

# The Changing International Order?



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This edition of *FOCUS*, the first of two editions dealing with the international order, is dedicated to the memory of Alexius Amtaika. Alex was a Research Fellow at the Helen Suzman Foundation. He had recently been appointed to the Mellon Chair at Rhodes University. All who knew Alex, whether as a colleague or a student, will attest to his great gifts as a teacher, as a scholar and as a man of great integrity. Alex's tragic death in a motorcar accident, in which his daughter was also killed, robs the South African political science community of a person who had accomplished so much and who still had so much to offer.

It was my great pleasure to teach Alex international relations at post graduate level, and I can still recall our extensive discussions around Hedley Bull's *Anarchical Society*, one of the seminal texts when thinking about the questions of international order. Subsequently, it fell to **Raphael de Kadt** to explore further aspects of international relations and political science generally with Alex.

We begin this edition of *FOCUS* with de Kadt's reflections on the **crisis facing the liberal democratic dispensation**. Commencing with its origins and evolution, this article documents the perils confronting liberal democracy; the fracturing of the liberal democratic consensus; the rise of "strong man" regimes, trade wars and the growth of protectionism; and geopolitical shifts and implications. A call to reflection and action is made on the part of those who value what de Kadt notes 'has been a political and economic dispensation that has facilitated greater human prosperity and wellbeing than any other in recorded history'.

In an interview with Tove van Lennep, a Helen Suzman Foundation Researcher, **Amitav Acharya** reflects on the internal crisis of the liberal world order and the advent of a new **"Multiplex World"** of multiple, crosscutting international orders. Although not all emerging hegemonies are committed to progressive values, multiplexity does not necessarily imply a decline in global justice and commitment to human rights. The liberal international order functioned as a club of the West, under which democracy was promoted selectively and human rights abuses were rife. The weakening of the Club may create more openings for weaker actors, state or non-state, to play a greater role in global governance.

**Tove van Lennep** reflects on the **European Migrant Crisis**. A data-based and historicised perspective of European migration shows that the "waves" of migrants referred to by politicians and the media during the European Migrant "Crisis" are neither unprecedented nor unmanageable. So why have refugees on rubber dinghies been transformed into a threat to one of the most powerful regions in the world? Attesting to the inevitability of human migration, this article explains the upsurge in European anti-immigrant sentiment, fashioned in the shadow of imperialism.

Finally, **Ronald Aronson** explores the unholy marriage of **Trump and his base** in this pioneering article. He argues, contrary to popular perception, that there was no white working-class landslide for Trump. Beneath Trump's victory lie deeper American realities, such as the force of evangelical religion and its recent amalgamation with the Republican Party and the unique right-wing politics this generates. And beneath even this lurk unresolved issues and persistent disorders of American life that date back to slavery.

We conclude with book reviews by **Graham Dominy** (on Richard Steyn's biography of *Louis Botha: A Man Apart*) and by **Eusebius McKaiser** (on Pieter Louis Myburgh's *Gangster State*).