

geopolitischen Auseinandersetzungen. All dies fordert uns nicht nur auf, jene so skizzierte westliche (und seither und bis vor Kurzem stetig reproduzierte) Erfolgsgeschichte kritisch zu reflektieren, sondern auch deren Fragilität und ihre Umstrittenheit künftig noch ernster zu nehmen.

Der lesenswerte Band vereint durchweg profunde Beiträge, die zum Nachdenken anregen. Ob die Befunde im Einzelnen wirklich vollkommen neu sind, sei dahingestellt, aber in der Zusammenschau ergibt sich ein hellsichtiges und ungemein gegenwärtiges Panorama. Weiterführende Überlegungen dazu, welche genuin osteuropäischen Perspektiven kontrastiv oder bestätigend hinzugezogen hätten werden können, bleibt freilich oft nur angedeutet bis gänzlich offen – die Arbeiten von Ivan Krastev und anderen haben in dieser Hinsicht Aufschlussreiches und Ernüchterndes zutage gefördert. Da der Rezensent keineswegs Freund eines Containerdenkens, weder zwischen Ost- und Westdeutschland noch bezogen auf Europa ist, sei abschließend eine Vermutung zu künftigen Zugriffen erlaubt: Voraussichtlich werden bald andere Unterscheidungsmerkmale noch prägender werden (Peripherie/Zentrum bzw. Stadt/Land; Arrivierte vs. „Modernisierungsverlierer“ u. a.).

Paul S. Landau: *Spear: Mandela and the Revolutionaries*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 2022, 412 pp.

Reviewed by
Ulf Engel, Leipzig

In his latest monograph, the Washington DC-based historian Paul Stuart Landau offers a deep rereading of the period from March 1960 to mid-1964 in South African history, when the African National Congress (ANC) reassessed its non-violent anti-apartheid policies and decided to also embark on a course of armed liberation struggle. The vehicle for this armed insurrection was the military organization Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK, or IsiZulu and isiXhosa for “Spear of the Nation”). The militia started a campaign of sabotage in December 1961, including derailing freight trains, downing telephone lines, and blowing up post offices. The violent contestation of the apartheid regime soon led to the introduction of draconian laws, a militarization of the South African police, and the imprisonment of dozens of activists without trial. Between August 1962 and July 1963, the regime succeeded in capturing the movement’s leadership, and after the infamous Rivonia trial (October 1963–June 1964), the group around Nelson R. Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and Govan Mbeki was sentenced to long prison terms. The option of a widespread violent insurrection was off even before it had seriously started. A large-scale, coordinated guerrilla onslaught (the so-called Op-

eration Mayibuye), discussed in May 1963, never got off the ground because the MK high command did not reach a strategic consensus on this perspective.

Landau is a professor of history at the University of Maryland, College Park, MD, and a fellow of the History Centre of the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. His two previous books, *The Realm of the Word: Language, Gender, and Christianity in a Southern African Kingdom* (Heinemann, 1995) and *Popular Politics in the History of South Africa, 1400–1948* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), were both finalists for the US African Studies Association's Herskovits Prize for the best scholarly work on Africa published in English. *Spear: Mandela and the Revolutionaries* is published in Ohio University Press's significant New African Histories series, which was launched in 2004 and which is currently edited by Jean Allman (Washington University, St. Louis), Allen Isaacman (University of Minnesota), Derek R. Peterson (University of Michigan), and Carina Ray (Brandeis University).

Landau's prosaic text is the result of 12 years of research. Based on intensive multi-sited archival research and the evaluation of a treasure of almost 250 interviews (some of which conducted by the author of this book himself), Landau interrogates how violence became an option for and practice of the ANC in the early 1960s. In 12 lucidly narrated chronological chapters, Landau introduces the reader to the crisis of South African politics in 1960 as well as the person of Mandela and the role of the ANC Youth League as "a greenhouse of African liberatory nationalism, in conversation with anticolonialism and antiracism worldwide" (p. 17). The follow-

ing chapters discuss the declaration of a state of emergency (3 March 1960 – just a few days before the police massacre of unarmed protestors at Sharpeville, Transvaal, on 21 March), the subsequent criminalization of the ANC, and Mandela's effort to take command of the illegal ANC. In his failure to do so, Landau locates the genesis of the MK. In the following discussion, the author attempts to trace the cultural transfers that Mandela and his comrades-in-arms made in their discussion of revolutionary nationalism, communism, pan-Africanism, and anti-colonial resistance from the United States, the Caribbean, and other places of post-colonial struggles against colonialism. Landau then analyses how the MK was organized in practice across the country and how it essentially functioned. Already two-thirds into the book, the author moves on to examine what the 1962 double crisis of the Sabotage Act (which threatened harsh penalties for any political resistance, including 90 days detention without trial) and the imprisonment of Mandela (5 August 1962, described with lots of detail, pp. 180ff.) meant for the survival of the ANC and the MK. The remaining two chapters recall the defeat of the ANC and the MK through the Rivonia trial and its aftermath. On an important side note, a well-organized index helps to navigate actors and organizations. This ethnographic global history of the ANC's debate on taking up arms against the apartheid regime substantially adds not only to ongoing debates on the history of resistance against the white settler minority regime and the internal debates within both the ANC and the MK, but also to a deeper understanding of Mandela's personality and his position among his

peers and seniors. By linking the history of his rise to the top of the party to the development of militant positions and practices of the MK, Landau also offers comparative perspectives on the histories of other Southern African liberation movements and the constitutive role of violence in their evolution. (Of course, Zimbabwe and Robert G. Mugabe come to mind, but not just them.) Moreover, the book certainly also is a contribution to historicizing the god-like figure Mandela became after the end of apartheid – at least for those without a solid grounding in the history of the movement and the struggle. But first and foremost, Landau's book portrays the future president of South Africa firmly as “an African nationalist, Black Marxist” (p. 295) and a member of the South African Communist Party (SACP) (which Mandela later concealed). Indeed, this is not great news, but it is likely to make us critically rethink much of the post-1994 hagiographic writing about Mandela and the “Rainbow Nation”. Hence, this book also provides an opportunity to reconsider Mandela, the ANC-SACP alliance, and their past violent option in a decolonial perspective. This also may shed some more light on current developments in a country that today is facing huge challenges both in terms of leadership and social cohesion.

Robert Mayhew / Charles Withers
(eds.): **Geographies of Knowledge: Science, Scale, and Spatiality in the Nineteenth Century**, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020, 273 pp.

Reviewed by
Alessandro Stanziani, Paris

The main aim of this collective volume is to put science and scientific thought into an appropriate spatial, social, and intellectual context. Against general histories of science that present the evolution of science as a pure theoretical enterprise, possibly universal (one science for the whole world), the authors insist on the role local specificities and space play in the history of science. The editors and most of the authors continually (maybe a little bit too much!) refer to the works of David Livingstone, a historian and geographer who during the last 30 years emphasized the location of science and the spatial scales of knowledge. Following this same path, the book presents three main sections: local studies, national studies, and global studies. The first section includes the chapters on Malthus's theory of population (Robert Mayhew and Yvonne Sherratt) and on the physicist John Tindall and his entourage in Belfast (Diarmid Finnegan). The second section introduces the theories of Henry Hotze on race and religion (Mark Noll), then to the disputes over race and religion in the nineteenth-century USA (Ronald Number), and finally to the evolution of the structuralist theory of evolution in