

Reviews

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Elite Transition: from apartheid to neoliberalism in South Africa by
PATRICK BOND

London and Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, and Pietermaritzburg: University of
Natal Press, 2000. Pp. viii + 318. \$69.95/£50.00; \$22.50/£25.99 (pbk.).

This book contains more than simply a Marxist analysis of the South African transition, it also contains the reflections of a committed activist on the left of what happened to the South African revolution. It is a tale of disappointment. There is little here to cheer anyone still hoping for the radical transformation of South African society and the creation of an egalitarian dispensation on Marxist principles. All the author can manage at the conclusion of the book is the defiant hope that just as in the darkest days of the previous regime, it must have seemed impossible to anti-apartheid activists that their cause would triumph, but in the end they won, so too may those hoping for the creation of a socialist society. It is worth noting straight away that Bond does not belong to the school of thought on the left, which argues that almost nothing has changed in South Africa. He does not equate capitalism and apartheid, as was once the fashion on the South African left, and he does not subscribe to the notion that preserving capitalism was an essential part of the deal that the leaders of the African National Congress (ANC) were forced into signing up to before being permitted to share power in the government of the country. His view of why the South African revolution took what he sees as a wrong turn is slightly more subtle than that.

Bond focuses on the economic arguments that were used by the big corporations to persuade ANC leaders of the benefits of what he dubs ‘a social contract capitalism’ (p. 53). He attributes considerable influence to the scenario planning that was popular in the business community in the late 1980s, and argues that it led to a narrowing of the economic policy discourse. This is disappointing ammunition for criticising the naivety of the ANC leaders in believing that their adoption of a neo-liberal macro economic strategy would actually deliver the high economic growth rates that would reverse for the good of the country’s trend of falling living standards. Not merely did GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution, as the strategy the government launched in 1996 was named) fail to achieve its targets, but in the process, Bond argues, the most progressive aspects of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) were sacrificed to its strictures on public expenditure.

Bond discusses the growth of opposition to GEAR in the late 1990s, but without much optimism that populist criticisms of the strategy would bring about a fundamental change in economic policy. The author is at his most persuasive when discussing why particular aspects of the government’s

approach to economic policy have not worked and also in detailing the human cost of its economic failures. He is less convincing on the shape of alternatives to a decaying Washington consensus, aside from vague references to alliances of progressive forces on a global but not globalising basis. Rhetorical flourishes aside, Bond is in fact not very comfortable with political analysis. The elites he has in mind in discussing the transition are in essence economic elites. There is no thesis here, let alone analysis, of an overarching political deal between elites. The blurb on the book is very misleading in this respect. Its tone of optimism is also out of keeping with the book's contents. Bond himself has very little to say about the political context of economic policy. He either simply does not see or does not wish to address the relationship between the government's commitment to racial reconciliation, and its eschewing of radical schemes for redistribution of wealth.

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Intervening in Africa: superpower peacemaking in a troubled continent by HERMAN J. COHEN
Basingstoke: Macmillan, and New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. Pp. 268.
£45.00.

Herman J. Cohen served as the United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs during George Bush's presidency (1989–93). These were important times for Africa and the world, as we made the transition from Cold War to post-Cold War eras. In this work, Cohen focuses on seven African crises to discuss the roles that he and the US played in diplomacy and peacemaking. Cohen establishes from the outset that peacemaking became his primary concern *vis-à-vis* Africa, believing that economic development was in the capable hands of the IMF, World Bank and USAID. Operating under President Bush's two global priorities – cooperating with the Soviet Union to resolve regional problems and improving relations with Congress on foreign policy concerns – Cohen and his diplomatic team set out to resolve the long-standing conflicts in Ethiopia, the Sudan, Angola and Mozambique. During his four-year tenure, conflicts in Liberia, Rwanda and Somalia also erupted, requiring him to pursue immediate crisis management strategies, as opposed to the deliberate, step-by-step diplomacy of the four mature wars. The book is organised with each of these seven conflicts covered in its own chapter. An introductory chapter discusses policy priorities, principles and organisational styles, and the concluding chapter offers a critical retrospective.

Cohen writes in a style that presents complicated issues in accessible prose. The organisation of the book makes each chapter a useful case study for scholars and teachers alike. The book is not a historical retelling of Cohen's four years as assistant secretary, but a partial perspective from an American

decision-maker, and it does not claim to be any more than that. Indeed, the insights Cohen presents from within the US administration are the book's most rewarding sections. For example, he does a good job illustrating the domestic obstacle course that policy-makers on Africa had to contend with, ranging from human rights activists to the Cold War right wing, from Congressional humanitarian advocates to numerous African-related lobbying groups. Moreover, Cohen's book illustrates the gaps between lower-level officials with African expertise and the higher-level decision-makers who tend to be largely ignorant of African affairs, yet retain the real power within the administration. Cohen's discussion of Liberia is particularly revealing on these matters. These are elements of US African policy that are often missed by academics and critics, especially those from outside the US.

Cohen's discussion of the seven conflicts benefits greatly from each chapter's concluding post-mortem section. In these sections, Cohen reflects critically on what went right, what went wrong, and what could have been done differently. Such passages of critical retrospection are often missing in similar memoirs. Particularly rewarding is Cohen's comparison of Angola and Mozambique. He explores how mistakes made in Angola led to resumption of the conflict, and contrasts that with what was done right in Mozambique to avoid a similar outcome. Rather than merely blame the return to violence solely on UNITA's Savimbi, Cohen shows that the international diplomatic community was largely to blame for the deeply flawed peace resolution.

This book will also, however, do much to confirm the view that US policy towards Africa is characterised by arrogance and historical amnesia. Cohen's writing displays the occasional evidence of a patronising attitude. This tone is especially present in the section on Liberia, with its repeated references to Liberia and its leaders as 'little brothers' of the US, and Cohen's self-proclaimed role of 'restor[ing] order in the family' (p. 10). More troubling is Cohen's astonishingly uncritical view of US supremacy and righteousness. He repeatedly asserts the importance of US prestige and superpower status in the resolution of African conflicts, even in situations where US input was minimal (Mozambique, for example). One of the themes running throughout Cohen's book is that the US success was based on its moral authority and neutral status. I question the neutrality of a superpower during the Cold War, especially when that superpower was supporting corrupt African dictators (Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, Samuel Doe of Liberia), protecting apartheid South Africa and funding anti-government insurgents (UNITA in Angola).

Cohen's ability to claim moral authority and neutrality is clearly linked to his – and the US policy-making community's – historical amnesia. The US, we are expected to believe, has been motivated by a neutral desire to see economic development in Africa, despite the fact that the occasional external Cold War imperative got in the way. Surely, the fact that the US was implicated in the assassination of one democratically elected African leader (Patrice Lumumba of the Congo), and in the protection of numerous African dictators, should give one pause to think. Yet an awareness of American historical involvement in Africa (with the partial exception of Liberia) is painfully missing from this work. This absence is especially troubling when Cohen asserts that covert US involvement in Angola began in 1986. In fact,

US involvement in that country (and with UNITA) is far lengthier and more sordid than he allows. The criticism of arrogance and historical amnesia should be levelled far less at Cohen, however, than at the more senior policy-making officials. In Cohen's representation, these officials come off as painfully and dangerously ignorant of Africa, African history and US involvement in the continent.

These criticisms do not necessarily mean that this book is fatally flawed. Rather, they illustrate that this is a rich and rewarding text for many reasons. It gives the reader valuable insights into the minds and machinery of US policy-making. Some of the book's lessons may have been unintended, but it is a rewarding book nonetheless.

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Land and Society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia, from the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century by DONALD CRUMMEY
Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, and Oxford: James Currey, 2000. Pp. 373. £45.00.

While the political history of the medieval Christian state in highland Ethiopia is a well-developed field of study (based on pioneer work of, for example, Tadesse Tamrat and Merid Wolde Aregay), many related aspects of the country's past have stayed out of the limelight, notably the underlying economic and social developments. The present work by Donald Crummey on the history of land holdings, rights and transfers, and on taxation and tribute, makes a major contribution to the understanding of the socio-economic mechanisms, ideas and practices upon which the historic Ethiopian state was built and through which it reproduced itself. This short review can only highlight a few points and call for reading and using this innovative book, which is a crucial advance in the attempt to understand historical Ethiopia.

The book presents an account of the land grants – i.e. property documents – made by the successive kings to churches, monasteries and nobles, and uses this as the basis for an analysis of the social relations and economic production structure of historical Ethiopia. It yields a fascinating and thoroughly researched account (with many examples of actual grant texts) of the complexity of the land system of imperial Ethiopia and its social, economic and political ramifications. Crummey's study shows a very good command of the historical record and of the sources (most of them consulted in the churches and monasteries by the author and his assistants), and is very well documented in 96 pages of notes and references (p. 261f.). In addition, the book is engaging and well written, not a dull account of a bygone 'feudal' empire.

The focus of the account is the *gult* system. *Gult* essentially means, according to the author, 'all rights by groups or individuals to collect tribute' (p. 11),

and in Ethiopia this always went on the basis of land. On p. 5, Crummey sees *gult* as ‘an institution of land tenure that brought together producers and privileged, farmers and rulers’. He asserts, however, that the *origins* of the *gult* system cannot be traced. It is not something only of the post-1270 ‘Solomonic’ kingdom: the first land grants cited here go back to the era of Zagwe King Lalibela (around 1205–10, see p. 39). The author claims that no doubt *gult* has its roots in the Aksumite kingdom, but that it is not necessarily tied to conquest. I wonder if more could not be said on this matter.

Crummey uses the focus on the *gult* and the land granting process to partially rewrite Ethiopian political history, or at least to emphasise certain aspects of its dynamics. Thus, this political history gets an extra socio-economic dimension that more fully explains it. Good examples are his account of the royal power struggles in the sixteenth century, in the time of imperial contestant ZäDingil, who tried to redefine tributary rights (pp. 61–3), and the events in the time of Susenyos, who created havoc by his economically impactful conversion to Roman Catholicism and grants to the Portuguese. By revoking many previous royal grants to Orthodox churches and monasteries, he called up serious rebellion. Another vital episode is that of Mentewwab, the formidable eighteenth-century female royal ruler who was very active in making grants and forging power for her family. Several chapters are devoted to the Gondarine period (after 1632) in which a very large number of land grants were made in a short time-span (especially in the mid-1700s). This crucial period was also the period when Oromo leaders were integrated into the ruling elites, a topic on which Crummey calls for a more favourable understanding (pp. 74–5).

Chapter 6 is a detailed case study account of one individual from a noble background, Gälawdewos, and is located in this period as well. It discusses the relationship of *aläqannet* (an institution of local leadership with norms of property inheritance) with the manipulation of land rights and grants to maintain class privilege. The next chapter on the ‘Era of Princes’ (1769–1855) shows that the *gult* system was not dependent on the kingship to persist, but was exploited by provincial lords, leading to more resource extraction from the peasantry. Chapters 7 and 8 treat in more detail the *institutional* grants and the *private* transfers by the noble elites of their *gult* grants (e.g. through sale, gifts, formal wills or marriage settlements). The story of *gult* goes up to the reign of Menilik II (Chapter 9), who gave many grants in the core area of Ethiopia. But obviously the land grants (via *qäläd*) in the conquered South were rather different in nature because of conquest and the imposition of the *gäbbar* system.

What is not so apparent from the sources but emerges nevertheless (see p. 86) is the violence on which *gult* was based, also in the core areas of the state: in the last instance, it was an enforced order. Though tolerated and manipulated by the producers, it was occasionally also violently contested by them, especially if *rist* rights came under threat.

Throughout the whole period under discussion, the *gult* system therefore served as the crucial economic mechanism by which power, and claims to power, were established in the name of royalty. Indeed it is striking that in this period so full of crises, upheaval and destruction, the ideas of both the kingship and legitimacy of *gult* were maintained. These were not based only on pure

force, but also on a measure of consent among the wider population of producers (that retained mostly its *rist* rights and was rooted in the land through this). Interesting is that *gult* was also given to Muslims (pp. 52, 61), and to women, who claimed it on account of links with male relatives. There is, of course, no clear 'ethnic' discourse to be recognised in the story of land granting (p. 257). Nevertheless, the account demonstrates deep internal divisions and frequent violent contestation between regional groups and different class elements over power, resources and the nature of the Ethiopian polity. What is perhaps not entirely clear is why and on what authority certain people, *apart* from the king, could make original *gult* grants.

The theoretical perspective of the book is informed by notions of class and material relationships (pp. 6–7), i.e. exploring how relations between producers and people of power shape political relations and the exercise of power. But the presentation and analysis of the land grants make it clear that all cannot be reduced to these material relations. The ideology of royal power and Christian norms are time and again seen to be the crucial referents in the process of forging relationships and grounding claims to power. Crummey also makes the point that Ethiopia was not a 'manorial economy' like medieval Europe.

Chapter 10 concludes with the transforming relations between state, land granting and society under the impact of changing global relations (imperialism and foreign interference). In the twentieth century, *gult* underwent great changes, with Emperor Haile Selassie trying to gradually undermine the basis of the land-holding class and their *gult* rights. In 1966 *gult* was finally abolished, although rural antagonisms had already become too great.

This book has, as the author says, been 'long in gestation' (p. xiii). But the first harvest of this research project is bountiful. Apart from fascinating historical material, Crummey's work provides a contribution to a more sophisticated debate on the historical dynamics of Ethiopia. This inspiring book has paved the way for a deeper, sociologically informed, study of Ethiopian history and of the socio-economic factors underlying its course. Its insights also reflect upon contemporary issues of land use and property relations (briefly treated in Chapter 10): reading this book makes one ponder the disarray of present-day Ethiopia's rural population, resulting from twenty-five years of dispossession (all land is 'state land'), and being negated in their identity and dignity as land owners and producers, and without material gains to speak of. Crummey's book has disclosed a rich corpus of sources that can be fruitfully used for additional studies, and can also prompt other historians and social researchers to explore with respect the still existing oral traditions and written sources of Ethiopia, thereby paying homage to the continuity and identity of a remarkable people.

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**Expectations of Modernity: myths and meanings of urban life on the
Zambian Copperbelt** by JAMES FERGUSON

Berkeley & Los Angeles, CA, and London: University of California Press,
1999. Pp. 326. \$48.00/£33.50; \$18.95/£12.50 (pbk.).

Ferguson's book sets out to bring the rich anthropological literature of the Copperbelt up to date with two decades of economic decline. In so doing the book also offers a powerful commentary on modernism, anthropology and prospects for a post-modern conceptualisation of development.

Its starting point is a summary of his review (first set out in the *Journal of Southern African Studies* in 1990) of the historiography of migration and urbanisation from the onset of the colonial period. This systematically criticises any notion of a smooth progression from short-term, cyclical and mostly male migration through to permanent life-long urban settlement. Ferguson then vividly constructs a theory of social change in the context of economic decline that transcends simplistic distinctions between urban and rural, modern and traditional. The starting point for this is the observation that residents of the Copperbelt are forced to adopt cultural styles that can be classified along a spectrum from *localist* to *cosmopolitan*. The former emphasises commonality with rural kin, while the latter is a 'slap in the face' to such alliances. The book movingly follows the experience of a sample of mineworkers retrenched in Kitwe in the mid-1980s. Having adopted a more *cosmopolitan* style when the Copperbelt was booming, many were forced to attempt retirement to rural areas and therefore to rebuild localist stylistic capability – mostly unsuccessfully. More generally, the argument reasserts the link between cultural performance, social relations and livelihood options. Ambiguity or 'noise' emerges as an important theme: as a strategy for keeping options open, as a symptom of actors' failure to cope with change, and as a source of confusion for anthropologists hoping to unearth logical local explanations for their behaviour!

The argument is also developed in relation to gender and marriage. Tension between husband and wife is linked to their distinct kinship loyalties, demanding conflicting stylistic performances. The myth of harmonious and stable monogamy is criticised for papering over the cracks of frequently violent domestic politics. The argument is richly illustrated (on the role of witchcraft, for example, though less so on revivalist religion and women's perspectives) as well as being carefully linked to relevant anthropological theory.

The final part of the book assesses the significance of the argument to wider debates about development. The collapsed hopes and poverty of an area once thought of as at the vanguard of Africa's industrial development belies any simplistic faith in the benign effects of globalisation. But the book avoids lapsing into a universal critique of all developmentalism: arguing instead for action based on a more complex and nuanced understanding of local as well as national and global actors. As a contribution simultaneously to African studies, development studies and anthropology – and hence as a worthy urban

counterpart to Moore and Vaughan's rural perspective on Northern Zambia – this is a book that deserves the highest possible praise and readership.

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Race and Ethnicity in East Africa by PETER G. FORSTER, MICHAEL HITCHCOCK and FRANCIS F. LYIMO
London: Macmillan, and New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. Pp. 192.
\$65.00.

As indicated in the preface, this book is a text that was written as part of the British Council Academic Link between the departments of sociology at the universities of Dar Es Salaam and Hull. It appears to be intended for both African and British students. East Africa is defined to include Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. As would be expected of a textbook, Africanist scholars will find little or nothing that is new in this analysis, although the authors state that they have attempted to develop an original synthesis of teaching and research materials.

The book strongly emphasises placing race and ethnicity in East Africa in the broader African and global contexts; in fact, about 40 per cent of its pages are devoted to these contexts. Theories of race and ethnicity with general application and theories of African and diaspora nationalism are discussed in some detail, along with human origins in Africa and race and ethnicity in South Africa, Rhodesia-Zimbabwe and the former Portuguese and French territories. The book does not hang together as well as it might, because of the amount of space devoted to these contextual topics and the relatively limited extent to which they are integrated with the primary focus of the analysis.

The discussion of race and ethnicity in East Africa itself is found in chapters focusing on Europeans, Asians, ethnicity among Africans, the relationship of religion to race and ethnicity, and the effects of tourism on ethnicity. There is little that is new in the authors' presentation of the first three of these topics, although the chapter on African ethnicity wisely states that an attempt to return to anything like pre-colonial ethnic boundaries would present insurmountable difficulties and might well lead to warfare (p. 94). The chapters on religion and on tourism are by far the most original ones in the book. Islam and Christianity are shown to provide cleavages that crosscut race and ethnicity, with the two types of cleavage weakening one another to a certain extent. Hinduism, of course, is practised only by Indians in East Africa. Since Hitchcock is a professor of tourism, one can assume that he was primarily responsible for the book's relatively brief treatment of this topic. He emphasises the ways in which tourism has stimulated the expression of ethnic identities on Zanzibar and among the Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania, and suggests that 'the interests shown in [ethnic] minorities by tourists may arouse positive views of identity, persuading majority populations that minority cultures are worthwhile, even desirable' (p. 149).

Teachers of the sociology, politics or history of East Africa may find this book useful as a supplementary text in their undergraduate courses, although it would probably be more useful as a primary text if it focused more intensively on East Africa or expanded its focus to all of sub-Saharan Africa.

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Queer Nations: marginal sexualities in the Maghreb by JARROD HAYES

Chicago, IL, and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000. Pp. 307. \$50.00; US\$20.00 (pbk.).

In his analysis of Maghrebian literature in French, Hayes seeks to show how Maghrebi writers have challenged official national history through gendered allegories. He reveals how the authors have used portrayals of marginal sexualities, transgressions of sexual taboos and gender insubordination to question the dominant discourse of post-independence elites and offer a more inclusive version of national identity and origin.

As a literary critic, Hayes deconstructs Maghrebi texts, not so much to divine the true intentions of authors as to reveal how they conflict with norms of patriarchy and compulsory heterosexuality. His aim is to ‘queer’ North Africa, i.e. to disclose the sexual diversity of the nation and reveal its shameful past, thereby disrupting narratives of national origins. He shows how Maghrebi novels conjure up queer ghosts and sexual skeletons in the closet that ‘haunt’ society today. One of his main arguments is that by revealing sexual secrets, Maghrebi literature also unveils political secrets that leaders have tried to exorcise. Private acts in novels serve as allegories for what happens in the public realm. In Hayes’ view, ‘Postindependence Maghrebian writers use revelations of sexual transgressions to “mess up” the political projects of national elites.’

Hayes begins *Queer Nations* with a discussion of homosexual sexual tourism in Western literature on the Orient. He goes on to illustrate how Tahar Ben Jelloun’s character Moha expresses a counter-narrative of Islam and struggles against the sexism of post-independence ruling elites. Rachid Boudjedra’s characters are seen as indicting the homophobic patriarchy of the post-colonial system. Similarly, Tahar Djaout’s unveiling of homosexuality is said to function politically as a struggle against power elites. Mohamed Dib is seen as portraying the Algerian Revolution as a sexual revolution in which the transgression and dangerous sexuality of women challenge the traditional conception of family and couple.

Hayes provides a compelling re-reading of Kateb Yacine’s *Nedjma*, which attacks Algeria’s ‘cult of origins’ by allegorising the female character Nedjma. The book portrays Algeria as a child of *métissage*, a nation whose origins are uncertain, multiple and complex. Its identity, shaped by a series of invaders, is inextricably tied to the identity of Maghrebi neighbours and Mediterranean

countries. Hayes also sees Ben Jelloun's *L'enfant de sable* and *La nuit sacrée* as national allegories that, by describing how a girl raised as a boy finally becomes a woman, tie the search for gendered identity to the search for national identity. They also highlight how women have been marginalised in national identity.

In several chapters addressing the 'feminist menace' as portrayed in Maghrebi literature, Hayes points out how Assia Djébar's books uncover the gendered violence against women that is an inherent component of national history. Djébar evokes the resistance of women to oppression. In her *Ombre sultane*, Maghrebi women are portrayed as resisting the institutionalised violence of marriage and compulsory heterosexuality. Hayes also analyses childhood narratives in Maghrebi literature.

The book has a number of poorly defined neologisms, and most chapters lack a clear introduction and conclusion that tie the discussion to the broader arguments in the book. The minutiae of Hayes' textual analysis and the frequent references to literary theory make the book less appealing to a general audience. Hayes' penchant for speculation and generalisation can be off-putting at times. Moreover, one does not need to read literary allegories to come up with attacks on official national norms: many Maghrebi social scientists and oppositional elites have for decades been directly challenging exclusionary national history and identity. Despite these limitations, *Queer Nations* is a brash, thought-provoking, and original work. Through representations of marginal sexualities, Hayes reminds the reader of the complexity of Maghrebi society and its private resistance to the normativity imposed by post-independence elites.

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Identity Transformation and Identity Politics Under Adjustment in Nigeria edited by ATTAHIRU JEGA

Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2000. Pp. 235. SEK 220 (pbk.).

A radical political economy framework of analysis has been used over the years to intervene in different areas of research in Nigeria, to provide not only an alternative approach, but also what those working with this framework believe to be an all encompassing theoretical framework. This edited volume seeks to provide a new, and admittedly refreshing, approach to the study of identity-based politics in Nigeria, particularly under the democratisation process supervened by structural adjustment; it is the first serious attempt to comprehend the dynamics of the creation, recreation and reinforcement of centrifugal politics, especially as these are linked to patterns and processes of accumulation (p. 12).

The editor, Jega, sets out, in a lucid manner, the rationale for the volume in the general introduction and the second chapter. He points out that three major factors are implicated in the character and logic of the post-colonial

state in Nigeria: its colonial origin; the clashing and near irreconcilable rivalries among the elite of the different and differing ethnic, regional and religious groups; and prolonged martial authoritarianism (p. 27). These major factors are taken to have defined and/or transformed the role of the state in myriad sectors, leading to the decomposition of the state and the resurgence of identity politics in state-civil society relations, in the period of economic crisis and structural adjustment.

Ibrahim takes on the issue of the transformation of ethno-regional identities, offering an interesting perspective to the understanding of what turns out to be, uncharacteristically, a simple rendering of the ethnic configurations. Ibrahim and Mu'azzam's chapter on identity attests to the 'growing disparity of wealth and opportunities', which with the introduction of SAP pushed people into 'adopting new religious values and orientation' (p. 80). Mustapha, Adesina and Momoh, in their chapters on minority identities, labour identity and youth culture (*Area Boys*) respectively, are quite rigorous in their treatment of the transformation (Adesina on his part questions the idea of 'transformation') of these identities under the SAP. Save for the distracting attacks on postmodernism, Adesina makes an important point about the primacy of the 'politics of annulment' (of the 12 June 1993 presidential election) in the process of identity politics in post-1993 Nigeria. Pereira's chapter on the National Council of Women Societies (NCWS) and the state focuses on the construction of civic womanhood *vis-à-vis* nationhood, but fails to improve our understanding of the dynamics of the construction of womanhood under the SAP regime. How did SAP condition and define the version of womanhood that was privileged by NCWS in these years? Unlike Momoh's somewhat sympathetic analysis of *Area Boys* in Lagos, Ya'u's chapter on the *Yandaba* of Kano emphasises the transformation of adolescent groups into 'violent gangs of disillusioned youth who are ready to kill in order to survive' (p. 178). Said Adejumobi's exhaustive analysis of the trajectory of the student's movement in the SAP decade (1986–96) 'within the context ... (of) social and class contradictions and inequalities provoked or accentuated by SAP' is in the last chapter. This timely volume is interesting and illuminating, particularly because it stimulates critical reconsideration of the dynamics of identity politics against the backdrop of the character of the state and the economic conditions which reproduced this politics. It is a compelling read for anyone interested in understanding the current crisis in which the African post-colony is engulfed.

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Exile and African Literature edited by ELDRED DUROSIMI JONES and MARJORIE JONES

Oxford: James Currey, 2000. Pp. 152. £11.95 (pbk.).

The latest edition of *African Literature Today* follows the usual practice of the publication in collating critical essays around a particular theme, in this case that of exile. As Eldred Jones makes clear in his brief introduction, exile is a condition that has had depressing historical connection with the producers of African literature, all too many of whom have suffered from that form of enforced estrangement which Ngugi has dubbed 'exclosure'. The burgeoning critical discussion of 'migrancy' and exile in the context of postcolonial writing relates, of course, to the fact that so much of what gets placed under this label is produced by authors who are voluntary or involuntary expatriates. Despite this, there is a tendency for 'exile' to slip from being the name for a particular circumstance under which lives are lived and, perhaps, literature produced, and to become instead a much more metaphorical, critically flabby term.

Annie Gagiano's first essay in the volume, for example, quite deliberately multiplies the meanings of 'exile' as a way in which to examine the multifaceted writing of Dambudzo Marechera, discussing the theme from seven angles. This means, at the most material level, Marechera's presentation of the social dimensions of exiled communities, and at the most metaphysical, something like an essential homelessness: exile as the ontological condition of human being. This metaphorical employment of exile is also what licenses the approaches to Catherine Acholonu and John Munonye made by Ogede and Akwanya respectively. Ogede suggests that: 'the moral and cultural confusion as well as the socio-economic anguish suffered by people in contemporary Nigeria pushes them to a sense of utter homelessness [and hence] is tantamount to the affliction of exile' (pp. 90–1). This is a powerful argument, but there are moments in his essay and some of the others in the volume where it seems that the meaning of the term exile has been spread a little thin and that it has rather lost its sociological specificity.

Not that this is uniformly the case. Nnadozie Inyama's absorbing piece on Ayi Kwei Armah's fiction is excellent, staking out carefully what 'self-exile' might mean in terms of alienation from a local group, and drawing from Armah a point made some years ago by the Nigerian critic Omafume Onoge, that exile may be *limiting* in what it enables the subject to see and conceive. This seems an important balancing idea, as many of the other essays in the collection follow much more closely the post-Rushdie, post-Okri consensus that exile is a condition peculiarly linked to the writer as 'visionary' or 'seer' (terms Ogwude uses in her piece on Bessie Head), or that it may be a 'mentally productive' state (as Jones suggests in the introduction).

My hesitations over the rather rarefied way in which 'exile' is sometimes discussed in literary criticism, however, do not detract from the journal's strongest point, which is its provision of a forum for the critical discussion of

African authors and work, many of whom have received too little attention elsewhere. If the figures presented in the main essays (which also include Emecheta, Brutus, Oket p'Bitek) are in this case largely familiar ones, the reviews are exemplary in focusing on and giving attention to material primarily published from within Africa. This space, perhaps as much as the critical material itself, seems to me to be one of *African Literature Today's* continuing achievements in this, the penultimate issue before the retirement of Eldred Jones as editor.

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Green Land, Brown Land, Black Land: an environmental history of Africa, 1800–1990 by JAMES C. McCANN
Oxford: James Currey, 1999. Pp. 201. £12.95 (pbk.).

The history of human-nature interactions in Africa has been widely written about, but *Green Land ...* is a welcome addition to the literature. Based on primary and secondary sources and McCann's own field experiences in Africa, *Green Land ...* provides a thoughtful and penetrating analysis of the history and changing nature of Africa's environmental landscapes over the last two centuries.

Structurally, the text is divided into two parts. Part I (chapters 1–3) presents an overview of Africa's environmental characteristics and an analysis of its geo-political and environmental history. Part II (chapters 4–7 and epilogue) uses case studies from sub-Saharan Africa to highlight natural resource degradation, desertification and the role of human agency in these processes. Each chapter contains notes for further reading and there is an extensive bibliography. Illustrative figures, maps and photos are used effectively throughout, making *Green Land ...* a valuable reference for both students and professionals.

The text's central argument is that modern African landscapes are the result of the interaction between human activity and natural change processes. From a perspective that considers humans as both agents and victims of landscape dynamism, McCann challenges widely held notions of Africa as some kind of special Eden threatened by humankind and therefore worthy of preservation regardless of the implications for rural African livelihoods. Early misreading of Africa's landscapes, argues McCann, culminated in misdirected conservation policies that sought 'to freeze the landscape's dynamism and achieve a scene that conforms to prevailing ideas about Africa's "natural" state' (p. 75), a viewpoint also shared by other commentators. In fact, McCann's fundamental point is that natural change processes, cumulative effects of specific human technologies, growing population, changes in agriculture and global capital penetration are all central to appreciating Africa's

environmental history. In pursuing this argument, McCann cleverly reveals how the survival strategies of African people were, and still are, designed to counter and adapt to nature's harsh realities.

McCann is critical of the role of the colonial and post-colonial state in environmental conservation. In both phases, as McCann expounds, state policies based on the false but resilient 'degradation narrative' sought to transform human behaviour to correct nature's own dynamism, with obviously limited success. Implementation of inappropriate policies further compounded Africa's environmental crises, as McCann demonstrates with cases from Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Mali, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Lesotho. McCann also blames the global media for perpetuating stereotypic images of Africa's environmental crises as a function of overpopulation and mismanagement, citing footage from the 1980s documentary film *The Desert Doesn't Bloom Here Anymore* as an example.

By examining African history through an environmental lens, McCann fulfils his objective to 'offer a new and enriching perspective on Africa's impressive political histories' (p. 23). In the process, he successfully challenges orthodox narratives based on Malthusian theory that blame Africa's environmental problems on human factors, primarily overpopulation and mismanagement. His analysis transcends current victim-blaming narratives and acknowledges that nature's extremes inherent in landscape dynamism – droughts, floods, fires – have always made survival more challenging in Africa than elsewhere in the world. Citing new research, McCann observes that 'there is evidence that human action and population growth indeed has [*sic*] changed the physical landscape by altering vegetative cover, but the meaning and direction of that change contradicts the human degradation narrative ... [and] ... evidence from new climatological and historical research questions the human hand in climatological degradation and adds new insights into Africa's history as a whole' (p. 58).

This new body of research clearly supports assertions that attribute desertification to global warming; that is to 'global climatic processes more than local human action' (p. 59), so that African communities are 'more likely to be victims of a changing environment rather than its perpetrators' (p. 60). In relation to early African empires like Great Zimbabwe, McCann uses an environmental perspective to argue that their demise was triggered largely by unfavourable temperatures, unreliable rainfall patterns and a general shift in climatic conditions, not simply human perfidy as earlier historians suggested. Indeed emerging archaeological and climatic evidence challenges existing perspectives on such issues as deforestation, desertification and soil erosion in Africa. For example, evidence from Lesotho blames colonial agriculture and soil types for soil erosion, gullies, deforestation and desertification.

However, the book has its shortcomings. As McCann himself professes, 'Africa's physical size, the scale of its human mosaic, and its biological diversity defy both generalisation and full coverage' (p. 5), and 'works of synthesis invariably invite a critical eye from specialists whose depth of knowledge and experience in a particular place necessarily exceeds the author's' (pp. xiii–xiv). Attempting to cover the environmental history of such a vast geographical expanse over two centuries in one text means that certain

themes remain thinly analysed or completely neglected. There is, for example, a paucity of information on the changing roles of the state and civil society in environmental conservation in Africa over the years, or on the major global implications of Africa's current environmental crises. However, to his credit, McCann uses detailed case studies to effectively analyse some key themes throughout the text.

In summary, *Green Land ...* is an insightful addition to the literature as it offers a valuable interdisciplinary assessment of Africa's environmental history. It will be an invaluable resource to students, and all those with an interest in African history and environmental studies.

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Credit, Currencies and Culture: African financial institutions in historical perspective edited by ENDRE STIANSEN and JANE I. GUYER
Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet. 1999. Pp. 174. SEK200 (pbk.).

This is an insightful and engaging collection of essays on the development of credit and currencies in Africa. The influence of local culture on this development is explored in each of the works. The studies are pithy and easily read, without a great deal of jargon. Almost all of this collection of seven papers by various authors were first presented as a seminar series, at Northwestern University, USA, in 1996. The editors are specialists on economic, political and social aspects of African society.

The editors stress that the essays presented are not meant to be an overview of the entire subject of African Financial Institutions, but essentially case studies which describe institutional structures for the management of money in Africa. They claim to address the challenges posed by monetary change and suggest lines for further research and debate.

A rich re-creation of economic and social life in pre-colonial and colonial Africa is presented in many of these papers. The overall influence of the tribal chief or King as the 'controller' of all types of financial activity was far-reaching. This could range from control over the supply and distribution of cowrie shells, to the authority to impose death duties, and control over the practice of 'pawns' – a debt bondage, not very different from slavery. The lack of institutions is reflected in a practice of 'private justice', by which private citizens could kill thieves or sell them as slaves ('Finance and Credit in Pre-Colonial Dahomey', Robin Law).

Cowrie inflation and problems with local monetary structures gave the perfect excuse to colonial merchants and their governments to ban the use of indigenous currencies. These were replaced by imported monetised metal coins, and ultimately regulated colonial currencies. Slavery and pawning human beings for debt was fairly widespread ('On Currency and Credit in the Western Sahel', James Webb). A quote from the French trader Saugnier

sums it up: 'If credit be given for any merchandise, it is necessary, before delivery to enquire into the circumstances of the buyer; whether he have any negroes or not' (Saugnier, *Voyages*, 274).

Jan Hogendorn's 'Slaves as Money in the Sokoto Caliphate' is an interesting article, exploring somewhat controversial questions: Could slaves have served as high-denomination mediums of exchange? To what extent could they fulfill the economic attributes of money? Could they serve as a medium of exchange, a unit of account, a store of value and a standard of deferred payment? There are some good references comparing slaves to primitive money and cowrie shells. Slaves seemed to have solved one of the problems with cowrie currency, that is high transport costs, as they were deemed to be 'self-transporting'!

John Hunwick ('Islamic Financial Institutions') has developed clear perceptions from Koranic precepts with regards to financial dealings. The author recognises the paucity of information with regard to empirical studies of financial institutions of Muslim polities in Africa. He therefore accepts the work remains somewhat inconclusive. However, the material is otherwise quite useful for those seeking a better understanding of the workings of the Islamic financial system versus the Western system. This paper along with the one by Endre Stiansen, 'Islamic Banking in the Sudan: Aspects of the Laws and Debate', provides useful material on the drawbacks of the Islamic financial system as an alternative system. Stiansen quotes Abraham Udovitch's phrase, 'In the Islamic heartland, there were many bankers, but no banks.' Indeed, it may be said that the structure of a number of present-day Islamic banks has evolved and developed from European and colonial models of financial institutions. By using Sudan as a case study on aspects of law and debate, broadly similar issues confronting many Islamic countries which are trying to implement Islamic financial systems are thrown up. These issues range from the position of institutions versus individuals in the country (the conflict between the Bank of Sudan and the president), to the liberal versus the strict interpretation of *shari'a* law. A number of questions come to mind, for example: Should a formal distinction between usury and interest be established in Islam? Would this be acceptable to a broad section of scholarly opinion? The implementation of an Islamic Banking System in Sudan seems to have been fraught with passionate populist appeasement, rather than concentration on cold commercial logic. This paper also begs the wider question of whether lack of direction, debate and thought have characterised Islamic banking from the very start of its recent resurrection. Essentially, the system was imposed both in Sudan (Nemeiry) and in Pakistan (Gen. Zia ul Haq). Both countries seem to be grappling with conflicting ideologies, as successive politicians seek to implement the system in its entirety. Even though in terms of volume and transactions Islamic banking is growing, fundamental questions about institutions, broadly acceptable accounting standards and 'acceptable instruments' need to be resolved. Until such time that these questions are resolved, Islamic banking may be seen by many as a 'politically correct' form of Western banking.

The 'Sociétés Indigènes de Prévoyance (SIPs)' introduced by the French colonists seem to have been one of the more successful structures of credit in

French Africa ('Imposing a Guide on the Indigene', Gregory Mann and Jane Guyer). Investment capital was loaned in rural areas with some notable successes. However, the SIPs seemed to benefit primarily through the policies of the French administration, and are said to have hindered the development of alternate, possibly more efficient, structures. Their greatest benefit was for French businesses. Unfortunately, these institutions went the way of many colonial structures, becoming instruments of patronage for the local administrators.

It may be said that the Yoruba regard money with the same contradiction that most cultures do: Money has a good side and an evil one. Money is perceived as spirit, moon, visitor (bringing glad tidings) or stranger, or witch (evil) ('Money and Informal Credit Institutions in Colonial Western Nigeria', Toyin Falola). A sense of amusement is added by a couple of folkloric narratives ('Idealism and Contradiction in the Yoruba View of Money', Adanmu G. Adebayo).

Did the colonists actively disrupt well-established informal or indigenous networks and prevent them from developing? Much of the work highlights the fact that these informal networks, or even semi-formal ones (if earlier forms of *shari'a* influenced financial transactions could be regarded as such), were in need of overhaul. Some were close to collapse – if we take the example of cowrie shells and slavery. Whether colonial systems, partly imposed though self-interest really were the best solution, may be regarded as open to debate and further research.

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The Politics of Patronage in Africa: parastatals, privatization and private enterprise by ROGER TANGRI
Oxford: James Currey, Kampala: Fountain, and Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1999. Pp. 165. £12.95 (pbk.).

Roger Tangri has spent the last ten years teaching in Ghana, Lesotho and Uganda. In a continent where modest economic performances and state interventionism tend to be the rule, these countries are among the few whose governments' engagement in privatisation seems to have gone further than mere lip-service for international donors. Thus, this book focuses on Africa's economic policies since independence, specifically, on the attempts made to address the continent's dismal crisis.

The book is organised in six chapters along a twofold outline. The first is geographical. Although Tangri chooses examples from all over the continent, he tends to favour the cases he knows best: Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe. The second outline focuses on the actors involved in the economic process: the state, private indigenous capital and foreign business.

The first chapter starts with a brief description of the exogenous factors that

triggered the continent's ongoing crisis: the decline in world commodity prices, the decline in terms of trade, the economic recession in the West which reduced the demand for African exports, and finally, the oil crisis. Tangri asks why some African countries, confronted with the same difficult international environment, fared much better than others did. He rightly suggests that these differences can only be explained through discrepancies in domestic economic management, which he sets upon describing in the following chapters.

Rather than underlying the already well-studied economic and administrative causes of Africa's crisis, Tangri prefers to address the political factors that led most African states to develop unsound economic programmes. He believes that 'economic statism' became so popular because 'at independence, African countries largely lacked a national identity, partly because colonial policy did much to strengthen ethnic, as opposed to national consciousness, and partly because the countries were too recent in existence to elicit a sense of common nationhood' (p. 8). His argument, often stated, but seldom developed, does raise the interesting question of the possible correlation between a country's economic performance and the strength of its sense of nationhood. It would have been interesting to confront it with statistical evidence.

After discussing the background to Africa's modest economic record, Tangri argues that it was not so much the system of public ownership as the patrimonial policies, which were at the root of the continent's crisis. He contrasts the short-term political stability given by a patronage network, as developed by Jean-François Bayart (Rhizome State) and its damaging effects in the long run, a point already well taken by Richard Sandbrook and Robert H. Bates. It would have been interesting to know what Tangri had to say about the recent literature by authors such as Béatrice Hibou and Joel Migdal, who believe that the privatisation of the political scene is not a signal of the state's collapse or discrepancy, but merely of its redeployment.

In the second and third chapter, he analyses the political reasons, which were conducive to the development of large parastatals in Africa during the sixties and the seventies. In the eighties and nineties, this trend was reversed due not only to internationally enforced structural adjustment programmes, but also as a result of growing internal popular dissatisfaction. Tangri then addresses the means through which local governments managed to downplay the effects of privatisation and effectively patrimonialise the process.

In the fourth chapter, he considers the developmental role played by private capital in Europe and by national governments in Asia. In Africa, he says, indigenous entrepreneurs and governments were unable to assume that function, because no independent source of power, be it economic or other, was ever allowed to develop. Whenever such an economic structure did emerge, it never constituted a viable political alternative, as it was either constituted by foreigners or highly dependent on political patronage. In the best of cases, this led to what Tangri calls crony capitalism.

The brief fifth chapter wonders to what extent foreign businesses were able to effectively influence Africa's development. Tangri contrasts the cases of Uganda and Nigeria. In the former, the return of small-scale Asian capital seemed to have given somewhat better results than in Nigeria, where large-

scale foreign companies tended to invest little and concentrate on extractive activities (often oil).

Towards the final chapter, one starts to wonder whether Tangri, rather than gauging Africa's economic statism, is in fact assessing the means through which Africa could (or should?) develop, based on European and Asian experiences. His concluding remarks are rather depressing, as lukewarm efforts to privatise have been met with modest success (European model) and Africa's authoritarian regimes have long been anti-developmental (Asian model).

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Salaula: the world of secondhand clothing and Zambia by KAREN
TRANBERG HANSEN

Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000. Pp. 298. \$52.50;
\$22.50 (pbk.).

Salaula is the name of second-hand clothing sold in Zambia, and originating from Europe and North America. It is a Bemba word that literally means 'selecting from a pile in the manner of rummaging'. Most *salaula* is initially donated to charities, then sold to specialist commercial exporters who ship it to Zambia and many other African countries for resale through market traders. It was first imported into present day Zambia via the Congo and Luapula during the colonial period. But trade liberalisation has rendered it both a staple good and a socio-cultural phenomenon. What does *salaula* tell us about contemporary Zambia?

The first thing to note is that *salaula* has virtually wiped out domestic production of clothing for the home market, even though Zambia remains a competitive producer of cotton and cloth. Some dress-makers and tailors survive by meeting speciality markets (such as for school uniforms) or by altering and customising *salaula* itself. Meanwhile, only a small elite can afford to buy even mass-produced imported garments. But Hansen convincingly attributes the decline of Zambia's textile industry as much to failures of public policy and management rather than to *salaula* alone.

While it is tempting to attribute the popularity of *salaula* solely to poverty and relative prices, Hansen explores its role in satisfying desires as well as needs. *Salaula* enables people to in part conceal their poverty, to make choices, and to display taste and style. It provides raw material for cultural performances that define different social networks and even livelihood opportunities, a medium for expressing diversity and for participating in at least one aspect of modernity. Hansen makes various other attempts to find deeper meaning in the trade. Does 'recommodification' (i.e. making alterations) signify an attempt to hide *salaula*'s foreign origins? Are there moral contradictions in the fact that clothes given to charity in the West earn handsome profits to commercial intermediaries? Does dressing in second-hand

foreign clothes symbolise Zambians' loyalty to the second-hand free market ideology that made the trade possible? None of these issues quite catches fire into an all-embracing argument, and perhaps the book is more valuable for its detail. Crinkles in clothes taken from bales are preserved, for example, because carefully washed and ironed clothes could equally well have come from a local grave. For this reader at least, the *salaula* trade emerges from this account above all as a testimony to pragmatism. Traders recycle from rich to poor in return for modest livelihoods. Consumers take advantage of better quality clothes, which also offer greater scope for individual expression. The *salaula* trade may be an indictment of global structure; but it is also a celebration of human agency, indeed creativity.

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The Colonial Legacy in Somalia: Rome and Moghadishu from colonial administration to Operation Restore Hope by PAOLO TRIPODI

Basingstoke: Macmillan, and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. Pp. 235. \$72.00.

When in 1991 General Mohamed Farah Aideed sued the former Italian Prime Minister B. Craxi for not giving him the 10 per cent of a commission agreed between them, everybody was amazed and could not believe this former ambassador and new-born warlord. One year later, the *Tangentopoli* scandal was providing far more credentials than expected to his claims. This book seeks to analyse the singular relationships that have developed for more than a century between Italy and Somalia, and provides a balanced analysis of the various periods, from the first Italian steps into Somalia up to Operation Restore Hope in 1992.

For the public unable to read the significant studies already made on Italian colonialism or post-colonial policies towards Somalia (by L. Goglia, C. Ercolessi, G. P. Calchi Novati, A. Del Boca, among others), Tripodi offers a fair, well-documented account of the Italian presence in Somalia. His chapter on the AFIS period (1950–60) is of special relevance for the debate on the Somali state. His description shows how the absolute need for a weak and poorly funded Italian administration to improve its relationships with the Somali Youth League and protect Italian economic and long-term influence in Somalia clashed with the building of a democratic state of any sort, long before the dictatorship established by Mohamed Siyad Barre in 1969. Though the description of the post-independence period is not the most original, the author not only (as in previous chapters) rightly underlines the absence of policies or their mismanagement; he also takes into account parameters related to the Italian political debate, the singularity of the Italian state, the lack of any structural understanding of Somali politics by Italian politicians and diplomats and, last but not least, the ambitious and sometimes confusing

aims of a form of non-alignment policy intended to increase Italian influence in the Horn of Africa and in the international arena. However, one priority has remained constant over the different periods: the obsession to retain Italian influence in Somalia, whatever regime was ruling the country. This explained Italy's astonishing flexibility after independence, the quick return after Siyad took over, and the importance of funds allocated to Somalia up to 1991 (around 1,600 billion lire). Bribes and corruption were, to a certain extent, side-effects more than the core aims to be reached. As the author notes, the fear of losing influence over the Somali rulers also explains the unbalanced attitude of Rome in 1991, which contributed significantly to creating the conditions for the second battle in Mogadishu in November 1991 and the UN intervention in Somalia.

Though interesting and well written, this book suffers several weaknesses or raises questions that could be addressed in future publications. The sources are not always critically analysed, and the viewpoint is mostly Italian. Minimal attention is given to Somali perceptions, and even when these are taken into account, they are not discussed: the justification of the 1969 coup by a former Siyad Barre minister as filling a power vacuum, for example, is merely standard rhetoric that should not be accepted at face value. The same goes for accounts by Italian diplomats. Though the author notes that the Somali issue has for the last three decades been as much an element of the internal debate in Italy as a foreign policy issue (as Angola is in Portugal), he fails to describe the many networks connecting business people and political figures, which French analysts would refer to as *réseaux*. The treatment of events in Somalia before and after 1991 by the Italian press (quite original by any British standards) is not discussed, despite its influence on politicians and public opinion. There is also room for debate on Italian diplomacy and military activities throughout Operation Restore Hope: the late Ambassador Augelli had little sympathy for the Americans and their bottom-up approach, and the main duty of his successor was to narrow the gap between Italy and USA in Mogadishu; the Italian military were in confusion, some cultivating the old friendships of the Siyad Barre period, others ready to endorse a radical solution for the country but against the American way. The role played by Somalis in deepening the gulf between Italy and the USA is not mentioned. These criticisms are intended only to indicate some directions in the work that still needs to be done on the peculiar relationships between these two countries.

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Inter-Ethnic and Religious Conflicts Resolution in Nigeria by E. E. UWAZIE, I. O. ALBERT and G. N. UZOIGWE
Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. 1999. Pp. 172. \$40.00.

It might be imperative to opine that ethnicity and religion have both in the recent past and present occupied a central and instructive focus in most political discourse on Africa, especially in most attempts to understand and appreciate the dynamics of African political development. It is even more difficult to understand political events in Africa outside the context of these two phenomena. Many states in Africa have made various attempts at both structural and constitutional engineering to find both temporary and lasting solutions to problems of religion and ethnicity. It is against this background that the authors of this book attempt some contributions to the on-going discourse on ethnicity and religious conflicts in Africa, with particular reference to Nigeria. This also makes the book topical, relevant and interesting. The primary objective of the book appears therefore to highlight causes of religious and ethnic conflicts in Nigeria, and suggest solutions out of the quagmire.

From a critical observation, the chapters of this book are proceedings of a conference held during the heyday of the military regime in Nigeria. The activities of the Army led to various levels of terrorism, which the opposition adopted as a way of protest and expression of frustration with the establishment. The incidence of terrorism is no longer a major issue today, as was the case during the military regime in Nigeria. However, Nigeria is today democratising and various democratic structures are already put in place to ensure its success. Furthermore, the freedom of expression engendered by democracy, has heightened the incidence of ethnic and religious conflict. The truth of the matter is that today the corporate existence of Nigeria is more threatened than under the military regime. However, this does not make the military regime a preferred option.

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The Making of Modern South Africa by NIGEL WORDEN
Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000 (3rd edn). Pp. 194. \$57.95; \$24.95 (pbk.).

Rewriting South African history as more than the story of British and Afrikaner settlers and their conflicts, with black people as mere adjuncts of colonial and apartheid policy, is certainly a tall order. With this book, Nigel Worden, history professor at the University of Cape Town specialising in the history of slavery in eighteenth-century Cape Town, attempts to introduce readers to some of this 'historical revolution' of the 1980s and 1990s on South Africa.

The book is not a complete general history of modern South Africa. Earlier editions (this is the third) focused on the years between the 1910s (the establishment of the Union of South Africa from the four white Republics) to the immediate aftermath of the 'white' Republic in the 1960s. This volume includes events up to the June 1999 election and the retirement of Nelson Mandela. Rather, it is a critique of South African historiography. However, there is much reason for the book to serve as an introductory read for use in history and political courses on modern South Africa.

Many new academic books on South African history have appeared since the mid-1970s, significantly transforming our understanding of the making of modern South Africa. Worden traces the roots of South African historiography to the ideologically driven 'white' history of the nineteenth century that (particularly for Afrikaner historians) focused on racially exclusionist nation-building. In these accounts, South African history is the story of British and Afrikaner settlers and their conflicts.

'Liberal' history improved on earlier history and dominated from the 1950s, with its focus on the economic and social background of apartheid. It was flawed, however, in its insistence on a 'dual economy' with two societies and its explanation of apartheid by an unhappy history of virulent racism, primarily of Afrikaners, born on the frontier of the early Cape Colony and transported inland by the Great Trek to resurface in the catastrophic National Party victory of 1948. Africans hardly featured in these narratives, if only as passive adjuncts to colonial policies. In the late 1960s and 1970s a body of literature emerged focusing on the internal opposition of African societies to colonialism and apartheid. Probably the most significant development in South African historiography was that of a Marxist tradition in the early 1980s, that explained segregation and apartheid as resulting from class domination by capitalists rather than broad race domination by whites. Through Marxist scholarship, the roots of modern South Africa were traced to unequal industrialisation on the Rand at the end of the nineteenth century. Since then a more nuanced approach to South African history has emerged that ditches the overt structuralism of Marxism in 'which individual and community experiences have been given prime place and the diversity of the response is now recognised'. Increased scholarship on the experiences of women, and the construction of identity during slavery, migrant labour, urbanisation and nationalism has emerged.

That Worden explains the major themes in South African history in such a thin volume while remaining concise, readable and balanced, is quite an achievement for a book that can serve as an excellent introductory text for history and political courses on modern South Africa.

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