

IN THIS ISSUE

In line with the journal's specific focus on current policy issues of local and regional relevance, this issue of the *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* offers you new insights on local, regional and continental matters from a variety of perspectives, with Zimbabwe and South Africa being the most prominent reference points.

While the battle over the succession of President Mugabe is in full swing, *Tyanai Masiya* and *Godfrey Maringira* analyse the factional rivalries inside ZANU-PF with reference to the use of heroism as qualifying element in the contestation. It reminds us of the symbolic meaning of patriotic history under liberation movements as governments. As the case of Zimbabwe illustrates with reference to five specific personal examples, opportunistic elements as well as factional constellations are more important than any factual evidence as regards the validity of the heroic status, which can change rapidly subject to shifts in power constellations. Hence the heroic aura as a means to enhance political profile and influence is as much as anything else a matter of circumstances. Such dynamics also play out in narratives accompanying the current positioning for the presidential candidates in SWAPO and the ANC. Their elections are decisive for the next terms in office for the State President in Namibia and South Africa respectively.

The analysis by *Pablo de Rezende Saturnino Braga* adds to the 'Brand South Africa' special focus of the journal's bumper issue No 1/17, by highlighting the perceived status of human rights in the country's foreign policy after *apartheid*. With Mandela's strong emphasis of a human rights oriented external policy, he argues, the country was associated with what he calls an origin myth. This awarded to the international relations of the post-*apartheid* era a moral high ground, which its subsequent policies guided by geopolitical realities and existing alliances did not match. At the end, *Realpolitik* guided a policy which in its international relations had no priority in promoting and protecting human rights but followed more pragmatic considerations as regards the positioning of the country in world affairs.

This also relates to some extent to the focus of the article by *Patrick Dzimiriri*. He documents the relevance of a compliance with an 'African Agenda', as stressed by Braga with regard to South Africa, with reference to the African responses to the humanitarian crisis caused by the government in Zimbabwe. Using the case of Operation *Murambatsvina* in mid-2005, he explores to what extent the Responsibility to Protect could or should have guided the position of other African states. As he suggests,

the absence of any determined immediate political signal by other African states contributed to the dimensions of the crisis unfolding. Neither the continental nor the regional body showed a political will to intervene for the sake of the people affected. He takes this as a sign that the notion of the Responsibility to Protect is not sufficiently internalised in the political culture and foreign policy of African states.

Angelo Dube and *Musavengana Machaya* present an interesting legal case in the Analyses and Reports section, in which South Africa's Constitutional Court for the first time reverted an earlier judgment. Whilst not the usual focus of articles in this journal, it allows us to follow a rather exceptional case. It documents that an independent judiciary can also revise its own previous court rulings to strengthen the rule of law.

The Debate Article by *Khwezi Mabasa* enters current hotly contested and controversially discussed matters of the student protests, which have partly paralysed campus life at South African universities over the past two years. Student activism, as the author stresses, is motivated by the goal to restructure what he categorises as the neo-colonial corporate university, which displays and reproduces the society's class, race and gender inequalities. Advocating a certain perspective by an activist and propagating a specific view taking sides, this article invites discussion and debate. We therefore would welcome any other views on the issue, which likely will remain topical for some time to come.

In contrast to the debate on current events, the Review Essay by *Roger Southall* engages with a particular incidence of Zimbabwe's *chimurenga* prior to Independence in 1978. It relates, however, to the timeless principled moral questions, if violence justifies counter violence and what to make of the ethics of a proclaimed 'just war'. Why should we expect from victims seeking to end their oppression more humanistic warfare than from those claiming Western civility but permanently violating human rights? As Southall concludes, "in a brutally unequal and unjust world, it may well be that the choice between black and white will all too often turn out to be shades of grey".

As many of the contributions to this and other issues of the *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* document, the either-or dichotomy is indeed a crude measurement, that in most cases contrasts with a reality rather in between. Such realities require sufficiently nuanced analyses and reflections. We trust that the contributions we publish are meeting such standards, though at times a more provocative and one-sided perspective can do no harm to stimulate further debates.

Henning Melber
Editor-in-chief