D ese's the South African government's enormeous popularity prove the success of the post-apartheid democratic state? In the April general elections, the ruling African National Congress (ANC) won roughly 70 per cent of the vote, as anticipated, and Mbeki's brilliant manipulation of the media has convinced the white-dominated opposition parties reduced their combined vote, with Tony Leon's Democratic Alliance taking 13 per cent. The old apartheid regime, in the shape of the renamed "New" National Party, won more than 20 per cent of the vote in South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, and today the ANC could maintain just 2 per cent in 2004, before folding themselves entirely into the ANC four months later.

What do left critics have to say, then? Progressive forces that did not field candidates for election also experienced the effects of the ANC juggernaut. The Landless People's Movement, for example, called for a vote boycott and saw the arrest of more than fifty of its members in the ghetto of Tembodihle, a few weeks in February–March 1996, June–September.

"It is absurd to record such labour as jobs." Asked about this definition, the main trade union was an official Labour Force Survey that new jobs had been created since 1994. His source was an official Labour Force Survey that "catch[ing] any fish, prawns, shells, wild animals or other food for sale or family food". About this definition, the main trade union official Zwelinkama Vavi said simply: "It is absurd to record such labour as jobs."

In addition, ANC election propaganda has been: "a level of macroeconomic stability not seen in the country for 40 years". In reality, there were three currency crashes over a period of a few weeks in February–March 1996, June–July 1998 and December 2001, ranging from 30 per cent to 50 per cent each, as the rand fell to R13.8 to the US dollar. Each crash led to interest rate increases that sapped growth and rewarded spec-ulators. These moments of macroeconomic instability were as dramatic as not very two centuries, including the September 1985 financial panic that split big business from the apartheid regime and paved the way for the reforms.

Thus, in July 2004, even the Economist Corporation Network conceded that the rand had recovered its strength to above R6.00 to the US dollar because "portfolio managers are putting their money into countries with high returns, and[South] Africa was among the highest. Portfolio investments accounted for a massive 24% of SA's gross domestic product, and 65% of the rand's trading took place offshore."

At that point, according to the Economist, South Africa's ranking among emerging market economies had the secret of "stability": South Africa "leads" in currency strength (1/25), and lowest inflation (3/25). Yet it lags in GDP growth (25/25); foreign exchange reserves (25/25); industrial production (21/25); and current account (20/25). As financial consultant Michael Power summarised South Africa's position: "Our real interest rates, cost of capital and unemployment is among the highest; our foreign direct investment inflow is among the lowest."

It is here that the core concession made by the ANC in the transition deal of the early 1990s is apparent: accommodating the desire of white businesses to escape the economic stagnation and declining profits born of a classical organic capitalist crisis, in the context of a sanctions-induced lager, and amplified by the rise in the 1970s-1980s of black militancy in workplaces and communities. The deal represented simply this: black nationalists got the state, while, thanks to economic liberalisation, white people and corporations could remove the bulk of their capital from the country and yet remain domiciled in South Africa with even more privileges. Trade, credit, cultural and sports sanctions ended; exchange controls were largely lifted; luxury imports flooded in; taxes were cut dramatically; and in the late 1980s white people's incomes rose by 15 per cent and the corporate pre-tax profit share soared back to the levels of the 1960s, associated with apartheid's heyday.

Poverty and Authoritarianism

Hence inequality has spiralled during ANC rule, as even state statistics show. Black South Africans suffered an income crash of 19 per cent from 1995 to 2000, with every indicator of social erosion further deepening in subsequent years. The ANC rebuttal is that when state spending is accounted for, the divergence is revered. Yet notwithstanding deepening poverty, the state raised water and electricity prices, to the point that, by 2002, they consumed 30 per cent of the income of households earning less than $70 per month. An estimated ten million people (out of a million people) have no water cut off, according to two national government surveys, and ten million were also victims of electricity disconnections, a shocking record in view of the ANC's 2000 local government election promises of "free basic services" including water and sanitation, electricity and other municipal services.

Defenders of the elite transition deal may claim that leftward pressure on the ANC emanates from the South African Constitution's celebrated socio-economic rights clauses. But the 1996 Constitution appears a bit tattered, partly because the judges are too frightened to take a stand against the state's neo-liberal policies, and partly because of an incident on 21 March 2004, Human Rights Day (anniversary of the infamous 1960 Sharpeville Massacre). Just before the opening of the Constitutional Court's beautiful new building in central Johannesburg at the site of the old Fort Prison, where Nelson Mandela had been incarcerated, the court and 65% of the rand's trading took place offshore."

South Africa's Left Critiques

Patrick Bond

A Democracy of Chameleons: Politics and Culture in the New Malawi

Englund, Harri (Ed.) ISBN 91-7106-499-0, 210pp. 220SEK (approx. 25 USD)

After thirty years of autocratic rule under "Life President" Kamuzu Banda, Malawians experienced a transition to multiparty democracy in 1994. A new constitution and several democratic institutions promised a new dawn in a country ravaged by poverty and injustice. This book presents original research on the economic, social, political and cultural contexts of the new era. The book engages with a culture of politics in order to expand the purview of critical analysis from the elite to the populace in its full diversity. A new generation of scholars, most of them from Malawi, cover virtually every issue causing debate in the New Malawi: poverty and hunger, the plight of civil servants, the role of the judiciary, political intolerance and have speech, popular music as a form of protest, clergy activism, voluntary associations and ethnic revival, responses to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and controversies over women's rights. Both chameleon-like leaders and the donors of Malawi's foreign aid come under critical scrutiny for supporting superficial democratization.

Anyone interested in politics and culture in sub-Saharan Africa will find this book an important source of insight and detailed analysis for a comparative understanding of Africa's democratization.
are rife; indeed, they are all far more prevalent than during apartheid, and life expectancy has decreased by a decade. Most South Africans are poor, ill and often suffering from the harmful effects of treating drug-resistant tuberculosis. The provision of adequate medical care, however, is now a human right by a constitutional provision, and the consequences of not providing such care are severe.

Another observer has stated that the South African government is not only failing in its responsibility to ensure the provision of adequate healthcare, but that it is actively preventing the provision of healthcare services to those who need them. This is evident from the high rates of unemployment and poverty, which are directly related to the lack of access to healthcare services.

The Spectre of Apartheid

Apartheid is still very much alive in South Africa, and its legacy continues to affect the lives of millions of South Africans. The legacy of apartheid is evident in the high levels of inequality and poverty, as well as the continued discrimination against black South Africans. The government has made efforts to address these issues, but progress has been slow and uneven.

The South African government has also been criticized for its role in the arms deal, which has been linked to the corruption and mismanagement of public funds. The arms deal has been criticized for its high cost, which is a burden on the South African economy, and for the potential for it to undermine the country's democracy.

Whose Pan-Africanism?

The idea of a single African Union is a long-standing one, but it has not been realized. The lack of unity among African states has been a major challenge to the development of a Pan-African identity. The history of colonialism, apartheid, and the Cold War has left a legacy of division and conflict.

The South African government has been criticized for its role in this history, and for its failure to address the challenges facing the continent. The government has also been criticized for its failure to provide adequate resources to support the development of a Pan-African identity.

Kwasi Wiredu and Beyond: The Text, Writing and Thought in Africa

Sanya Osha

Published May 2005; 240 pages; index

ISBN 2-86978-150-4

This study offers a comprehensive exploration of the work of Kwasi Wiredu, arguably Africa's leading philosopher. It not only provides an introduction to the richness of his thought but also the tensions by which it is traversed, both of which contribute to the inform that informs Wiredu's work.

Frances Meynell, University of California, Berkeley

A philosophical reflection that takes on one of the leading thinkers who has worked in African philosophy, with a focus on his work on decolonization in contemporary African systems of thought is well known. Wiredu advocates a re-examination of current African ethical formations in order to subvert unsavoury aspects of tribal cultures embedded in modern African thought, as well as deconstruct the unnecessary Western epistemologies to be found in African philosophical praxis. In this book Sanya Osha argues that Wiredu's apparent schematism falls short as a viable project and suggests that because of the very hybridity of postcoloniality, projects seek to retrieve the pre-postcolonial horizon bound to be marred at several levels. Language itself presents a major problem which Wiredu's thesis does not fully address. Additionally, the position of Wiredu's thought, whether of social and political issues, presents numerous problems of its own to Wiredu's project of conceptual decolonialisation. To buttress his argument, the author draws on postcolonial theory as advanced by figures such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Abula Inda and B执iontulje in other scholars.

Sanya Osha has a PhD in Philosophy and taught the discipline in Nigerian universities for several years. His main areas of research include African studies, literature, cultural studies and postcolonial theory. He is currently with the Centre for Civil Society, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Africa: 10,000 CFA; non-CFA zone: 20; Rest of the world: £14.95 / $24.95

For orders:

African Books Collective
Email: abch@africanbookscollective.com
Web: www.africanbookscollective.com

Rest of the world:

African Books Collective
Email: codersia@codersia.sn
Web: www.codersia.org

September / September 2005
genuinely democratic state, and to the degree that it is feasible, financed through cross-subsidisation by imposition of much higher prices for luxury consumption. Because the commodification of everything is still under way across Africa, de commodo- 
fication could form the basis of a unifying agenda for a broad social reform movement, if linked to the demand to “rescale” many political-economic responsibilities that are now handled by embryonic world-state institutions (including even UN agencies, presently under the influence of neo-liberal US and EU administrations). The de commodo-fication principle is already an enormous threat to imperial interests, as in, for example, the denial of private corporate monopolies based on “intellectual property”; resistance to biopiracy and the exclusion of genetically modified seeds from Af-
rica); the recapture of indigenous peo-
renationalisation of industries and utilities
monopolies based on “intellectual prop-
erty”; resistance to biopiracy and the exclu-
semeny, for example, the denial of private corporate

neoliberal US and EU administrations). The

decommod- ification principle is already an

Africa in transition. Anybody who wishes to understand the region is advised to read this book

From National Liberation to Democratic Renaissance in Southern Africa: Continuities and Disjunctures in the Discourse and Practices
Edited by Cheryl Hendricks and Lwazi Lushaba

“From National Liberation to Democratic Renaissance in Southern Africa broadly engages the region’s political and cultural economies, and, in particular, the ways in which the logics and the nature of the liberation movement imprints on post-liberation patterns of change and on continuing challenges. The authors draw on current discourses and theoretical interventions to revisit national liberation struggles and to address issues of identity, post-liberation state-building and democratisation. Case studies from Botswana, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimba-
dermine the ways in which the legacies and the nature of the liberation movement imprint on post-liberation patterns of change and on continuing challenges. The authors draw on current discourses and theoretical interventions to revisit national liberation struggles and to address issues of identity, post-liberation state-building and democratisation. Case studies from Botswana, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimba-

To make any progress, delinking from the

From National Liberation to Democratic Renaissance in Southern Africa: Continuities and Disjunctures in the Discourse and Practices
Edited by Cheryl Hendricks and Lwazi Lushaba

“From National Liberation to Democratic Renaissance in Southern Africa broadly engages the region’s political and cultural economies, and, in particular, the ways in which the logics and the nature of the liberation movement imprints on post-liberation patterns of change and on continuing challenges. The authors draw on current discourses and theoretical interventions to revisit national liberation struggles and to address issues of identity, post-liberation state-building and democratisation. Case studies from Botswana, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimba-

decommodification strategies with the call
to close the World Bank, IMF and WTO, and with rejection of the United Nations’
neoliberal functions and lubrication of US
imperialism. Beyond that, the challenge for Africa’s progressive forces, as ever, is to

Africa's progressive forces, as ever, is to

The non-reformist reform strategy
non-reformist reforms do not have a co-

neoliberalism in Africa will also pass—
largely because of progressive resistance,
but also because the elite strategy is
demonstrably unsustainable.

East Africa: In Search of National and Regional Renewal
Edited by Felicia Arudo Yieke

“East Africa: In Search of National and Regional Renewal presents a stimulating mix of historical and contemporary experiences at the heart of African nationalism and pan-African aspirations. It offers rich, critical and insightful scholarly readings of East African debates, practices and historiographies. While exploring the different dimensions of the challenges of renewal confronting the countries in the region, the authors take full cognisance of the changed contexts, conditions and forces shaping Africa today. The result is a lucid and highly accessible collection of

Notes
African Intellectuals:
Rethinking Politics, Language, Gender and Development
Edited by Thandika Mkandawire

In this thought-provoking overview of the history, fate and possible future roles of African intellectuals both within Africa and in the African Diaspora nearly half a century on from Independence, some of the continent’s most eminent thinkers discuss the issues at stake. Their starting point is the uniquely difficult circumstances confronting intellectuals: regimes intolerant of independent debate, economies in sharp decline, societies wracked by violent conflict, and official languages different from people’s mother tongues. Africa has experienced, compared with Asia or Latin America, much higher rates of emigration of its intelligentsia to North America and Europe, as well as frequent displacement from home countries to other parts of the continent.

African Intellectuals constitutes a valuable, because so rare, exploration of the complex interface between African intellectuals and society, state and politics in the context of fundamental new departures like the restoration of multi-party politics, new economic horizons like NEPAD, and a renewed awareness of the need for Pan African cooperation.

The Contributors: Beban Sammy Chumbow, Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Amina Mama, Ali A; Mazrui, Thandika Mkandawire, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Hannington Ochwada, Raymond Suttner, Paul Tiymbe Zeleza

Urban Africa:
Changing Contours of Survival in the City
Edited by Abdulmaliq Simone & Abdelghani Abouhani

This volume illustrates the complex and constantly social and human dynamics of African city making and human survival today. It explores how African urban dwellers have had to find the not only effective ways of pursuing their livelihoods and other aspirations within cities but also ways of managing their interactions with often more powerful economic and political interests that seek to impose particular uses of urban space.

Amidst very different socio-cultural contexts in Dakar, Addis Ababa, Cape Town, Kisangani, Jos, Zaria, Cairo, and Marrakech, the research in this volume focuses on the diverse ways Africans negotiate novel spatial practices, political-economic processes, and social relations that entangle place, identity and power in urban sites. While historically familiar patterns linking country side and city remain, these are constantly being reworked as African agency gives life to highly diverse urban formations which are further fashioned through the geographically uneven dynamics of globalisation that articulate with locally specific histories, cultural practices, and political contingencies.

The result is an emphasis in Africa on city making through fluid and rapidly changing institutional structures, informal agreements, and finding innovative ways to interweave various sectors and actors. Urban change, as a consequence, is not a process easily managed.

Liberal Democracy and Its Critics in Africa:
Political Dysfunction and the Struggle for Social Progress
Edited by Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo
Published 2005; 256 pages; ISBN: 2-86978-143-1

The institutional forms and process of democracy are spreading in Africa as dictatorial regimes have been forced to give way. But democratic form and democratic substance are two different things. Western derived institutional forms are neither necessarily the most appropriate nor the most practical in the current African context, and rooting democratic norms in African political cultures raises socio-cultural questions. This book draws on the experiences of particular African elections and countries to explore the continuing impact of police state apparatuses; the factors influencing voters’ attitudes and behaviour; the impact of incumbency on electoral competition; women’s participation; and the lack of choice in party programmes. The fundamental issue is whether democratic processes as currently practised in Africa are really making any difference.

For orders:
Africa
Publications and Dissemination
CODESRIA
Avenue Cheikh Anta Diop X Canal IV
BP 3304
Dakar, CP 18524, Senegal
Email: codesria@codesria.sn
www.codesria.org

South Africa
UNISA Press
P O Box 392, Pretoria 0003
South Africa
Email: mumii@unisa.ac.za
www.unisa.ac.za

Rest of the world
Zed Books Ltd,
7 Cynthia Street, London N1 9JF, UK
London, United Kingdom
Email: zed@zedbooks.demon.co.uk
www.zedbooks.co.uk