of ethnic labels. Migrants from the Upper West to the mines and farms of the south discovered that they were 'northerners', and hastened to adopt ethnic identities and appropriate manners and customs to shield themselves from southern condescension. Nkrumah and the arrival of party politics created new sources of power and new goals, as local factions aligned themselves with patrons in Accra. Widening horizons brought home new ideas and materials for making history.

The Catholic education program produced a literary elite eager to re-evaluate their ethnic heritages and to argue about history and social structure not only with ethnographers of the north, such as Jack Goody, but with Lentz herself. Intellectuals now strive to create a collective history from local traditions and remnants of ethnography and to represent the result as a respectable element in a master narrative of West African history which will rescue them from perceived marginality (p. 264). Lentz says: 'The interweaving of pre-colonial and colonial models of belonging – ranging from clans and clan-alliances, first-comer/late-comer relations and territorial proximity as defined by earth-shrine parishes, chiefdoms, districts, and Catholic congregations – has created a complex system of available identifications that local actors mobilize in defining group membership and justifying collective action' (p. 271). Intellectuals debate the criteria to be used and the relative respectability of given labels, but ethnicity as a supposedly primordial and absolute identity, however it be defined, provides a basis for political claims and for resisting the claims of others (p. 3). All the labels that are or have been in use are controversial, with the effect that even the author shows some hesitation in applying them. 'No matter how ''primordial'', ethnic identities are contestable; redefinitions must invoke local affinities and histories and must respect popular ideas of what ''custom'' is supposed to be, yet must be expressed in terms that are intelligible nationally and internationally, compatible with accepted models of ''Ghanaian cultures''' (p. 255).

This book is based on research in Ghana, north and south, over a period of 15 years, and on extensive library research in several languages. Despite the complex and elusive realities of the situation she discusses, Lentz offers a readable narrative that constitutes an important contribution to the history and politics of the north, of the Lawra Confederacy (which is the main focus of the story) and of Ghana as a whole.

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## NEW INSIGHTS INTO MOZAMBIQUE'S POSTCOLONIAL HISTORY

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*Revolution, Counter-Revolution and Revisionism in Postcolonial Africa. The Case of Mozambique, 1975–1994*. By ALICE DINERMAN. London and New York: Routledge, 2006. Pp. xxiv + 394. £80 (ISBN 0-415-77017-3).

KEY WORDS: Mozambique, civil wars, memory, postcolonial.

Possibly Alice Dinerman's study on postcolonial Mozambique will not find a large readership, simply because there is only a rather expensive hardcopy edition of the book, which is based on her doctoral research in Namapa District, Nampula Province, northern Mozambique. This would be regrettable, since the book is of great interest not only to scholars of Mozambique, but also to those of postcolonial

Africa in general, post-conflict societies and the sociology of memory. The signing of the General Peace Accord in October 1992 finally ended the devastating 16-year armed conflict between the Frelimo government and Renamo, a rebel army once created by the white minority regime in Rhodesia to destabilize the socialist one-party regime dominated by the former. Concerning Renamo, Dinerman concludes that the rebel army was more devoted to wiping out Frelimo's postcolonial gains than to turning the dark side of the revolution, such as compulsory resettlement in communal villages to its own advantage. She claims that, at the time of the peace agreement there was already little ideological difference between the former belligerent parties, Frelimo and Renamo, as both had been committed to liberal democracy and a free-market economy. Many leading Frelimo people of the socialist period have become the primary beneficiaries of the new political and economic system. Consequently, Renamo's transformation from a cruel rebel army into a political party and Frelimo's ideological reorientation from soviet-style socialism to neo-liberalism produced a revisionist history that has purged the conflict of ideological considerations. However, according to Dinerman, the primary objective of what she calls mnemonic revisions that occurred in the 1990s was 'to minimize the government's own responsibility for engendering and aggravating the national trauma of dictatorship and war by shoehorning that responsibility into a single source: Frelimo's initial hostility to tradition and especially its animus toward chiefly rule' (p. 11). Dinerman's study tries to identify the domestic factors of the widespread opposition to the socialist Frelimo regime, especially in the rural areas, and explores the genealogy of official mnemonic practices and describes their different combinations and significations. In her discussion she includes the explanations for the country's armed conflict and Frelimo's ideological trajectory given by other foreign political analysts of Mozambique, whom she divides into Frelimo sympathizers and revisionists. The revisionist view represented by Geffrey, Cahen and Brito was a Left critique of Frelimo and the party's academic sympathizers who stressed external factors to explain the failure of Frelimo's socialist experiment and the reinstatement of chiefs, a political transformation to which Dinerman pays special attention. The revisionists focused on the impact of Renamo-led rural resistance to the state to explain the return to chieftaincy. Both the sympathizers and the revisionists shared the presumption that the revolutionary regime, at least initially, succeeded in removing traditional hierarchies from local power. Dinerman's study provides another view on this subject. Discussing the postcolonial state's relationship to chieftaincy, she postulates that in fact there was neither a radical break with Portuguese colonial practice in the 1970s nor a total reversal with regard to the socialist regime's policies in the post-conflict period in the 1990s, when legislation formally attributed a renewed role for traditional authorities in local governance. Her findings suggest that in the revolutionary period traditional authorities and the new government-appointed local hierarchies were constitutive of local government institutions. Frequently former chiefs occupied posts in the new hierarchies of popular power or the latter co-existed with royal rule by other means. Dinerman demonstrates that Frelimo's discourse has denied the state's own complicity in supporting and renewing the same 'traditional' leadership, institutions and practices it was publicly committed to replacing. Given this continuity in structures of authority during the socialist period, Dinerman claims that the 'retreat to tradition' in the early 1990s was not a radical departure from previous government practice, as Frelimo sympathizers and revisionists alike believed. It only publicly displayed longstanding practices as newly introduced. Therefore, she argues that there was only a 'myth of revolutionary rupture' that, during the revolutionary period. served to support the discourse of Frelimo's state

strength and, in the post-war period, became the key explanation for civil strife and anti-Frelimo sentiment in the rural areas. One function of this myth of revolutionary rupture in Mozambique has been to deny the historical responsibility of the regime for failed policies, forced villagization, and human rights violations that affected the majority of the population and, at the same time, to enable a memory discourse that absolved Renamo from its responsibility for its violent actions. Dinerman's approach of mnemonic narratives and her thesis of the myth of revolutionary rupture offer another perspective and new insights into Mozambique's postcolonial history and is a worthy contribution to the literature on postcolonial Mozambique.

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## A LABORATORY FOR THEORIES OF GENDER AND RACE IN ZIMBABWE

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*Surfacing Up. Psychiatry and Social Order in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1908–1968*. By LYNETTE A. JACKSON. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005. Pp. xiii + 230. $55 (ISBN 0-8014-4310-5); $24.95, paperback (ISBN 0-8014-8940-7).

KEY WORDS: Zimbabwe, colonial, gender, race/racism, social, state.

The back cover of Lynette Jackson's book says that she 'maintains that the asylum in Southern Rhodesia played a significant role in maintaining the colonial social order'. In fact she doesn't and it didn't. As she herself is at pains to emphasize, 'there was no "Great Confinement" in Southern Rhodesia' (p. 188). Ingutsheni asylum was 'born too small' (p. 54) and never grew large enough for its purpose. Its history could better be used to demonstrate the Rhodesian refusal to provide services to Africans than to show how African opposition was repressed. The one famous dissident whose incarceration in Ingutsheni Jackson does discuss – the independent church leader Matthew Zvimba – walked out of the institution the day after admission and was never returned there. The Rhodesian authorities were anxious that African lunatics should be treated as far as possible in their own communities. Jackson begins by demonstrating the ruthless use of force in the establishment of Rhodesian rule and there was enough direct force available during the period she discusses to make the indirect force of psychiatry unnecessary.

The back cover is on much sounder ground, however, when it claims that 'focussing on the history of the Ingutsheni Lunatic Asylum [she] explores the social, cultural and political history of the colony … Jackson uses Ingutsheni as a reference point'. This is precisely what she does do. Ingutsheni makes an admirable reference point for many reasons. It was one of the few state-run institutions in Southern Rhodesia which contained both black and white men and women. It formed a sort of laboratory for theories of gender and race. Jackson has a particularly perceptive chapter on the black women who were in Ingutsheni and the reasons why they were there. The extraordinary imperatives and irrationalities of racial discrimination are wonderfully illustrated in the context of the mad. White female lunatics had weekly hair-dressing and beautifying appointments, attention to appearance being essential to white female