

histories (p. 66) and how to interpret these histories that, while situated in the clan, also espouse a 'progressivist' message is not immediately obvious. Maddox suggests that what we witness here are 'Kongola's efforts to move beyond the dialectic between colonizer and colonized' (p. 3), indeed that he 'is living, writing, and performing more than a synthesis of colonized/colonizer, local/global, traditional/modern; he is attempting to erase the distinctions' (p. 11). These suggestions are intriguing, but what the erasure of such distinctions might mean and in what respect Kongola's work might exemplify their transcendence would benefit from more exploration and explanation than is provided here. Maddox also ascribes a very purposeful subjectivity to Kongola, who 'seeks' (pp. 17, 143) these erasures, subscribes to such a 'vision' of history and its purpose (p. 65) and dedicates himself to this 'project' (p. 136). Because these points are so central to the book's undertaking of exploring the practice of history in central Tanzania, it would have been valuable to see more of Maddox's reasoning, as well as his interviews and conversations with Kongola, which one assumes play an important evidentiary role.

While they seek to make connections to these larger themes in the book, chapters 5–8 are interesting also as stand-alone, thematically focused pieces. Chapter 5 on gender, drawing on Kongola's biographies of his wife and mother, chapter 6 on Christianity, and chapter 7 on chiefly power, legitimacy and the negotiation of indirect rule in Dodoma offer rich micro-historical discussions of important issues. They round off a book that presents much original and interesting material. As an analysis of the practice of local history in central Tanzania it tends towards the evocative; on the other hand, the book asks a series of provocative questions in an innovative way.

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THE MURDER OF A KENYAN MINISTER

doi:10.1017/S0021853707002678

The Risks of Knowledge: Investigations into the Death of the Hon. Minister John Robert Ouko in Kenya, 1990. By DAVID WILLIAM COHEN and E. S. ATIENO ODHIAMBO. Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 2005. Pp. xv + 344. \$59.95 (ISBN 0-8214-1597-2); \$26.95, paperback (ISBN 0-8214-1598-0).

KEY WORDS: Kenya, crime, law, politics/political, political culture, postcolonial.

On 30 January 1990, a Concorde jet chartered by the Kenyan government touched down at Washington's Dulles International Airport, carrying President Moi and a retinue of some eighty officials. The Kenyans had come to attend the National Prayer Breakfast meeting in Washington, but the administration of Papa Bush was then at loggerheads with the Moi regime over issues of economic mismanagement and human rights abuses: the White House refused to give the visit official status. Kenya's foreign minister, Robert Ouko, had warned Moi that he would be an unwelcome visitor in Washington. The advice was ignored.

At a press conference at the Holiday Inn, Moi was savaged by the Washington press pack. He stumbled, inarticulate and inchoate, unable to defend the abysmal record of his government. It was left to his suave foreign minister, Ouko, to repair the damage, smoothly redirecting attention to Kenya's positive contribution to international conservation policies and its favourable investment climate. Things got worse when Bush refused Moi's request for a meeting, instead sending

Secretary of State James Baker for a 'private' meeting at the Kenyans' hotel, where he chastized Moi for the corruption of his government. Meanwhile, Bush met with Ouko. Then, on the morning of the Prayer Breakfast, with Moi presiding, Bush steadfastly avoided recognizing the Kenyan president or shaking hands with him. The message was clear: the Americans would deal with Ouko, a man they could trust, but they would no longer deal with Moi. When the retinue arrived back in Nairobi on 4 February 1990, Kenyan security officials took away their foreign minister's passport.

These strange events are part of the background to the murder, in February 1992, of Robert Ouko. In telling the story of his death, Cohen and Odhiambo draw upon a rich array of official reports and journalistic investigations into the crime. With careful research and insightful presentation, Cohen and Odhiambo do not explicitly solve this 'who-dunnit', but they do tease out a multiplicity of themes about Kenya's recent political past. Revisiting some of the issues of collective memory, public history and the uses of the past in the construction of the national meta-narrative that they first broached in their pioneering study *Burying SM* (1992), the authors here focus more explicitly upon the political world of President Moi's regime in its most oppressive phase during the early 1990s. It is an unconventional history, drawing together the disparate threads of a story that still has no clear conclusion, but Cohen and Odhiambo's ruminations on the power of meaning and public imagination in the shaping of history are informative, scholarly and entertaining, and should give us all pause for thought.

Robert Ouko's life had many achievements, but they all now fall under the shadow of his political murder. As one of the country's leading administrators, he struggled to sustain the infrastructure of the East African Community until its collapse in the economic crises of the mid-1970s. By the early 1980s he was one of Africa's most distinguished foreign secretaries, highly regarded in the West as well as in his own continent. As a member of parliament for Kisumu, he earned admiration as an energetic politician who was deeply committed to the development of his region. Then, as Moi's regime fell foul of the Bretton Woods institutions in the late 1980s, Ouko increasingly focused upon the need to foster local development to protect his constituents from the cold chill of economic recession. To this end, he championed the revival of the molasses-processing plant in his constituency but ran into the morass of Kenya's then highly corrupted export-licensing regulations. Having been moved from foreign affairs to the industry portfolio in 1983, Ouko had gained valuable, and perhaps shocking, insight into the extent to which Kenya's domestic economy was being pillaged by its own government. Did his mounting frustration turn Ouko into a rebel, making him a danger to some of those closest to the president, notably Nicolas Biwott? This is the implication of Cohen and Odhiambo's assessment.

At the time of his death, by then restored to the Foreign Ministry, Ouko had compiled a lengthy dossier of the background to the molasses plant and the many obstructions that had prevented its revival from being profitably realized. This was all part of a deeper campaign against corruption with which Ouko had identified himself. The dossier has never been found, but in assembling the pieces of evidence surrounding the Ouko murder Cohen and Odhiambo convincingly suggest that the contents would certainly have been highly damaging to several persons close to Moi, and especially the minister for energy, Biwott. From the time of his trials on the presidential visit to Washington in February 1990, to his death two years later, Ouko had been locked in a political struggle with Biwott, Moi's right-hand man and long-time *confident*. Cohen and Odhiambo present Ouko and Biwott as stark alternatives, epitomizing the choices that confront the Kenyan public in deciding their political future.

It is 14 years now since Ouko was murdered, and no one has yet been prosecuted for the crime. Meanwhile, Nicolas Biwott remains an important figure in Kenya's domestic politics. A book such as this reminds us that there is still much work to be done in restoring democratic, accountable government to Kenya, and that history may yet have a role to play in that process.

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DEMOGRAPHIC CRISIS IN WESTERN UGANDA

doi:10.1017/S002185370700268X

Crisis and Decline in Bunyoro: Population and Environment in Western Uganda 1860–1955. By SHANE DOYLE. Oxford: The British Institute in Eastern Africa, in association with James Currey, 2006. Pp. xii + 276. £45 (ISBN 0-85255-432-6); £16.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-431-9).

KEY WORDS: Uganda, demography, environment, fertility, political ecology, population, state.

Shane Doyle contributes to a growing literature on African population history through an examination of the prolonged demographic decline in the East African kingdom of Bunyoro. Arguing that earlier explanations of demographic decline based solely on STDs are inadequate, Doyle directs attention towards the policies of states and the decisions of individuals. With careful detail, he demonstrates that malnutrition, child mortality due to malaria, and social causes of low fertility such as marital instability and social dislocation must also be considered. Doyle provides distinct chapters on political, economic and demographic change from the 1860s to the 1950s, so the book is not only an important contribution to historical demography and political ecology, but also an essential enrichment to scholarship on Bunyoro and colonial Uganda.

Doyle argues that Bunyoro's demographic crisis began before the arrival of long-distance traders, in conflicts between the centralizing state and clan-based centers of power: these local instabilities created the occasions for Ganda invasions of Bunyoro and Nyoro invasions of Buganda. Violence undermined fertility because people's flight from their homes exposed them to food insecurity and disease, population was lost to enslavement and, furthermore, the capture of thousands of Nyoro cattle diminished nutrition, through the loss both of milk and meat, and of manure for crops.

The colonial conquest of Bunyoro was the decisive factor in its decline. Doyle argues that Kabalega's ability to draw benefits for his kingdom from long-distance trade, and his skills as a guerrilla war commander led, paradoxically, to the almost complete depopulation of the kingdom. Hardly any people remained after the intentional use of famine as a weapon and the enslavement of Banyoro during the war. Early colonial taxation and forced labor lowered fertility because marriages were not sufficiently stable for people to bear enough children to replace the lost population, and children died in high numbers. According to Doyle, colonial rule had a greater negative impact in Bunyoro than elsewhere because of enduring colonial antipathy and because the Banyoro who succeeded in holding onto chiefships were extremely conservative and ultimately self-serving.

Poverty, malnutrition, undernutrition and endemic disease prolonged population decline. People emigrated to districts with more economic opportunity. Bunyoro's cattle economy never recovered from the transformation of the disease