

describes the relationship between the state corporations and the private corporations, particularly those private corporations owned by the Oppenheimer family, which dominated the mining and manufacturing sectors in South Africa. One chapter in the book can be described as a social history, detailing the local level politics in the Vaal Triangle to the south of Johannesburg, including the town of Vanderbijl Park, named in homage to its creator. Iscor established some of its steel manufacturing plants in the region and its engineers moulded the white towns and black townships and hostels in accordance with their own vision of appropriate residential standards. The town of Sharpeville, which is famous as being the site of the Sharpeville Massacre of 1961, is situated in the Vaal Triangle, thus demonstrating the significance of this region, engineered by the state corporations, to the course of political struggle during the twentieth century.

The book is a timely intervention in South Africa's economic and political history. It details a defining period in the history of the country — one where large amounts of state spending encouraged economic and social development of a particular kind. But the idea that the developmental state was dismantled from the 1970s onwards avoids the use of other terms, such as neoliberalism, to explain the transformation of the period. Another potentially useful comparative context is that of the experience of countries across the African continent. In many African countries, the state-led developmental project had similarly ground to a halt by the 1980s, signalling the onset of austerity measures and political reform imposed by international monetary bodies.

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GUNS AND MONEY OF APARTHEID

Apartheid Guns and Money: A Tale of Profit.

By Hennie Van Vuuren.

London: Hurst Publishers, 2018. Pp. 448. £25.00, hardcover (ISBN: 9781787380974).

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Key words: South Africa, apartheid, global, sources, political, post-apartheid.

In 2018, the former Umkhonto we Sizwe cadre Barry Gilder published his first novel, *The List*, to widespread acclaim. *The List* is a South African iteration of what Richard Hofstadter famously called the 'paranoid style' in national politics. In the novel, Gilder imagines a 'deep state' beneath his country's democratic exterior — hidden machinations that are a holdover from the country's previous dispensation and that help to explain many of what Gilder sees as the post-1994 South African state's failings. The takeaway is that all is not what it seems. Hennie Van Vuuren's *Apartheid Guns and Money* is no less rich in character and conspiracy than Gilder's novel. Researched with the assistance of Michael Marchant, Anine Kriegler, and Murray Hunter, Van Vuuren's weighty tome comprehensively documents the hidden web of alliances that kept the apartheid government in weapons, and its agents awash in money, during the 1970s and 1980s. With his collaborators,

Van Vuuren compiles an enormous amount of material to yield a sobering and disturbing book, which is both an act of investigative journalism and of recuperative history, with a conspiracy theorist's acute awareness of what remains unknown.

The core of the study is the history and activities of Armscor, the apartheid government's state supported weapons manufacturing and procurement agency, which was founded during the late 1960s, just as international sanctions began to limit the state's abilities to source its armaments. Sanctions were coeval with wars in the frontline states of Angola, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique before the economic crises of the 1970s cooled the ardour of South Africa's African opponents. Weapons procurement was central to the South African government's national security strategy. Armscor and its agents were budgeted billions of rand and given tremendous leeway to do whatever they thought necessary to keep the country more than a step ahead of its foes. The organization was never transparent about what it did with the money and with whom it worked. Van Vuuren convincingly demonstrates the public funds that vanished during the ensuing decades in the name of state security, a point that he and his collaborators return to again and again, with an eye on the continuities into the post-apartheid period. The graft to come is never far from Van Vuuren's mind; references to the Thabo Mbeki government's infamous arms deal recur frequently. At times, the extent to which Van Vuuren wants to position Armscor's business dealings as both precedent and cognate to the enormous corruption associated with the post-1994 African National Congress (ANC) government — as well as with famously corrupt politicians farther afield, like the American president Donald Trump — is distractingly apparent.

There is a point to be made here about how the international arms trade continues to suck up public funds and exploit the darker aspects of both human nature and international competition. But continued references to the present detract a bit from the specificity of the enquiry, when that story deserves our full attention. Part of the reasons for Armscor's lack of transparency was the fact that its real business was not arms procurement, but rather sanctions busting, and in this effort it had no shortage of collaborators. Van Vuuren and his researchers pursued archival crumbs scattered across the globe to link the apartheid state to almost every major, and many minor, players in 1980s international relations. Surprising no one, apartheid's usual abettors either collaborated or happily looked the other way while Armscor tended its affairs. The United States, the United Kingdom, France, Israel, the military dictatorships in the Southern Cone of Latin America: they all played their part to keep the white supremacist state armed to the teeth, even as much of the population in supposed 'democracies' was increasingly and vocally opposed to apartheid. Van Vuuren pays special attention to the critical role played by smaller states, less conventionally associated with the maintenance of apartheid. The Belgians and especially the Swiss are exemplary here. Both Belgian and Swiss banks extended lines of credit to Armscor and its agents; these institutions also laundered South African money so that their governments could profess their innocence to those international bodies naïve enough to think that compliance with United Nation mandates meant actually complying. Van Vuuren documents this process in tremendous detail, naming individual traffickers and collaborators. As the kids say, he has the receipts.

That the conspiracy extended well beyond the usual suspects is the most edifying and disturbing aspect of the study, as well as perhaps its greatest contribution. Rather than

running parallel to the usual Cold War alliances, weapons manufacturers in fact played a very different game. During the 1980s, Armscor-affiliated buyers did business with the Soviet Union and its Eastern Bloc satellites, notwithstanding the communist world's support for the ANC's military in exile. South African arms buyers were active in Moscow and East Germany; the South African military had specialists on the ground doing business with and learning from their colleagues in Soviet Siberia. South Africans also did business with the USSR's communist rivals, the People's Republic of China (PRC). As the proxy war between South Africa and Cuba raged in Southern Angola during the mid-1980s, Armscor looked to the PRC to provide AK-47s and tens of thousands of rounds of both artillery and bullets for South Africa's local ally, UNITA.

The latter story will be of particular interest both to historians of South Africa and to those interested in the story of African governments' relationships with apartheid, which is a burgeoning area of inquiry. Both the Soviet Union and China recognized the public relations problem that doing business with South Africa entailed and went to great lengths to hide their involvement. Van Vuuren and his team trace Eastern Bloc and Chinese weapons from their ports of embarkation to seemingly random and distant locales that were intended to obscure their ultimate destinations in Southern Africa. Sometimes the weapons did not reach their intended recipients, but they often did. African countries were critical players in this process. Van Vuuren reveals how anti-communist states like Cote d'Ivoire and Zaire knowingly provided safe harbor and false paperwork to enable weapons to be shipped to South Africa without their origins being exposed. In this way, Chinese guns and bombs were shipped to Zaire, where they were relabelled as ploughs and bicycles and sent onward, ostensibly to Maputo, to be offloaded in Durban. To be sure, Mobutu was already a well-known bad actor when it came to the white-minority governed South African state, his avowed pan-Africanism notwithstanding. But he was not alone. The government of Gabon's Omar Bongo and Kenya's Daniel Arap Moi also provided cover and support to the South African military, to cite only two of the apartheid state's continental collaborators. Bongo's Gabon allowed a South African company to build and maintain an airstrip used by wide-bodied South African Defence Force (SADF) jets, while Moi's Kenya provided falsified end-user certificates for weapons that were in reality destined for South Africa and its region's multiple proxy wars.

It is impossible for a single review to consider each instance of international malfeasance addressed in *Apartheid Guns and Money's* hundreds of pages. And the study is not without its limits. Some case studies of individual bankers and their dealings with Armscor are so obsessively pursued that one is left wondering if such individuals were uniquely bad actors, and, counterintuitively, whether the conspiracy was therefore less widespread than the book would otherwise suggest. At times Van Vuuren seems to take apartheid agents' word for it, when there are surely elements of hyperbole, bravado and score-settling behind many startling claims. The book reads like an encyclopaedia of bad actors when a shorter, tighter, more breezily narrated study would have been more likely to gain a wider audience, both internationally and in South Africa itself, without detracting from its essential contributions.

I note this only because the book does deserve to be widely read. In an era when the South African government is synonymous with misbegotten tender contracts and graft, Van Vuuren reminds us that corruption has long been the business of the South African

state. For better or worse, today's ANC has made a quick study of the deals that kept money flowing through yesterday's National Party. Perhaps even more importantly, *Apartheid Guns and Money* is a useful reminder that when it comes to the circulation of weapons and money, international relations are seldom what they seem. The book's title playfully gestures at Warren Zevon's 1978 song 'Lawyers, Guns and Money', with its lyrics about a hard-drinking gambler in the Cold War's seedier spaces, where 'the shit has hit the fan'. During apartheid's Cold War, seediness and corruption extended from Pretoria, to Brussels, to Zurich, to Washington, Paris, Moscow, East Berlin, Beijing, Kinshasa, Libreville, and back to Durban. Those relations had very real implications for the repressed majority within South Africa, and those millions of Mozambicans, Angolans, and others caught in the crossfire. Armscor thrived in this network, gleefully wheeling and dealing, wallowing in the manure. The realities of the conspiracy were more widespread and even deadlier than fiction dares believe.

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FUGITIVE MODERNITIES IN WEST CENTRAL AFRICA

Fugitive Modernities: Kisama and the Politics of Freedom.

By Jessica A. Krug.

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Key words: Atlantic world, identity, diaspora, resistance.

In the early seventeenth century, Kisama emerged as a new identity and place for communities of fugitives fleeing the expansion of West Central African states and the violence of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Through a rigorous examination of identity formation, Jessica A. Krug unravels the social, political, and intellectual foundations of Kisama in present-day Angola and the idea of Kisama in South America, most notably in the Portuguese and Spanish colonies of Brazil and New Granada (present-day Colombia). Krug's premise, which she calls 'the Kisama meme', reflects how these fugitives established an identity based on a common language, warrior identities, the slave trade, and a refusal to organize their society around centralized authority. By following the idea of Kisama across the Atlantic, Krug is able to examine the underpinnings of maroon communities in the Americas.

Chapter One interrogates the central role that the local leader, Kafuxi Ambari, played in the emergence of Kisama identity despite the violent conflicts of the era. Krug argues that Kafuxi's victory in 1594 over an alliance of Portuguese, Ndongo, and Matamba forces attracted thousands of refugees into the geographic region associated with Kisama. The next chapter examines how violence and socio-political ruptures shaped how political constituencies formed and operated in these maroon communities in geographical Kisama in