

BOOK REVIEW

Ben Turok. *Beyond The Miracle, Development And Economy In South Africa: A Reader*. Fair Share, School of Government, University of Western Cape, South Africa. Pp. 130. R40.00

It is widely accepted that the peaceful transition to parliamentary democracy in South Africa was little short of a miracle. The successful outcome of a negotiated transfer of power to majority rule was unexpected in a country where a race war was a more likely prospect. Even more significant is that with the substantial victory in the second democratic election, we now see the consolidation of the ANC's achievement.

Attention now moves away from the purely political to the socioeconomic and the policies which the government will pursue in its quest for transformation of the economy and social relations in order to introduce the Better Life For All promised by the ANC.

This book provides a set of ideas and proposals around the theme Growth and Development. It argues that the polarisation of society and the concentration of economic and social power in an exclusive white elite cannot be overcome by conventional growth economics. It requires a holistic approach led by a developmental state in partnership with business, and inclusive of civil society organisations. This will provide the legitimacy and momentum for the establishment of a participatory democracy.

It is accepted that South Africa must observe the structures of sound macroeconomic discipline to reassure international investors and institutions. Domestic business also seeks continuing certainty that the government will protect the value of the Rand, maintain national reserves, reduce inflation and contain state consumption expenditure. But the book argues that such discipline needs to be accompanied by positive programmes to stimulate the economy, especially its overall productive capacity, and carefully selected social spending. This is also in line with current thinking in the World Bank.

Hence industrial policy should target more than the export sector, crucial as this

is. Overcoming widespread poverty and creating employment opportunities across the country, in urban and rural areas, requires an intensive effort driven by a decisive development perspective. This implies a massive human and social capital programme with the full participation of civil society organisations. There are important implications for Black Empowerment here, which are examined in a bold and direct manner in the book.

The author does not shirk other difficult questions around the transformation of South Africa from an apartheid society riddled with conflict to a people-centred and people-driven democratic system based on justice and equity.

The book is meant for the general reader but should be useful for policy makers and students in the broad area of development studies, politics and economics. It consists of short articles and is easy to read.

Anon.