

BOOK REVIEWS

Winrow, Gareth M. *The Foreign Policy of the GDR in Africa*. Soviet and East European Studies no. 78. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

This book, based on the author's doctoral dissertation at the University of Manchester, is an extended case study that fits comfortably within the larger framework of isolated states. Deon J. Geldenhuys, a political scientist at the Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg, explored this matter in great detail.¹ The fact that the German Democratic Republic (GDR) no longer exists does not detract from the quality of Winrow's research nor from his findings.

Winrow, a member of the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Bogazici University in Istanbul, explores the East German Government's dealings with African states to determine not only how its African policy related to the overall Eastern bloc policy but also to that of its main rival, the Federal Republic of Germany. As in the case of Cuba, Africanists have been intrigued to discover whether, and to what extent, East Germany was the cat's-paw of the Soviet Union in Africa. Winrow examines this question to establish the extent to which the GDR was an autonomous actor in international politics. Why was Berlin in Africa anyway? Winrow indicates that some of the reason can be traced to a certain sense of contrition for the German past — which the GDR had to come to terms with, if only to denounce it — coupled with a humanistic urge (which characterizes at least the Marxist-Leninist doctrine) to assist newer, weaker states. At another level, the drive was for enhanced international legitimacy as a means to break through the cocoon of isolation. In this sense, the Geldenhuys tome is most helpful as a handbook of strategies that isolated nations have used to enhance their international legitimacy.

Winrow analyzes East Germany's *Afrikapolitik* not so much as an Africanist but as a political scientist. The nub of *Afrikapolitik* was the three-cornered relation among Berlin, Bonn, and Moscow. Winrow cogently argues that the Berlin-Moscow link was not a pure client-patron one if only because such an asymmetrical relationship would permit the client to swap patrons (as Egypt did when shifting from the Soviet Union to the United States). Although the author sees the relationship as modified clientage, he shows that Berlin should not be tarred with the surrogate or proxy brush, as a number of analysts have done. Rather Winrow offers another perspective: the GDR employed an affiliation strategy. Berlin was Moscow's junior partner with a mind and agenda all of its own, and Moscow saw to it that Berlin received economic rewards for its troubles.

That agenda, especially before the early 1970s, was to maximize its international recognition, especially among Third World states. That would enhance its sense of autonomy. The greater its autonomy, the greater its legitimacy, both internally (for the ruling Socialist Unity Party [SED]) and externally. This was not just symbolic; it had tangible benefits. Particularly was this the case in its ceaseless

jousting with the Federal Republic of Germany, which laid claim to speak for all Germans and which, through the widely recognized Hallstein Doctrine, attempted to punish those Third World states that had the effrontery to recognize the imposter Berlin regime. Bonn, in short, wanted German unification on its own terms and wanted the Soviets to keep the Berlin regime on a short leash. To the extent that the Bonn regime atoned for the sins of the Third Reich through reparations to Israel, for example, it could be regarded as the true successor regime. The GDR did not, as Geldenhuys points out (p. 424), even consider reparations to Israel until 1988.

East Germany, with the possible exception of Romania, served as the *doyen* of East European states in terms of Africa and Moscow's senior affiliate. Winrow examines with care the amount and types of material and non-material aid that the Berlin authorities were able to furnish to African states and liberation groups. His analysis of GDR-African relations fits within the larger world of the rivalry between Bonn and Berlin in Africa and is equally anchored within the Soviet-East European nexus. It is an exceptionally well written, lucidly argued work with meticulous documentation, and it deserves a wide audience among both Africanists and students of international politics. The only drawbacks are that the author listed only two interviews (one with a GDR official and one with a West German official), which seems inadequate, and that the bibliography is only a short, select one. That is offset by the rich lode of sources in the voluminous endnotes and a thorough, accurate index.

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Endnotes

1. See, Deon J. Geldenhuys, *Isolated States: A Comparative Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), especially pp. 52-56.

Adam, Heribert, and Kogila Moodley. *Democratizing Southern Africa: Challenges for Canadian Policy*. Occasional Paper No. 9. Ottawa: Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security, June 1992.

This impressive but irritating monograph is both comprehensive and incomplete, informed yet partisan. It was prepared by two of Canada's most astute yet embattled analysts of the sociology of South Africa. They draw optimism from the apparent "historic compromise" (pp. 130 and 371) of the last five years, "from formal Apartheid to informal stratification" (p. 130), which certainly stands in contrast to seemingly intractable stand-offs in comparable divides in, say, Israel and Northern Ireland. (p. 132)