few scholars, mainly in South Africa, have explored the interactions of expertise among Africans and Europeans in botany (for example, Elizabeth Green Musselman) and the natural history of emotion (for example, Robert Shanafelt). Jacobs and Bank recently edited a special issue of *Kronos: Southern African Histories* (41:1 [2015]) on ‘The Micro-Politics of Knowledge Production’, which considers research networks that cut across divides of race, class, gender, and nationality.

The most distinctive feature of Jacobs’s contribution to this literature is the attention she brings to the ecological dimensions of knowledge production. Jacobs’s exploration of this dynamic grows out of her previous study that traces three centuries of political-ecological transformations in the pastoral-agrarian economies of peoples in the Kalahari Thornfeld in the northwestern Cape (*Environment, Power and Injustice: A South African History*, 2003). The attention that Jacobs gives to political-ecological factors in shaping knowledge about birds is one of the most unusual and valuable features of *Birders of Africa*. Jacobs’s insights illuminate not only the history of ornithology in Africa, but also provide a sorely needed comparative perspective on the history of ornithology and related sciences in Europe and North America, where comparable studies tend to be more narrowly focused.

Jacobs’s *Birders of Africa: History of a Network* stands as a model for future scholars of science and technology studies, history, anthropology, political ecology, and animal studies, in Africa and beyond.

**GILLIAN FEELEY-HARNIK**

*University of Michigan*

---

**THE APARTHEID REGIME’S SEARCH FOR SURVIVAL**

*An African Volk: The Apartheid Regime and the Search for Survival.*

By Jamie Miller.


doi:10.1017/S0021853718000592

**Key Words:** South Africa, apartheid, politics, race.

This study by Jamie Miller was developed from his University of Cambridge dissertation. Its aim is to investigate the debates and conflicts in which South Africa’s ruling National Party (NP) engaged in their efforts to adapt to an evolving postcolonial world. To do so, Miller set out to place himself ‘in the shoes of South African policymakers, and understand the values, norms, historical experiences, and political imperatives that shaped their views of the world and informed the various programs they developed for the regime’s survival’ (ix).

Miller succeeds admirably in this task. The result is a fascinating study of the policy of détente developed by John Vorster, the South African Prime Minister between 1966 and 1978. Vorster was determined to break out of the apartheid state’s international isolation by reaching out to other African governments. He was confident that diplomacy could transform the hostility of other African nations to the apartheid state into acceptance,
thereby securing apartheid’s legitimacy. Success on that front would provide the NP with the time and space to bring its homeland policy for South Africa’s black majority to fruition, which would then ensure the survival of the Afrikaner people. In making his case to African leaders, Vorster emphasised the anticolonial history of the Afrikaner, and argued that the Afrikaner volk was part of Africa, and not a European entity.

To win over those African leaders, as well as South Africa’s black majority, Vorster realised that he had to smooth the rough edges of apartheid with tightly controlled domestic reforms. He took some petty measures in this direction, for example, by opening some parks and hotels to all races, and allowing the visiting New Zealand rugby team to include Maori players. But Vorster’s policies exacerbated the already existing deep divisions in the NP between the verkramptes (narrow-minded) and the verligte (enlightened) groups. In 1969 a small number of ultra-conservatives broke away to form a new political party, the Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP), but it was crushed in the 1970 election. However, the majority of verkramptes remained in the NP. The government was furthermore divided on Vorster’s outreach to Africa between the ‘doves’ and ‘hawks’. The ‘doves’, concentrated in the Bureau for State Security and the Department of Foreign Affairs, fully supported Vorster’s diplomacy. P. W. Botha, the short-tempered and vehemently anti-communist Minister of Defense and leader of the NP in the Cape Province, led the ‘hawks’. For him Vorster’s détente policy signified appeasement to the communist threat that faced South Africa, and he was convinced that military force should be used to force southern African states to submit to South Africa’s regional hegemony.

Diplomacy, combined with financial assistance, meant that Vorster initially achieved some success in meeting and forming ties with African leaders; he convinced Malawi’s government to open an embassy in Pretoria. However, détente received a serious setback in 1975 when South Africa, at the insistence of Botha, became involved in the Angolan civil war, an intervention that undermined the claim that the apartheid state could coexist peacefully with black Africa. But what finally shattered the détente policy was the Soweto uprising of June 1976, which bolstered the perception that apartheid was a symbol of Africa’s colonial past.

It is in explaining Vorster’s failure to bring about much needed domestic reform that An African Volk is open to some criticism. Miller argues that Vorster was unable to free himself from the millstone of the right wing of the NP, which operated under the leadership of A. P. Treurnicht. It is clear that Vorster feared that his policies would foster the growth of the HNP, but the claim that Treurnicht was Vorster’s bête noire is too simplistic. Leading verligte editors, such as Schalk Pienaar, Dirk Richard, and Wimpie de Klerk, in fact felt that Vorster’s relationship with Treurnicht was too close. Vorster, who held a high opinion of the idealism, abilities, and leadership potential of Treurnicht, was also insecure and ultra-sensitive to criticism, which made him receptive to flattery. Treurnicht, with his considerable charm bordering on sycophancy, exploited this weakness ruthlessly. As a result, Vorster trusted him as a loyal ally, and protected him against verligte criticism, such as in 1976, when he confronted Wimpie de Klerk, the editor of the influential Die Transvaler newspaper, for daring to publicly attack Treurnicht’s conservatism. Ultimately it was

not Treurnicht’s influence but, as Miller points out, Vorster’s inability to articulate a coherent reformist vision, and rally support on that basis, that stalled his reform initiative.

My misgivings about Miller’s analysis of Treurnicht’s relationship with Vorster is a minor point, and does not detract from the achievement of *An African Volk* as a significant and pathbreaking study of policymaking in South Africa during the 1960s and 1970s. Miller’s new insights on the workings of the inner circles of the NP make this book obligatory reading for those scholars and students with any interest in the history of the apartheid state.

F. A. MOUTON

*University of South Africa*

**SELLING APARTHEID**

*Selling Apartheid: South Africa’s Global Propaganda War.*

By Ron Nixon.


$24.00, paperback (ISBN 9780745399140).

doi:10.1017/S0021853718000609

**Key Words:** South Africa, apartheid, politics, international relations.

Ron Nixon’s new book, *Selling Apartheid*, tells the story of the apartheid regime’s efforts to deal with its image problem. For forty years, the regime used secret funding, hidden propaganda, subtle co-option, overt lies, blackmail, and violence to promote the idea that apartheid was not bad. From buying American newspapers outright and hiring expensive lobbying firms, to funding sham defenders in the public sphere and co-opting corporate America with promises of tee times with professional golfer Gary Player, the story is an exciting one.

Nixon, who writes for the *The New York Times*, tells it in rich detail and with all the verve one would expect from a journalist. What the book does particularly well is illuminate the breadth of connections between the regime and organisations outside South Africa. This is not merely a story of American Southern whites who see nostalgia in apartheid; it is one of British conservatives admiring South Africa’s rigid social hierarchies, of conflicting ideas about the social responsibility of business, and of progressive movements pushing divestment by American universities and states. It is also a story of contemporary relevance. Plenty of public figures today, from the Baltimore radio host Lester Kinsolving, to the recent British Prime Minister David Cameron, have taken part in South African junkets that were designed to enhance apartheid’s international image.

*Selling Apartheid* puts this story together better than any previous work. Current scholars are not likely to revisit this chapter of history, because it is one that has simply been told too many times before. From inside South Africa’s Department of Information, Eschel Rhoodie wrote books about South Africa’s propaganda campaign, as did his immediate subordinate, Les de Villiers. From outside, Mervyn Rees and Chris Day compiled the