Africa, Empire and Fleet Street: Albert Cartwright and 'West Africa' Magazine
by JONATHAN DERRICK
New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. 357. $45 (hbk).
doi:10.1017/S0022278X18000745

Among academic studies, it is rare to find monographs about a weekly magazine, let alone one dedicated to African affairs. Scarcer still is having a journalist-cum-scholar who worked for a magazine write about its first editor, especially as such persons seldom attract interest from researchers despite their contributions to news production for public consumption. In this regard, Jonathan Derrick, an Africanist historian whose research interest covers West Africa, has broken new ground with *Africa, Empire and Fleet Street: Albert Cartwright and 'West Africa' Magazine*. The author does so by meticulously weaving the life of Albert Cartwright (1868–1956), the founding editor of *West Africa*, with a chronicle of the magazine's first 30 years until its pioneer editor retired in 1947. To some extent, *West Africa over 75 Years*, an edited volume compiled by the London-based magazine's managing editor, Kaye Whiteman, in the 1990s, to commemorate its alluring history before ceasing publication in 2003, set the stage for Derrick's book to show readers Albert Cartwright and *West Africa*'s influence in shaping both colonial and anti-colonial discourses in Britain and Africa. As a budding journalist, Derrick served on the editorial staff of the magazine from 1966 to 1970, and, later, from 2000 to 2003. By the time of his second stint, though, he had trained as a historian as well, having completed a PhD in African history at SOAS University of London.

Derrick's professional background explains why *Africa, Empire and Fleet Street* reveals a rich texture of biographical elements that bring out Cartwright's complex personality situated within a wider panorama of news production by British periodicals and newspapers about 19th- and early 20th-century Africa and Africans, British commercial interests and colonial intervention, and encounters between colonisers and colonised. Archival colonial documents, the Cartwright family papers, photographs, family oral memories, interviews with family members, together with newspapers and periodicals on African affairs published in Britain, furnished the author with varied sources to reconstruct a multilayered history of Cartwright and *West Africa*, a magazine bankrolled by Liverpool and Manchester trading firms engaged in African commerce, since its inception in February 1917. Prominent among such companies were the African Association, Elder Dempster, G. B. Ollivant, John Holt, and Paterson, Zochonis & Co. It is noteworthy that *West Africa* operated from London, where 'contacts with government officials and influential people' were 'a normal part of journalism'. Yet, as Derrick points out, 'the magazine was independent politically and there was no government money in it' (3).

The six chapters of *Africa, Empire and Fleet Street* kick off with an overview of the creation of *West Africa*, 'a weekly newspaper devoted to the affairs and needs of the group of countries known as West Africa', according to its first editorial (2). Chapter 2 then examines Victorian newspapers and periodicals that covered African affairs during the 19th century. These, obviously, were a precursor to *West Africa*. One such business-oriented magazine, the *African Times*, 'was oriented

toward the West Coast and friendly to Liverpool firms, recording their trade in regular detail besides continuing to serve the West African elite' (25). Chapter 3 continues with an intriguing account of Cartwright's career trajectory in South Africa, where he worked from 1885 to 1911. Here, Derrick is quick to inform the reader: 'Available sources give a good deal of information, but some is sketchy or inaccurate. And notably, Cartwright did not leave any surviving account of his own life' (33). Chapter 4 then shifts to West Africa and spotlights an earlier magazine, also named *West Africa*, which was only in circulation for a few years after 1900. The chapter also looks at the activities of Liverpool-based firms and merchants engaged in commercial activities in West Africa and features the activities of Edmund Dene Morel (1873–1924), a journalist, clerk with Elder Dempster, and political figure, who facilitated the debut of *West Africa* in 1917. Against the backdrop of the British Empire and its dealings with Africa and Africans, Chapter 5 covers the activities of *West Africa* from its early years right through the inter-war period. During this period, as Derrick observes, '*West Africa* had no serious competition, among specialised titles of the mainstream British periodical press, for coverage of Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and the Gambia. There were, however, some bold but short-lived ventures at papers edited by Africans in Britain' (141). Building on the previous chapter, Chapter 6 not only looks at the magazine under Cartwright's editorship from the 1930s to 1947, but also examines *West African Review*, a Liverpool-based monthly launched in 1935 with a similar editorial policy as *West Africa* but more focused on feature stories than its forerunner.

Among the notable attributes of *Africa, Empire and Fleet Street* are Derrick's keen eye for specifics, his nuanced interpretation of Africa's colonial past, and his eloquent and fluid writing style that make the book both enthralling and accessible without getting the reader bogged down in minutiae. This is most evident in the chapters on Victorian news outlets on Africa and Cartwright's sojourn in South Africa as the author situates the rise of news production on Africa within the context of the expanding commercial interests of British enterprises in the continent during the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Although Derrick explains why the book ends with Cartwright's retirement in 1947, a limitation he acknowledges, however, readers familiar with Africa's independence movement in the post-World War II period might view this as a missed opportunity to capture a crucial moment in African history when *West Africa* was emerging as an anti-colonial mouthpiece for West African nationalists. Such reservation, though, is not to diminish the significant contribution *Africa, Empire and Fleet Street* makes to our comprehension of the links between the production of information – read knowledge – about Africa and Africans during the colonial period and commercial firms in Britain pursuing their business interests while investing in news outlets to shape the discourses of British colonial rule and exploitation in Africa. All told, this book has set a trend that historians may follow with another study that explores *West Africa* from the period of decolonisation after World War II until the magazine ended publication in 2003, several decades after Africa's 'decade of independence' in the 1960s.

REFERENCE

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TAMBA E. M'BAYO
West Virginia University

The Development Dance: How Donors and Recipients Negotiate the Delivery of Foreign Aid by HALEY J. SWEDLUND
Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017. Pp. 188 $23.95 (pbk).
doi:10.1017/S0022278X18000794

Aid donors used to primarily fund projects, but then they realised that broader economic issues in recipient countries derailed project success. This, along with other factors, encouraged them to shift their focus to structural adjustment. After structural adjustment largely failed, donors realised that underlying political institutions 'ruled', and so they moved to providing budget support to gain influence in recipient countries where reform seemed possible. After this approach faltered, donors again turned to micro-level interventions, this time with a renewed focus on producing measurable results.

The above potted history asserts that change in aid modalities is driven by donor learning. It is a common story, and in *The Development Dance* Haley Swedlund suggests that it is – at minimum – highly incomplete. Rather than explain aid fads as the result of an ongoing learning process, Swedlund argues that cycles of aid delivery mechanisms result from donors and recipients being forced to work together to deliver aid while also being unable to sanction each other for breaking deals. The main issue is that while the low-level actors on both sides of an aid bargain may want to keep their word, both sides are ultimately accountable to actors other than each other. For example, a donor organisation might promise to deliver a set level of funding to certain sectors in a recipient country. However, the presence of this deal with the recipient government will not prevent the donor country's President from responding to electoral pressure by cutting the aid budget or shifting aid to new sectors. Similarly, recipients may pledge certain reforms in order to receive aid, but if key constituencies in the recipient country are harmed by these reforms then their passage may be unlikely. Aid fads result from donors and recipients constantly searching for – and failing to find – ways to create durable aid bargains.

This argument is supported by qualitative case study research in Ghana, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda and a survey of over 100 high-level aid officials from 23 different agencies operating in 20 countries in Africa. The results support the theoretical argument, and highlight the value of qualitative interviews in a research area that often places an emphasis on statistical analysis. Through discussions with staff of donor organisations and recipient governments, it is made clear that the broader literature's focus on delegation as the main concern of aid delivery is misplaced. Swedlund puts this concern to the side and focuses instead on illustrating the challenges of sustaining aid