Dear ABPR Reviewer,

I enclose a clipping of your review, which appeared in ABPR vol. XVII, no.4, 1991, p. 296.

Thank you for contributing to ABPR.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Jay
Deputy Editor

Africa Research Centre
The Sanctions Weapon: A Summary of the Debate over Sanctions against South Africa.
112 pp. R8.85 pap.

As the intertwined processes of negotiating the end to apartheid in South Africa and the gradual lifting of international economic sanctions continues to unfold, scholars surely will focus increasingly on the history of the sanctions debate and, most important, the success of economics sanctions as a viable tool of foreign policy. Unfortunately, this book, prepared at the request of the Black Caucus, a group of black representatives of US companies in South Africa, adds little to the voluminous amount of material already devoted to these topics.

The book is divided into five succinct chapters which summarize the background to sanctions (Chapter One), the sanctions debate (Chapter Two), the effects of sanctions (Chapter Three), the nature and impact of “selective” sanctions (Chapter Four), and future prospects (Chapter Five). The discussion of the sanctions debate, divided into “pro-comprehensive sanctions”, “anti-sanctions”, and “pro-selective sanctions” groups, is the most authoritative section of the book. Yet, problems ranging from the minor typographical error of referring to the “Free South Movement” (deleting the all-important “Africa”) to the more conceptually confusing practice of placing certain groups in several categories, detract from the overall presentation. The work is at its weakest when seeking to explore the “effects” of sanctions. The reader is constantly presented with a host of generalizations both supporting and disclaiming the significance of the impact of economic sanctions with little presentation of supporting data. In this regard, a significant handicap is an over-emphasis throughout the work on extensively summarizing the arguments of already published works (sometimes lasting several pages) rather than offering a more rigorous and systematic analysis of that presents new findings or looks at past research in a more unique fashion. As such, this book is only recommended for special collections devoted to South Africa.

Peter J. Schraeder
Department of Political Science
Loyola University
Chicago, Illinois, USA