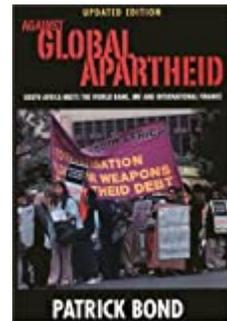


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in the Humanities & Social Sciences



Patrick Bond. *Against Global Apartheid: South Africa Meets the World Bank, IMF and International Finance.* Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2003. xxix + 326 pp. \$29.95 (paper), ISBN 978-1-919713-82-3.



Patrick Bond. *South Africa and Global Apartheid: Continental and International Policies and Politics.* Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2004. 45 pp. \$14.95 (paper), ISBN 978-91-7106-523-0.



Reviewed by Gerald Horne (Department of History, University of Houston)

Published on H-SAfrica (September, 2004)

Patrick Bond of the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg has developed a reputation as one of the more trenchant critics both of governments in Southern Africa—especially the African National Congress (ANC)-led regime in Pretoria and the ZANU-PF administration in Harare—and of international financial agencies, such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). In these works, he combines his two interests in a sweeping critique cum condemnation of both these regimes, along with these international agencies. The author is understandably upset with the difficulty that Southern African regimes have had in resisting the dictates and mandates of the IMF and World Bank.

His works are worth reading, but they contain a ma-

major flaw in that, despite his detailed critiques of these ruling parties and of Washington, similar consideration of the domestic opposition is conspicuously missing from his narratives, especially those on South Africa, which is disproportionately comprised of the affluent and conservative from the European minority. One would never know from his writings that not only do they continue to control the commanding heights of the economy in this region, but they also have at their disposal powerful political parties—for example the formation led by the conservative Tony Leon, whose only appearance in these pages comes when the author approvingly quotes him assailing ANC foreign policy. Thus, the naive reader could finish Bond's works believing that the problem in the region is that leaders are knaves—not that there is a power-

ful, obstructionist opposition with ties to the Washington that Bond so rightly despises.

At times, the author's irritation with the ANC, especially, seems to overcome his analysis. Thus, he cites President Thabo Mbeki's words, "the globalization of economy resulting among other things in rapid movements of huge volumes of capital across the globe, objectively also has the effect of limiting the possibility of states to take unilateral decisions" (*Against Global Apartheid*, p. viii). The author acknowledges the veracity of these words, but then proceeds to suggest that South Africa's economy would be radically different—but for the knavery of the ANC. He does this, though he writes subsequently, "virtually no single country has the reserves to withstand a co-ordinated attack by financial speculators" (p. 8). Yet his hostility to the ANC and Mbeki is such that when he and they make concrete proposals that all fair-minded observers would support—for example "rejuvenating the UN" by broadening the membership of the all-powerful Security Council—the author simply mentions this point then says a few paragraphs later that this potentially powerful demarche is "beyond my immediate scope to address" (p. 117). I suspect that one reason Mbeki has referred to Bond and his ilk as "ultraleft" is not necessarily because of his and their stiff opposition to many of their policies, but also because when Mbeki and the ANC come up with positive programs—such as reforming the UN—the author either ignores or dismisses the point, instead of helping to propel this initiative forward, which is indispensable for the future of international peace and security.

Thus, the author is critical of South Africa's performance at the now-heralded 1999 Seattle global trade meet, where Pretoria's delegate—who was the "only proponent amongst developing countries" supportive of including "labour, social and environmental" clauses in trade agreements—was thwarted (pp. 130-131). This is a complicated matter, as evidenced by Pretoria's difficulty in rallying its traditional allies to its banner. But for the author, it is just more evidence of how "misguided" and feckless the ANC is.

In the second volume under review, the author is scathing in his analysis of Pretoria's attempt to bring peace to war-torn Burundi. Yet, as so often happens in these pages, the author does not provide the reader with alternative proposals beyond debt cancellation—which, of course, is an issue for Paris and London, which go unmentioned, rather than Pretoria. Indeed, the author's obvious hostility toward the ANC and its allies makes the

reader rather skeptical of his overall arguments.

In *South Africa and Global Apartheid*, the author writes of "alienation and discontent ... obviously increasing" among the African majority in South Africa (p. 8). Yet because, throughout, the author neglects to mention the horrible reality of organized right-wing and ultra-right-wing forces imbedded amongst the European minority in that nation, he is unable to explain why this same African majority continues to vote heavily for ANC governments, for despite their apprehension or even critique of this organization, they recognize that there is a larger, more sinister foe: something that for whatever reason the author scandalously neglects.

In addition, though the author is justly critical of the various regimes in Washington, at times he paints a picture that, curiously, lets them off the hook. Thus, he writes in *Against Global Apartheid* that "many countries witnessed extraordinary social, civil and regional conflicts ... during the 1980s-90s" (p. 18). He then lists a number of African nations, including Angola. Later he writes of "violent regional conflicts," including Angola and Mozambique (where the opposition MNR was long in the pay of the global right-wing) (p. 39). Still later, he writes of "27 years of Kenneth Kaunda's nationalist misrule" in Zambia (p. 46). However, one would never know from this book that the Angolan conflict—akin to a number of the conflagrations he lists—was exacerbated and lengthened considerably by aid from U.S. imperialism. Thus, the war in Angola lasted until about 2002 with the fires being stoked by generous U.S. aid to UNITA. As for Zambia, this slighting reference to Kaunda elides the massive destabilization this nation suffered over decades because of Lusaka's selfless aid to the South Africa in which the author now resides. Hence, again, the unsuspecting reader might think that Angola's and Zambia's problems are wholly home-grown. Similarly, France does not figure at all in his analysis (nor does Britain), though Paris and London are still major players in the domestic economies and politics of Africa and feel that they deserve a privileged position in the continent's exploitation. This is all quite curious.

Like many authors, Bond writes blithely about "post-Cold War geopolitical fragility" (*Against Global Apartheid*, p. 19), which is proper, but he does not note, at all, the role of the former Soviet Union as something of a counterweight to U.S. imperialism (as in the case of Vietnam, for example); thus, he does not contemplate the blow to the hopes for the socialism, that he so ardently desires, by both the fall of the USSR and its blunders—

which, in the eyes of some, has harmed immeasurably the prospects for a socialist future. Thus, the author writes that the cry in the 1970s for a “New International Economic Order ... faded badly over the subsequent two decades,” but the reader is not given a hint as to why.

To be fair, the author does not appear to approve of any government on the planet—not just those in Southern Africa. Though apparently a Marxist and socialist, he lists Cuba as a representative of “Third World Nationalism,” though Havana for some decades has been in the forefront of shaping Marxist and socialist thought and praxis (*Against Global Apartheid*, p. 94). But this category is questionable, in any case, since the leaders of Russia (a nation that overthrew Havana’s patron, the former USSR) and of Nigeria (which harbors one of Africa’s more rapacious capitalist classes) are both listed with Castro and Cuba under this heading. Similarly, he avers that the regime of Bill Clinton and that of Gerhard Schroeder were “virtually indistinguishable from the policies of conservative predecessors” such as Reagan and Kohl (*Against Global Apartheid*, p. 118). Contesting this point would require a volume as long as the ones under review, but suffice it to say that this is something of an overstatement, which could mislead progressive forces both tactically and strategically if followed.

To his credit, the author is laudatory of “Global Justice Movements,” such as environmental and labor activism, etc. Yet, unless one is an anarcho-syndicalist, it is difficult to imagine the realization of some of Bond’s goals, such as “nixing” or liquidating the IMF and World Bank, without the holding of state power by progressive forces at some point. One gets the impression from Bond that marches and demonstrations and “Social Forums” will bring this about, though at best these are necessary—but not sufficient—preconditions.

Thus, I think, because of this preference for mass movements to bring change and his shunting aside regimes of all stripes, he does not engage sufficiently

with the 1998 proposal by the ANC-led alliance for a “Brasilia-Pretoria-Delhi-Beijing” alliance to challenge U.S. imperialism and its acolytes. There have been other discussions about a “Moscow-Delhi-Beijing” alliance and still others that the author does not note. Yet, as imperfect as it may be, ultimately it will require state power of some sort to confront, in the global arena, the state power in Washington that the author so ardently denounces.

One of the major points contemplated by the “Global Justice Movement” in the United States is the relative paucity of African-Americans in the ranks of the anti-corporate-led-globalization movement. I have long felt that one reason for this omission is this movement’s emphasis on stressing maintenance of U.S. sovereignty in the face of global agreements, whereas African-Americans—traditionally the most progressive sector in an otherwise moderate and conservative U.S. electorate—from their own experience have learned that they often make progress when U.S. sovereignty is circumscribed: witness, for example, the clamor today for international monitors for the November elections in fraud-ridden Florida or the process by which “racial” segregation retreated during the Cold War, not least because of global pressure. I can now add another factor to my explanation of why some African-Americans have steered clear of this movement, for if Bond’s words are indicative of the thinking in this movement—and I think they are—it will be quite difficult to sell African-Americans on an explanation of Southern Africa’s ills that puts African-led parties front and center and barely mentions the existence of reactionary parties led by the “white” minority.

Consequently, though these works contain valuable data, reading them is akin to watching a boxing match, while only scrutinizing one of the fighters. But, unfortunately, the ANC does have formidable foes at home, enemies with profound connections in Washington, New York and London. I hope that in his future work the highly prolific Professor Bond would tackle this fraught and important subject.

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Citation: Gerald Horne. Review of Bond, Patrick, *Against Global Apartheid: South Africa Meets the World Bank, IMF and International Finance* and Bond, Patrick, *South Africa and Global Apartheid: Continental and International Policies and Politics*. H-SAfrica, H-Net Reviews. September, 2004.

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