deutschen Staatsverständnisses entstanden und tradiert worden sein mag. Zugleich bestätigt sich damit, dass sich die Bejahung eines Widerstandsrechts dieser Art in der englischen Tradition des deutschen Idealismus, etwa im 19. Jh. bei T.H. Green, im richtigen Kontext befindet, also keine Besonderheit darstellt.<sup>2</sup> Rechtlos ist eine Herrschaft im Sinne Kants schon dann, wenn sie nicht auf einer Repräsentativverfassung beruht und daher nicht auf den Willen des Volkes zurückgeführt werden kann.

Alexandre T. G. Trivisonno präsentiert am Ende seinen Beitrag über den Republikanismus kantischer Prägung. Er entwickelt auf einer hohen Abstraktionsebene der Theorie der Freiheit diesen Republikanis-

mus, um dann Philip Pettit's Theorie der Freiheit i.S. einer Republik an diesem Maßstab zu messen. Der Maßstab wird allerdings im Wesentlichen vorausgesetzt, da der Autor sofort auf Pettit zugeht und seine Schrift zum Freiheitsbegriff heranzieht. Daher hält sich der Ertrag in Grenzen, zumal es nicht nur an einer Textanalyse von Kants Schriften fehlt, sondern auch daran, dass der Beitrag so gewichtige Arbeiten wie etwa diejenigen der letzten Jahre zum Freiheitsbegriff nicht verwertet. Daher steht dieses Essay auf etwas tönernen Füßen, auch wenn es durchaus zu treffenden Ergebnissen kommen sollte, etwa dem, dass der moderne Republikanismus von Pettit mit dem älteren kantischen Konstrukt von „Republik“ durchaus vereinbar ist.

Es zeigt sich, dass der Tagungsband ganz unterschiedliche Arbeiten enthält. Das entspricht der Kultur solcher Tagungen und dem Niveau, das die Teilnehmer mitbringen. Dennoch sind sie für den wissenschaftlichen Austausch neben den international zugänglichen Publikationen unerlässlich. Sie fördern die Maßstäbe und beschleunigen die Kommunikation, lassen beide plastisch werden und helfen so, den internationalen Zusammenhalt der Wissenschaft herzustellen. Und Kant ist eine solche Messe allemal wert, wird doch seine politische Philosophie immer noch Ausgangspunkt heutiger Analysen, sei es offen oder ganz unbewusst – und da ist die Offenlegung der Traditionslinien immer Desiderat.

#### Anmerkungen

- 1 Der Staat 52 (2013) S. 401 ff.
- 2 Dazu etwa D. P. Schweikard, in: ders. u. a. (Hrsg.), Ein Recht auf Widerstand gegen den Staat?, Tübingen 2018, S. 149 ff.

**Brian Hamnett: The Enlightenment in Iberian and Ibero-America, Iberian and Latin American Studies, Cardiff: University of Wales Press 2017, 374 p.**

Reviewed by  
Gabriela Goldin Marcovich, Paris

Brian Hamnett's comparative study of the Enlightenment in Iberia and Ibero-America examines Portuguese and Spanish empires, metropolises, and American dominions alongside one another, offering a comprehensive overview of the ideas that shaped the political culture of the Iberian worlds throughout the 18th and early 19th century. Although the study is mainly concerned with the intellectual aspects of the Enlightenment, it treats ideas as embodied by historical actors, of whom the author offers a sort of "prosopography" (p. 3). The author's stated aim is to respond "to those who say that they had no idea there was any Enlightenment in Spain and Portugal and their American territories," and "to set discussion of it into the historical mainstream" (p. 1). The Iberian Enlightenment has been often overlooked because of its religious character. Scholarship has also tended to reduce Iberian Enlightenment to its Enlightened Despotism, thus letting an emphasis on foreign influences overshadow the movement's indigenous foundations (p. 24). Following Jonathan Israel's *Radical Enlightenment*,<sup>1</sup> Hamnett starts with the antecedents, stretching his examination back into the late 17th cen-

tury, up until the counter-Enlightenment. Consequently, Hamnett interrogates the relationship between the Enlightenment and the Revolution in the Iberian and Ibero-American contexts.<sup>2</sup>

The antecedents for the Iberian Enlightenment have to be looked for in the late 17th century. At that time, Spanish and Portuguese wealthy individuals such as the *arbitristas* and the *novatores*, begun to reflect on the reasons for the pressures of external debt and heightened international competition that their empires were facing (Ch. 1). Since the 1720s, groups of mostly noblemen and churchmen such as the Valencian *ilustrados*, the *Sociedades de amigos del país*, the reformers at Coimbra, or the members of the Sevillian *tertulias* gathered to provide solutions for the challenges confronted by Hispanic societies. From the 1770s onwards, following the collapse of the gold boom in Brazil in the 1760s and the end of the Seven Years' War, these "pockets of Enlightenment" (p. 35) began to receive State support: "the imperial government appropriated Enlightenment ideas for political purposes – stimulating commerce and industry, increasing tax revenues and waging war more effectively" (p. 38).

It is within this framework, Hamnett argues, that the relationship between the Iberian Enlightenment and religion has to be understood (Ch. 2): a general drive for regalist reforms that would reinforce the State against the papacy – this was, e.g., the goal of the Jesuits' expulsion first from Portugal (1759) and then from Spain (1767) – without undermining the principles of religion. Among the ranks of the promoters of the Hispanic Enlightenment were in fact many clergymen, who sought

to reform the Catholic Church, to "clarify doctrine and purify [...] religious practices" (p. 46). This circumstance accounts for the persistence of the Inquisition at a time that saw a formidable push toward education reform.

State support for the Enlightenment came with the "ministerial appropriation" of its ideas during the 1770s and 1780s (Ch. 3 and 4). In Spain, the reforms put forward by the likes of Campomanes, Jovellanos, and Gálvez aimed to consolidate the State's power on the European stage through absolutism and by ensuring that the empire would continue to provide for the needs of the metropolis. In New Spain, the reforms applied (with haphazard results) ideas from the European enlightenment in order to restructure the *intendencias*, commerce, and the military (pp. 96–97). In the Portuguese world (Ch. 4), similarly but "not identical[ly]" (p. 114), the ministerial work of Pombal and Souza Coutinho displayed a strong emphasis on botany, agronomy, and productivity (p. 119).

Enlightenment-era reforms were not radical since they did not challenge the social structure of privileges in Spain's ancien régime, firmly grounded as this was in absolutist ideology (pp. 99–100), or the racial hierarchies of Portuguese slavocracy (p. 125ff.). This Enlightenment, which aimed to help monarchies and empires preserve their unity, may be qualified, following Jonathan Israel's proposal, as moderate. Even when, with the French revolution and the crisis of 1808, the imperial Spanish monarchy broke down, the republican and liberal ideals that led to constitutional change were not of a radical nature.

Hispanic-American societies (Ch. 5, 6, and 7) were by no means insulated from

European ideas. Their savants, drawing on robust local traditions, had been eager to modernize sciences, education, and health systems since the early 18th century. Foreign and American-born savants such as Boturini, Clavijero, Alzate in New Spain, and Mutis, Baquijano, and Unanue in New Grenada and Peru were interested in furthering American knowledge, with a strong focus on the natural sciences. The Hispanic-American Enlightenment was not radical, and “point[ed] not to the impending disaggregation of the respective Monarchies but, in cultural terms, to their continuing unity” (p. 145). The Tupac-Amaru revolt of 1780/81 was not connected to the Enlightenment, which was confined to the Lima region, but rather had its roots in Andean history (p. 194). The historical writings of the Mexican Enlightenment, such as Clavijero’s, however, did lay the ground for the claims of non-Spanish political legitimacy made by later reformists such as Abad y Queipo and Hidalgo (although the former ended up not supporting the revolution led by the latter, becoming a victim of the counter-Enlightenment).

Also in the Iberian peninsula, historical writings constituted an arena for the confrontation between absolutist and liberal political ideals, with both looking to the past for legitimacy (Ch. 8). With the crumbling of the Iberian empires and their political crises (in 1808 for Spain and 1820 for Portugal), alternatives to ministerial absolutism were sought in history, with exponents of liberalism particularly looking for legal precedents to their own constructs in a reinvented medieval past. Hamnett argues that, unlike elsewhere in Europe, “in Iberia medievalism formed

one aspect of the Enlightenment” (p. 209), a tendency bequeathed to liberalism and, later, romanticism. Hamnett identifies a chain of continuity between the Enlightenment and liberalism marked by a sequence of three links: “a continuing thread of ‘modern’ reforming opinion”, “a more radical Liberalism” that challenged the first one, and “an anti-clerical sentiment” arising especially in the 1830s–1850s (p. 243). The last chapter provides a survey of the Counter-Enlightenment in Iberia and Ibero-America from the 1820s onwards.

This book will undoubtedly contribute to the wider discussion of the Enlightenment in Iberia and Ibero-America of which a vibrant bibliography already bears witness to the importance of this field. The comparative perspective allows for a novel contextualization of the intellectual and political ideas that were discussed in the Iberian peninsula and the Americas. Hopefully, it will spark further research and debate about the nature and significance of the Iberian Enlightenment and new lines of enquiry such as the importance of the counter-Enlightenment in Iberia and Ibero-America.

#### Notes

- 1 J. I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment. Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750*, Oxford 2001.
- 2 B. R. Hamnett, *The End of Iberian Rule on the American Continent, 1770–1830*, Cambridge 2017.

**Dominic Davies: Imperial Infrastructure and Spatial Resistance in Colonial Literature, 1880–1930, Oxford / New York: Peter Lang 2017, 296 p.**

Reviewed by  
Steffen Wöll, Leipzig

Currently working as a lecturer at City University of London, Dominic Davies is an English scholar with a focus on colonial and postcolonial literature. His recent publications include the co-edited *Planned Violence Post/Colonial Urban Infrastructure, Literature and Culture*<sup>1</sup> and *Urban Comics: Infrastructure & the Global City in Contemporary Graphic Narratives*.<sup>2</sup> Davies' thesis-turned-book *Imperial Infrastructures and Spatial Resistance in Colonial Literature, 1880–1930* scrutinizes the dynamics and cross-effects that play out between “infrastructures, borders, urban planning, the built environment, and literary and cultural narratives”<sup>3</sup> and represents an example of those works whose relevancy has only increased over the course of the last years. This is not only due to a recent surge in the fields of cultural and literary geography but also comes as a result of a renewed interest in the linkages between the workings of spatial formats such as empires and nation-states and their discursive constructions or subversions in fictional texts past and present.<sup>4</sup> With its intriguing subject matter and accessible prose, *Imperial Infrastructures* makes productive these linkages by utilizing a methodology

Davies calls “infrastructural reading” that is designed to “open a critical space within what is, predominantly, pro-imperial literature” (p. 4; original emphasis).

Setting the tone for the subsequent examinations, the book opens with a quote by Rudyard Kipling whose overt message encapsulates the deep entanglements of colonial and literary space and history in the epistemological networks of so-called western civilization. “Month by month,” Kipling muses, “the Earth shrinks actually, and, what is more important, in imagination. [...] We have cut down enormously [...] the world-conception of time and space, which is the big flywheel of the world's progress.”<sup>5</sup> Working through a new-fangled and subversive reading of colonial literature by a number of South African and Indian writers, Davies offers a methodological reappraisal of infrastructural development as a linchpin of the British Empire. Infrastructures and their integration into the power structures of geopolitical world systems, he suggests, should not be restricted to their understanding as straightforward economic and narrative pivots of accumulative capitalism and racism and their exploitative mechanisms in the colonizing of peoples and spaces. Conversely, by utilizing an alternative methodology, the book puts emphasis on the support, but also the underlying insecurities, critiques, and implicit oppositions that permeate examples of literary fiction which have thus far mostly been viewed as championing imperial accumulation of power through the means of infrastructural development.

Across four chapters, Davies' study offers a thorough and convincing reevaluation of colonial discourses that oftentimes forfeit

historical nuance and thematic complexity in favor of seemingly unambiguous dichotomies between colonial abusers and subaltern victims. What is interesting in particular is Davies' selection of primary sources that consciously attach themselves to a sensitive point of Britain's imperial history: Rather than pointing to more obvious examples of resistances in texts written by subaltern authors, the book complicates the subject by tracing resistances, contradictions, and insecurities in the literary production and representation of colonial infrastructures in the writings of authors such as H. Rider Haggard, Olive Schreiner, and John Buchan. Rightfully arguing that "the avoidance of such texts can be defeatist" (p. 13), Davies lays out a cross-section of colonial wirings in British-controlled South Africa and India, identifying humanitarianism, segregation, frontiers, and nationalism as their thematic fulcrums. At the same time, in its goal to map out infrastructures and resistances based on an eclectic corpus of colonial literature, the book could have benefited from a more focused engagement with fewer aspects rather than splitting its attention across its relatively short chapters. As a whole, *Imperial Infrastructure* succeeds in providing a lucid perspective as well as valuable insights into the role that colonial literature played in the construction and subversion of the British Empire during its heyday from 1880 to 1930. Importantly, the book demonstrates that the literary subjects, metaphors, themes, and tropes of infrastructure do not exist as part of a solely fictional dimension that can be easily demarcated from physical embodiments such as bridges, railway lines, and territories. Fictional narratives not

only become valuable historical sources through which the circulation of colonial-infrastructureal networks can be observed and understood; they also are significant actors in these networks as they partake in discourses regarding the policing or undermining of British-controlled spaces abroad. Davies' method of infrastructureal reading proves effective in exposing these dynamics, leading him to the conclusion that colonial literature played a vital part "in the production of an unevenly and unequally developed landscape that has continued to scar the material and imagined geographies of now formally decolonised states, and that continue to shape the twenty-first century's post-imperial world" (p. 255). What informs the book's main finding is hence the cognizance that literary fiction not merely reflected imperial infrastructures that were hailed as signifiers of progress or humanitarianism but themselves became constituents of an overarching discursive infrastructure that supported or defied the projects of empires – an insight that equally augments and complicates present-day inquiries into the matters of colonialism and imperialism.

#### Notes

- 1 E. Boehmer / D. Davies (eds.), *Planned Violence Post/Colonial Urban Infrastructure, Literature and Culture*, Oxford 2018.
- 2 D. Davies, *Urban Comics. Infrastructure & the Global City in Contemporary Graphic Narratives*, New York 2019.
- 3 City University of London, Dr Dominic Davies, URL: [www.city.ac.uk/people/academics/dominic-davies](http://www.city.ac.uk/people/academics/dominic-davies).
- 4 See, e.g., S. Wöll, *Bleeding Borders. Space, Blackness, and Hybridity in Jack London's Representations of the American Southwest*, in: *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 63 (2018) 1, pp. 5–28.
- 5 A. Lycett (ed.), *Kipling Abroad. Traffics and Discoveries from Burma to Brazil*, London 2010.

**Julia Obertreis: Imperial Desert Dreams. Cotton Growing and Irrigation in Central Asia, 1860–1991 (Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte Osteuropas / Cultural and Social History of Eastern Europe, Bd. 8), Göttingen: V&R unipress 2017, 536 p.**

Reviewed by  
Jan Zofka, Leipzig

History books about single raw materials, goods, commodities, or techniques are on the rise. In line with the global and transnational turn, a growing number of studies approaches global and (trans-)regional transformation processes through a material dimension. Cotton, coffee, salt, tobacco, water, and dams that guide it, coal, and nearly everything that can be found in a household serve as starting points for histories of capitalism or human society and culture. While Bill Bryson uses this approach through “things” in a very eclectic and entertaining way, in the more strictly scholarly field Sven Beckert’s global history of cotton has caught the greatest attention.<sup>1</sup> Julia Obertreis’ book on cotton growing and irrigation schemes in Tsarist and Soviet Central Asia is an important contribution to this growing field of global history, especially as the Soviet Union is to a large extent absent in Beckert’s “Empire of Cotton”. However, the book plays in more than one field – more than a transregional or *global* history of cotton and irrigation, it is a history of the (Central Asian) peripheries of the Tsarist Empire and the Soviet Union, and about how these were

ruled in the context of an ever-transforming society.

The starting point and linchpin of Obertreis’s *longue durée* history from the late Tsarist Empire to the end of the Soviet Union are the actors. Engineers working on irrigation schemes, aristocratic capitalists financing large canals, or national party leaders promoting the Hungry Steppe development project are the heroes of the story. The study deliberately does not go down to the level of the actual farmers and village people but stays on the level of decision-makers and specialists. This proves to be the perfect angle to detect the patronizing mechanisms of power in the Soviet system, a continuity of expert networks and their agendas from Tsarist to Soviet reign, as for example the “cotton autonomy” and the civilizing-mission mentality of European modernism, and a contraposition of “actors on the ground” towards central planning institutions.

The reader is introduced very closely to the world of the protagonists – a world of large-scale campaigns and mobilization of resources for overambitious goals and of a mentality of fighting and battlefield with the corresponding pride of the “Hungry Steppers”. The Hungry Steppe development project in Uzbekistan from the mid-1950s to the late 1970s shall be highlighted here as an example of Obertreis’s approach and the extremely valuable insights revealed by it. In the framework of the hungry steppe development project, several large-scale measures were combined to win huge parts of land for cotton growing: a large irrigation scheme, several state farms and the corresponding villages, a regional centre town, Yangier, and the corresponding infrastructures were built

up. Obertreis depicts this campaign as a micro-cosmos of personalized, patronalizing, Stalinist rule on the one hand, but as a progressive, multicultural space, which “offered a certain liberty from economic and professional restrictions” (p. 321) on the other. To realize the project, the Union government had founded the huge trust *Golodnosteproj*, which disposed of several infrastructure-providing and material-producing enterprises from food to cement production, and got overfunded by the Union and the Uzbek republican government. Thus, this trust developed a considerably autonomous existence, and it was presided by an omnipotent chairman, who combined backslapping face-to-face contact with the workers with a strict regime of unconditional commitment – in line with the typical Soviet-Stalinist way of enterprise governance. Especially fascinating is that Obertreis elaborates various contradictions and debates among the leading engineers that touch upon basic questions of the Soviet model of development at the transition from Khrushchev’s to Brezhnev’s reign. An example stems from the field of architecture: the old chairman promoted a radical solution of urban-style agglomerations with multi-storey buildings, in line with Khrushchev’s “agro-city”, while the younger engineers at the threshold to become his successors opted for accommodating the peasants in traditional style countryside housing (pp. 311–313). This debate is a small cut-out of a fundamental contradiction in the Soviet modernization project between a radical vision of destroying the old and a more cautious transformation of existing structures, or even a rebuilding of tradition and history. In the same line stands the contraposition

between promoters of a highly industrialized, monocultural, intensive agriculture based on a deep division of labour (who dominated the Soviet discourse) and the supporters of a more adaptive approach with crop rotation and with an acceptance of local knowledge on the circumstances at place (pp. 188–197, 416, 472). This everlasting debate on agricultural development, which was not only led in socialist states and is contemporary also today, was carried on even in the high Stalinist 1930s, on the eve of the great terror. These are only two of many examples, where Obertreis brings out conflicting agendas among the protagonists and institutions of the Soviet modernization project.

The great number of actors, projects, and institutes named in the book is a disadvantage in terms of readability. A reduction of complexity would have been allowed in order to use these protagonists in a more exemplary and categorising way. This might also help to fill more of the middle ground between phone calls in starry nights of the Hungry steppe and the Soviet model of development.

As the title clearly promises, the book is more an imperial history and does not put the globality of cotton circulations centre stage. However, it hints to most interesting points, which can be taken as starting points for a global history of cotton in the socialist world. The most elaborated point in this respect is the presentation of the Soviet Central Asian peripheries as a model for Third World countries through the Uzbek party head’s travel diplomacy, through visits to the Hungry steppe project by Fidel Castro, Ahmed Ben Bella, or Süleyman Demirel and through the export of know-how and technology for irrigation

and cotton growing by Uzbek institutes (pp. 334–339). Other examples of global entanglements are the attempts to grow Egyptian cotton sorts in Turkmenistan (p. 193), the chemicalization of agriculture (p. 345), and cross-border cotton trade statistics, including the Soviet role as the main cotton deliverer to the COMECON, only very briefly hinted to in the book (p. 453). That these points are not in Obertreis's main focus does not do any harm to the assets and strengths of the book: It is an important contribution to filling the gap of cotton history in the socialist world and Eastern Europe/Eurasia, as well as to the history of international entanglements of the peripheries of Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union, and to the social, cultural and economic history of Central Asia. In the context of the efforts undertaken by recent approaches to economic history<sup>2</sup> and by the material histories mentioned in the beginning, Obertreis's book certainly is a further step towards a conciliation of cultural history with political economy.

Notes:

- 1 S. Beckert, *Empire of Cotton. A Global History of Capitalism*, New York 2014; B. Bryson, *At Home. A Short History of Private Life*, London/New York 2010.
- 2 See for example the conference „Scales of Economy“, Sydney, July 2016, URL: <https://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-6915?title=scales-of-economy&recno=3&q=Slobodian&sort=newestPublished&fq=&total=10>.

**Eckart Conze / Martin Klimke / Jeremy Varon (eds.): *Nuclear Threats, Nuclear Fear, and the Cold War of the 1980s*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2017, p. 370.**

Reviewed by  
Karena Kalmbach, Eindhoven

Since the seminal book *Angst im Kalten Krieg*,<sup>1</sup> recently it has become commonplace to mention nuclear, fear, and Cold War issues in one breath. The 2017 compilation *Nuclear Threats, Nuclear Fear, and the Cold War of the 1980s*, therefore, follows a well-established line of research. Yet this work equally attempts to consolidate two central perspectives within common ground: consistently linking military and civil aspects of nuclear technology, and popular public discourse with the high politics of international security.

This book is an offshoot of the 2009 conference *Accidental Armageddons: The Nuclear Crisis and the Culture of the Second Cold War 1975–1989*, held at the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C. After the editors' own introduction, a wide variety of scholars present 15 articles clustered under the main headings: 1. Defining Threat: Nuclear Dangers and the Moral Imagination, 2. Popular Culture, 3. Local and Transnational Activism, and 4. The Challenge for High Politics.

The introduction, which explains the book's structure, in itself exemplifies how difficult it is to actually stay true to the

claim of consistently linking the military and civil aspects of nuclear technology. These two “worlds” are divided in the introduction, with much more consideration given to the military side. What is more, the notion “fear” remains very much one-dimensional here: it is the fear of the bomb, the classic, well-trodden path of highlighting the fear of technology. Fortunately, the following articles – sometimes individually but in any case collectively – succeed in achieving the publication’s main aim and actually integrate the military and civil perspectives of nuclear technology. Interestingly, some articles do not even mention the word fear, which raises the question: to what extent does the book’s title serve to draw attention rather than promote the analytical framework of its content? Speaking of fear, this phenomenon remains a little unpacked. In some of the articles, it is taken for granted that people were of course afraid (yet nothing is said about the concrete object of this fear, let alone its performativity). On the other hand, other articles do make the extra effort to engage strongly with “fear” as an analytical category. In this regard, Tim Geiger and Jan Hansen present an interesting set of sources, namely correspondence sent to the German Social Democratic Party’s Head Office in the early 1980s, in which people revealed openly their extensive nuclear-related fears, for their own lives as well as the total destruction of the planet. The final article in this compilation, “Building Trust” by Enrico Böhm, reminds us that not only the fear of technology is at stake, but that the development of nuclear technology itself was inherently driven by fears. He highlights, by referring to Rüdiger Graf’s work

on the oil crises,<sup>2</sup> that “the fear (angst) of economic destabilization became a driver for the development of nuclear energy as a presumably reliable and secure energy source” (p. 336).

If the notion of “fear” had been unpacked and consistently become an analytical category, the insights in this book would have been much more fruitful and added a truly innovative aspect to this established research field. Nevertheless, the book is a very interesting read and offers thought-provoking perspectives, mainly through the interplay of the articles. As they are all short, concise (approximately 15 pages, plus notes), and very well written, you can easily read them all. Particularly newcomers to the field will appreciate the book as a wonderful source for exploring the diverse strands of research in the vast field of nuclear history. Whoever accomplished the tremendous task of indexing all the articles and compiling a 16-page index list deserves the appreciation of the nuclear history research community.

Part I opens with Wilfried Mausbach’s “Nuclear Winter: Prophecies of Doom and Images of Desolation during the Second Cold War”. This article might attract the broadest readership. By focusing on the work of Paul Crutzen, Mausbach lets us conceptualize the discussions around the nuclear winter to pave the way for climate change and Anthropocene debates – a perspective highly relevant beyond nuclear history. Although the next articles might appeal to a less broad audience, they are nonetheless interesting. In “Atomic Nightmares and Biological Citizens at the Three Mile Island”, Natasha Zaretsky wonderfully retells this account as a social history of Pennsylvania and a cultural history of

the human foetus, while highlighting that categorizations such as “left and right” or “conservative and progressive” blur when it comes to nuclear issues. Eckart Conze ends Part I with “Missile Bases as Concentration Camps: The Role of National Socialism, the Second World War, and the Holocaust in the West German Discourse on Nuclear Armament”, an article which fulfils the title’s promise by embedding this nuclear armament discourse in its social and cultural context.

Part II turns to popular culture to explore some fascinating sources. In “‘Will you sing about the missiles?’ British Antinuclear Protest Music of the 1980s”, William M. Knoblauch examines British song lyrics as a form of music activism; then in “From Artists for Peace to the Green Caterpillar: Cultural Activism and Electoral Politics in 1980s West Germany”, Martin Klimke and Laura Stapano undertake a similar endeavour with German songs, linking them to the German Green Party’s new campaigning methods. Closing this part is Thomas Goldstein’s “A Tenuous Peace: International Antinuclear Activism in the East German Writers Union during the 1980s”, which illustrates that writers as well as musicians shaped the discourse – and notably not just in West but also in East Germany.

Part III contrasts studies on local and transnational activism. First, Stephen Milder describes “The ‘Example of Wyhl’: How Grassroots Protest in the Rhine Valley Shaped West Germany’s Antinuclear Movement”. This text complements Michael Stewart Foley’s “No Nukes and Front Porch Politics: Environmental Protest Culture and Practice on the Second Cold War Home Front”, as considered together the

articles underline the similarities and differences in local protest phenomena. Susanne Schregel, in “Global Micropolitics: Towards a Transnational History of Grassroots Nuclear-Free Zones”, exemplifies best how vital it is to jointly consider the military and civil aspects of nuclear technology, showing us that “Nuclear free” can mean many different things. All the other contributions in this part concentrate on either nuclear power plants or nuclear bombs, but at least these dimensions are brought together in one and the same chapter. Patrick Burke’s “European Nuclear Disarmament: Transnational Peace Campaigning in the 1980s” and Sebastian Kalden’s “A Case of ‘Hollanditis’: The Interchurch Peace Council in the Netherlands and the Christian Peace Movement in Western Europe” emphasise once more the transnational connection of anti-nuclear protest.

The fourth and final part of the book stays closest to the introduction’s focus on military aspects and no longer features anti-reactor protests. Yet despite not always connecting the military and civil side of nuclear technology, the book succeeds in its aim to consistently link popular public discourse and concrete high politics. Lawrence S. Wittner in “Peace through Strength? The impact of the Antinuclear Uprising on the Carter and Reagan Administrations” and Tim Geiger and Jan Hansen in “Did Protest Matter? The Influence of the Peace Movement on the West German Government and the Social Democratic Party, 1977–1983”, focuses precisely on this interconnection. And what book on nuclear history does not remind us that whatever patterns we try to establish through comparative studies,

France is usually the exception that proves the rule. Katrin Rucker's "Why was there no 'Accidental Armageddon' Discourse in France? How Defense Intellectuals, Peace Movements, and Public Opinion Rethought the Cold War during the Euromissile Crisis", confronts us with this phenomenon. The closing article by Enrico Böhm entitled "Building Trust: The G7 Summits and International Leadership in Nuclear Politics" reminds us of the nuclear origins of institutions to which we have grown accustomed and that have lost their "nuclearity"<sup>3</sup> in today's public discourse. Alongside the ever-changing narratives of nuclear vices and virtues,<sup>4</sup> shifting nuclearity is probably one of the most interesting topics to study in nuclear history. What better way to start exploring such avenues than by reading the widely-appealing articles in this book.

#### Notes

- 1 B. Greiner/Ch. Th. Müller, D. Walter, *Angst im Kalten Krieg*, Hamburg 2009.
- 2 R. Graf, *Gefährdungen der Energiesicherheit und die Angst vor der Angst. Westliche Industrieländer und das arabische Ölembargo 1973/74*, in: P. Bormann/T. Freiberger/J. Michel (eds.), *Angst in den internationalen Beziehungen*, Göttingen/Bonn 2010, p. 73–92.
- 3 For the concept of nuclearity, see G. Hecht: *Nuclear Ontologies*, in: *Constellations* 13 (2006), pp. 320–331.
- 4 K. Kalmbach: *Revisiting the Nuclear Age. State of the Art Research in Nuclear History*, in: *Neue Politische Literatur* 1 (2017), pp. 51–52.

**Matthew Frank: Making Minorities History. Population Transfer in Twentieth-Century Europe, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2017, 464 p.**

Reviewed by  
Umut Özsü, Ottawa

In this new and exciting work of political and diplomatic history (and also intellectual history), Matthew Frank, an associate professor of international history at the University of Leeds, sets out to provide a history of population transfer in Europe during the course of the twentieth century. Rather than focusing exclusively on a specific socio-historical context marked by a particular experience of population transfer – movements envisioned or coordinated by Nazi-affiliated Romanian officials, say, or the forced migrations that accompanied the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s – Frank elects to chart the rise and fall of what many jurists, historians, and sociologists, not to mention diplomats and journalists, have long understood as a specific mode of nation-state-building. Much of this ground is well-trodden, with key stops on Frank's journey – the Greek-Turkish population exchange, the first large-scale legally sanctioned compulsory exchange of its kind, population transfers and related deportations and expulsions in the Soviet Union before and after the Second World War, Allied-organized expulsions of ethnic Germans from central and eastern Europe after 1945, and various transfers, some implemented and others

merely proposed, in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and elsewhere in central and eastern Europe – having been examined in detail by a range of other scholars. Frank draws dutifully from this secondary literature but reinforces and supplements it with an exceptionally impressive range of materials from state, personal, and international archives. The writing is precise, the research is meticulous, and the basic objective – to map the extensive use to which an idea of marginal significance at the turn of the twentieth century came to be put during the decades that followed – is both eminently important and commendably clear. I enjoyed reading it a great deal.

The book raises a host of questions of general theoretical and methodological interest. Two such questions are especially worth noting here. First, the scope of any history of the sort that Frank sets out to provide will turn to a significant degree on the way in which its central organizing concept – which, in this case, happens to be a euphemism for legally formalized dispossession and displacement – is understood by the scholar in question. The phenomena captured by a term like “population transfer” are many and varied, and one may, therefore, broach the topic from a host of disciplinary and inter-disciplinary perspectives. Still, notwithstanding its origins in several obscure and largely unread writings from the final decade of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth which Frank has rescued and which he analyzes quite nicely (pp. 18–32),<sup>1</sup> “population transfer” is at root a term of preponderantly legal usage and significance, one elaborated and popularized in the vocabulary of the technocratic international law sponsored by the League

of Nations after the disintegration of the Concert of Europe system. Post-Second World War treaties like the 1948 Genocide Convention and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 ultimately prohibited forcible transfer of peoples, either expressly or impliedly, and they were accompanied by a litany of oft-quoted but legally non-binding instruments like the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But twentieth-century international lawyers – practising lawyers, law professors, legal advisers, and other state functionaries, and those who performed some combination of these roles – have had a fair deal to say about population transfer, and the inter-war period was certainly no exception to this rule. This is so not least on account of the central role that lawyers have played in drafting, interpreting, and implementing the treaties and other legal instruments that justify and sometimes even formally authorize such movements.

Frank is admirably forthright about how he understands population transfer. He defines it on the book's first page as “the idea that, in order to construct stable and homogeneous nation-states and a peaceful international order out of them, national minorities could be relocated en masse in an orderly way with minimal economic and political disruption as long as there was sufficient planning, bureaucratic oversight, and international support in place” (p. 1). This formulation makes for tidy functionalism: institutional coordination of en masse displacement is used to craft nation-states whose ethno-confessional homogeneity promises to ensure social cohesion, political stability, and economic development. Yet it misses what is arguably the most crucial feature of what has come

to be called “population transfer”, namely that it is constituted, sanctioned, and legitimated in and through international law. The absence of any reference to law in this definition sheds light on the limitations of Frank’s general approach to the historical record. Frank attends to treaty-making conferences and the basic terms of certain treaties at several points in the book, but with the exception of a brief and tellingly insightful discussion of Nicolas Politis, an international lawyer who represented Greece as a foreign minister, ambassador to the League, and in various other capacities, there is little direct engagement with the specifically legal dimensions of population transfer. This, in my view, is a lost opportunity, especially given Frank’s talents and skilful craftsmanship. The movements Frank examines would not have been undertaken or entertained in the way they were, nor possibly as intensively and frequently as they were, had it not been for a general willingness on the part of all relevant actors to rely heavily upon treaties, agreements, and all manner of other legal instruments, including pieces of domestic legislation. It is interesting, at any rate, that the term “international law” surfaces only rarely in the book after putting in an obligatory brief appearance in its very first sentence.

The second point of general theoretical and methodological interest must, unfortunately, be expressed even more directly: *Making Minorities History* is an essentially Eurocentric book. An exceedingly good one, outstanding at times in its command of obscure unpublished sources in multiple languages, but one that is marked by an oddly persistent indifference toward the extra-European world. The difficulty

here is that it is no longer possible to write about a phenomenon that is intrinsically and definitionally international, in the double sense of being about mass movements across borders and being made possible through legal rules and institutions for managing inter-state relations, without situating “specifically European” developments in a broader comparative context. Flat assertions to the effect that “this book limits its scope to Europe for the most part” (p. 5) are not enough to justify such neglect of the broader global framework, particularly since countless waves of “global history” and “international history” have established that technologies of state-building, even those of specific regional provenance or application, may be understood adequately only within larger frameworks for analyzing their similarities and differences. On this point, Frank appears to think otherwise. There are passing references to the partition of British India in 1947 (e.g. pp. 365–367, 369), and slightly more about the expulsion of Palestinian Arabs the following year (e.g. pp. 181, 365–369). But little attempt is made to situate the history of “population transfer in twentieth-century Europe” (itself a somewhat overdrawn categorization given that, as he too agrees, legally organized inter-state transfers owe their modern origins to a region on the periphery of Europe and known widely at the time as the “Near East”) in a modular theory of the different modes of nation-state-building in global circulation in the early twentieth century. Lacking such comparators, the specificity of population transfer is occluded, a superabundance of empirical data being provided at the expense of a real explanation of population transfer’s struc-

tural role in the creation and recreation of states and societies alike. In order to provide such an explanation, Frank would have had to transform the suggestive observations in the book's brief conclusion (pp. 407–415) into a robust guiding argument, to be threaded from one end of the book to the other. He also would have needed to have been less given to accepting the orientalist views of Western diplomats like Joseph Grew at face value (p. 68), and less inclined to gloss the work of Giulio Cesare Montagna, an Italian official who played an important role in preparing the treaty for the Greek-Turkish exchange, as having “carried out his task with equanimity, fairness, and good humour” (p. 70). Perhaps most tellingly, he would need to have been less insistent on downplaying Fridtjof Nansen's role in its design and implementation as the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (even as he documents in great detail how Nansen threw his weight behind the idea, laid the groundwork for its acceptance, agreed that it could be compulsory, championed it before statesmen, diplomats, and journalists, expressed dismay when initially unable to conclude a treaty that would formalize it, intervened powerfully in the Conference of Lausanne in December 1922 to underscore its urgent necessity, made glowing references to the resettlement efforts with which it was accompanied in his Nobel Peace Prize speech later that month, helped to secure the financial and institutional support of the League and foreign governments, and claimed partial responsibility for it for years to come (pp. 50–58, 61–70, 88–89, 410–411).

*Making Minorities History* is a deeply researched and carefully constructed work

that will be of great interest to scholars and students of state-building, forced migration, minority politics, empire and decolonization, and twentieth-century European history. Like any book, it is not without its limitations. But it is a valuable and enriching contribution to the growing literature on population transfer's manifold histories, and it should be consulted by all those interested in the study of “nations and nationalism”, broadly understood. Once again, I benefited from it a great deal.

#### Note

- 1 Here Frank refines and augments a discussion initially sketched in his first book. See M. Frank, *Expelling the Germans: British Opinion and post-1945 Population Transfer in Context*, Oxford 2007, pp. 15–16.

**Tanja Bühner / Flavio Eichmann / Stig Förster / Benedikt Stuchtey (eds.):  
Cooperation and Empire: Local  
Realities of Global Processes, New  
York: Berghahn Books 2017, 392 p.**

Reviewed by  
Satoshi Mizutani, Kyoto

In this age, when colonialism is universally condemned, why do we study those indigenous peoples who are seen to have cooperated with European colonial empires? Why not just focus on ‘subalterns,’ dissidents, or revolutionaries? Ever since Ronald Robinson famously brought the issue to the forefront of academic debate in the 1970s, with his theory of ‘collabora-

tion', this has been a highly sensitive topic. Surely, the academic study of collaboration should not serve to reproduce the apologist view of colonialism as equally benefiting all parties involved, including non-Europeans of all social groups. As Wolfgang Reinhard, in his historiographical chapter of this volume, rightly points out, 'colonialism was a system of rule-based upon an alliance of exploitation between colonial powers and indigenous elites at the expense of the common colonial subjects' (p. 370). If the study of cooperation is important morally, it is because certain modes of violence, exploitation, discrimination, and injustice – the consequences of which are still with us today – would not be adequately understood without a critical engagement with it. In fact, as a simple matter of fact, colonialism would not have worked without the inclusion of colonized subjects, particularly elites, into the administrative, military, and other institutions of imperial governance, even if such inclusion differed in degree and form. Like it or not, no history of a colonized society would be complete without addressing the question of the indigenous elite's relationship with the regime.

The authors of *Cooperation and Empire* re-open the question of 'collaboration' as discussed by Robinson decades ago. With the use of a more neutral term, 'cooperation', their aim is not to simply reapply Robinson's framework to newly-explored cases. Rather, they bring new ideas such as 'hybridity' and 'mimicry' into dialogue with Robinson, a cross-fertilization that re-examines the question of cooperation from critical perspectives.

One of the merits of this collection is its diversity in terms of the periods, regions,

and themes covered, which allows readers to rethink cooperation from a much wider perspective than Robinson's theory would permit. In the early modern era, the terms of cooperation were different from those in the modern era, even counter-intuitive. Dealing with the Portuguese overseas empire of the 16th century, Polónia and Rosa Capelão show how women – both European and indigenous – played active roles as intermediaries, a phenomenon less observable in more modern empires where gender, in combination with race and class, increasingly served to hierarchize imperial social relations. Geopolitical differences across continents also produced significantly different terms of cooperation. In some parts of Asia, the modes of cooperation reflected the presence of non-European empires, which remained resistant to European penetration well into the nineteenth century. Tanja Bühner's chapter on cooperation between the Nizam of Hyderabad and British diplomats shows that contexts existed where it was Europeans who found themselves in the weaker position. In fact, the British residents at the Nizam's Court tried to adapt to the local culture, giving Homi Bhabha's concept of 'mimicry' rather different connotations. In British India, where the Mughal empire had already established an imperial polity, Britain did not have to build administrative infrastructures from scratch. But this condition did not necessarily obtain in other parts of the British empire. Ralph A. Austen's chapter shows that these differences in pre-colonial structures of government-produced different results. According to Austen, tax collection in South Asia was more efficient than in Africa because of the tax system that had been developed

under the Mughal rule, which Britain inherited and made its own.

A renewed study of cooperation is especially useful when it facilitates the re-examination of certain key concepts in colonial studies. One such concept is the 'invention of tradition', advocated by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. Some of the case studies show how the European selection of indigenous cooperators was arbitrary in ways that reflected colonizers' projected images of indigenous tradition. Both Ute Schüren and Ulrike Schaper discuss indigenous people whom Europeans regarded as the 'chiefs' of colonized societies in the contexts of Spanish rule in sixteenth-century Yucatán and German rule in Cameroon, respectively. They show how Europeans imposed their own image of indigenous elites or leaders to suit their imperial ends, reducing, in that process, the original heterogeneity of the societies they colonized. European efforts to rule through a tradition they themselves fabricated did not always work, however, as Myriam Yakoubi's piece on cooperation between the British and Faisal I of Iraq shows. In its effort to invent a monarchy in Iraq to serve as a vehicle for imperial intervention, Britain installed the Hashemite Faisal from Mecca as Iraq's first king. Contrary to Britain's preconceived notion of Faisal as a natural leader of the local people, he turned out to be not a 'puppet' of Britain, but rather a person who sought to fulfill his own interests and eventually demanded independence.

The above case of Faisal calls into question the very meaning of cooperation. Did 'cooperators' actually cooperate as expected by imperial rulers? To what extent and how did they sabotage the cooperation they had

agreed to, or even resist colonial rule? Vincent O'Malley's work on the Maoris called 'Kupapas', who are commonly supposed to have 'collaborated' with the British in a treasonous way, shows that they in fact pursued their own interests, not hesitating to switch allegiance when the need arose.

It is important to understand that cooperation and resistance were not always opposites. As famously experienced in the case of English-educated Indians in South Asia, nationalism could arise from the discontent felt by those who were initially regarded as cooperators. Tensions between imperial rulers and their indigenous cooperators were not uncommon, and mismanagement of these tensions often ended up inviting anti-colonial sentiments and movements. Such tensions existed, for example, in Anglo-Sudanese cooperation in the field of school education. As the chapter by Iris Seri-Hersch shows, beneath a façade of peaceful cooperation, European officers regarded anglicized Sudanese officials as a threat, while many of the latter offered their service with eventual independence in mind. High degrees of adaptation to Western norms and values did not always correspond to an increased sense of imperial allegiance. Charles V. Reed's chapter on European-educated African elites in South Africa is highly illustrative of this point. Upholding the liberal values of the British Constitution, what these African elites demanded was nothing less than racial equality; this constituted a fundamental challenge to the asymmetrical nature of the colonial relationship, not an acceptance of their status quo position as faithful local agents of empire.

Cooperation did not just concern European imperial authorities on the one

hand and colonized elites on the other. The colonial presence of European non-officials, such as planters and private settlers, often complicated the picture, not least because of their ruthless and reckless pursuits of self-interest. In his essay on colonial Martinique, Flavio Eichmann shows how French administrators and rich sugar planters in the colony formed an alliance that subverted the aims of the imperial authorities in Paris. It was widely observed that non-official Europeans in colonies were prone to misconduct, with their violent and discriminatory treatment of indigenous subjects having a detrimental impact on ideologies of European civilization and white prestige. It was often the case that colonial states failed to control these Europeans, leaving the colonized helplessly exposed to denigrating forms of mistreatment, including genocide. The relationship between official and non-official Europeans was neither purely cooperative nor purely antagonistic. Matthias Häußler's chapter on white settlers in German Southwest Africa shows how the inability

of the colonial state to control the settlers' shocking violence against Africans sparked a revolt against German rule, the subsequent suppression of which caused even greater suffering.

As far as the harm that cooperation inflicted on common people is concerned, even more complicated is the exploitation and violence meted out by indigenous co-operators. A notable case is that of 'Native Guards': a village-level police force in colonial Africa. Comparing the institutions of Native Guards in British, French, and Portuguese colonies, Alexander Keese argues that insufficient remuneration, neglect by their European superiors, and alienation from the local population due to being from other areas combined to make Native Guards notoriously prone to extortion, corruption, and violence.

The editors of this stimulating volume should be congratulated for bringing together such a wide range of topics without a loss of focus. This book will surely serve as food for thought for anyone interested in this important topic.

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## ANNOTATIONEN

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**Felix Brahm / Eve Rosenhaft (eds.): *Slavery Hinterland: Transatlantic Slavery and Continental Europe, 1680–1850*, Woodbridge: Boydell Press 2016, 261 p.**

The co-edited collective volume, *Slavery Hinterland*, appears in the book series, *People, Markets, Goods: Economies and Societies in History*. Previous titles in the series have focused on British or English history, and therefore this book, while suiting the series' title, appears to deviate from the prior monographs and volumes published there. This book seeks to illuminate the experiences of historical actors in societies not directly involved in the trafficking of enslaved Africans (i.e. not Britain) with a focus on people from Central and Southern European societies but argues that their lives were nevertheless touched by this transatlantic trade in human beings and plantation economies. Since this volume's publication in 2016, the series has mainly returned to a British focus but a forthcoming collective volume in the series will build on the thesis in *Slavery Hinterland*, "by looking beyond slavery and American plantations." That book, *Globalized Peripheries: Central Europe and the Atlantic World, 1680–1860*, edited by Jutta Wimpler and Klaus Weber, will be released in 2020 and therefore this is a developing dialogue that may be of interest

to *Comparativ* readers: to what extent have transformations in Central Europe as well as lived experiences been impacted, entangled, and implicated in the transatlantic economies? *Slavery Hinterland*, in fact, opened with a terminological discussion on why *hinterland* became a guiding concept of the book rather than *periphery*, a term that suggests "that areas in continental Europe were subordinate in importance to the Atlantic world" (p. 6).

This book consists of eight body chapters, as well as a comprehensive introduction by the editors and an afterword by Catherine Hall. The more specific guiding question for this volume is: what did people in Europe not directly participant or implicated in the slave trade perceive of slavery and anti-slavery discourses between 1680 and 1850? The volume is the product of a conference on the topic in 2012 hosted in Liverpool at both the university and the International Slavery Museum, located at a major site of the transatlantic slave trade. This volume, however, looks even further to the "hinterland" of slavery, particularly at societies far removed from the Atlantic coast: German-speaking lands, Italian speaking lands, and Denmark. The volume, most obviously and successfully seeks out the German experience, distance, and moral perception of the slave trade and slavery, as most contributions (also in

*Globalized Peripheries*) skew towards contributions from German-speaking lands that mainly center on experiences of individuals, families, etc. What is refreshing about the volume is its ability to go beyond a new imperial history framework to examine colony and metropole within an analytic framework: the actual connectivity and perceptions of colonialism reached far beyond any imperial container.

This volume may offer new perspectives and source material for scholars of transatlantic or transregional empires directly implicated in the slave trade or plantation slavery as well as historians of Atlantic slavery, abolition, commodities, and commerce. Yet one can imagine that for many scholars working in these fields, they may not have the language competencies for primary research in Central Europe; this book offers new empirical perspectives for these historians. To that end, the book is followed by a helpful bibliography, which is not always the case in collective volumes. This book also will be insightful for historians of Germany's later colonial project, which did not emerge from scratch in the late nineteenth century but was informed by longer-term received perceptions of race, slavery, and colonialism.

Megan Maruschke

**Günther Schulz/Mark Spoerer (Hrsg.): Integration und Desintegration Europas. Wirtschafts- und sozialhistorische Beiträge (=VSWG-Beiheft 244), Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2019, 230 S.**

The very brief introduction to this collective volume has been written together by

the outgoing and the incoming president of the Society for Social and Economic History. The chosen title may lead some readers on a false track: At least those expecting a discussion of current European integration and disintegration will be surprised by Philipp Rössner's excellent overview of economic governance tools developed since the fourteenth century across Europe or Yiannis Kokkinakis' discussion of the difficulties with state-building in Greece before 1914 and the role the financial sector played therein. Rössner builds on his enormous knowledge of both economic theories and practices to argue that Europe has developed a particular rich repertoire of interventions into the economic sector and many of them are often presented as relatively new while he can demonstrate that they are part of a much longer experimentation. Kokkinakis on the other hand starts with a single case study of the ambition in Crete to build a sovereign state and to merge later with Greece but his message is also rather general: the financial institutions play an often underestimated role when it comes to the compatibility of political entities.

The other papers are closer to each other and they circulate around the notion of infrastructure. Christian Henrich-Franke, Cornelius Neutsch, Laura Elsner, and Guido Thiemeyer look at a series of important figures who turned the building of such infrastructures towards border-crossing functions and include the regulation of the Rhine shipping in the early nineteenth as well as the ISDN-standard in the late twentieth century. Uwe Müller broadens the perspective to the Eastern part of Europe and asks for the proportions between national and transnational perspectives

under the impact of state-socialist coordination of infrastructures within the COMECON. Heike Knortz is interested in the border-transcending labour migration in Western Europe (and the effect the immigration of unskilled labour had on the need to develop innovative branches further); while Christian Marx focuses on the chemical industry and asks of Europeanization means above all better conditions for the expansion of multinational. Richard Vahrenkamp argues in his piece about the distribution of products over the long twentieth century that logistics play more and more a decisive role for integration, and finally, Hans-Peter Ullmann's key-note

to the underlying 27<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Society for Social and Economic History (April 2017 in Bonn) raises the question if different debt cultures are counterproductive or even dangerous to the continental integration. He remains conscious of the political implications of a notion such as debt culture (and in particular when relating it without further qualification to both states and national cultures). It can lead to inappropriate stereotypes (as demonstrated in the German public during the Greek debt crisis or in the strange division between an economical North and smooth South within the European Union).

Matthias Middell

## **Autorinnen und Autoren**

### **Markus Bierkoch**

M.A., Freie Universität Berlin  
bierkoch@zedat.fu-berlin.de

### **Ulf Engel**

Prof. Dr., Leipzig University  
uengel@uni-leipzig.de

### **Helmut Goerlich**

Prof. em. Dr. Dr. h.c., Universität Leipzig  
goerlich@uni-leipzig.de

### **Gabriela Goldin Marcovich**

Doctorante, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales  
gabriela.goldin@ehess.fr

### **Karena Kalmbach**

Associate Prof., Eindhoven University of Technology  
k.kalmbach@tue.nl

### **Megan Maruschke**

Dr., Leipzig University, Research Center Global Dynamics, SFB 1199  
megan.maruschke@uni-leipzig.de

### **Matthias Middell**

Prof. Dr., Leipzig University, Research Center Global Dynamics  
middell@uni-leipzig.de

### **Satoshi Mizutani**

Prof., Doshisha-Universität, Kyoto  
smizutan@mail.doshisha.ac.jp

**Robin Möser**

M.A., Leipzig University, Graduate School Global and Area Studies  
robin.moeser@gmx.net

**Umut Özsu**

Associate Professor, Carleton University, Ottawa  
umut.ozsu@carleton.ca

**Kiran Klaus Patel**

Prof. Dr., Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München  
patel@lmu.de

**Chris Saunders**

Prof. em., University of Capetown  
chris.saunders@uct.ac.za

**Timothy Scarnecchia**

Associate Professor, Department of History, Kent State University  
tscarnec@kent.edu]

**Anna-Mart van Wyk**

Prof. Dr., University of Johannesburg, Department of Politics and International  
Relations  
annamartvw@uj.ac.za

**Steffen Wöll**

Dr. phil., Universität Leipzig, Sonderforschungsbereich 1199  
steffen.woell@uni-leipzig.de

**Jan Zofka**

Dr. phil., Leibniz-Institut für Geschichte und Kultur des östlichen Europa (GWZO),  
Leipzig  
zofka@leibniz-gwzo.de