

interpretation based on jealousy may be at the core. A comparison with the Zimbabwean situation came to my mind. If historians writing about Zambia are to face up to the task of explicating its economic decline, they need courage. To this day, Kaunda is quite active in creating a symbolic universe that avoids that question, and he has a following in his interpretation. This paper points to urgent important research that will enter a highly contested terrain. Readers who are pressed for time may choose to read only this article. I would not be surprised, however, if they read the whole book thereafter.

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Trade Unions and the Coming of Democracy in Africa edited by
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New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Pp. 296, £42.50 (hbk).

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This collection of case studies explores the impact that African trade unions have had on the democratisation process in Africa, focusing on seven countries: Senegal, Niger, Ghana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia. The authors engage with the debates regarding the sources of political liberalisation and democratisation on the continent. Contrary to the argument that these processes were primarily driven by external events and actors, the authors in this volume assert that such perspectives overlook the pre-eminent role played by internal actors, particularly the trade unions. In the initial, pre-transition, phase of political liberalisation, trade unions were instrumental in creating political space through their persistent demands for political rights and the freedom to organise. They have occupied an unrivalled position at the forefront of popular struggles for democracy, acting as a figurehead for other groups in civil society that lack the mobilising capacity enjoyed by the unions.

Trade unions also continued to play an important role during the establishment and consolidation of the new democratic dispensations. In some countries they gained an influential role in government policy formulation. However, in all these cases, the unions were ultimately forced to protest against economic reforms and, in the examples of Zambia and Zimbabwe, went as far as forming opposition parties to directly contest elections with incumbent regimes. Whilst some analysts argue that the persistence of trade union militancy would undermine the process of democratisation by destabilising a new democratic regime, these case studies suggest that unions have acted as an essential counterweight to the executive powers of government, and have continued to keep the democratic transitions moving forward. In their attempts to defend real wages, public services, and a broader social agenda in the face of the Structural Adjustment Programmes espoused by international financial institutions and donor governments, the unions have proven to be the most vocal and effective representatives of the interests of both their members and the wider popular classes in their respective countries.

This collection includes contributions from some eminent scholars, and the case studies provide extremely informative and well-detailed accounts of the

different national contexts of trade union organisation. However, the level of theoretical and analytical content in each of the chapters is quite uneven, which necessitates the noteworthy contribution made by the editor. Kraus' introduction and conclusion provides the real analytical meat of the book, situating the case study findings within some of the broader debates about political liberalisation on the continent. Overall, this is a timely and thought-provoking contribution to the debates regarding the role that organised labour has in the democratisation of African countries.

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Guns and Governance in the Rift Valley: pastoralist conflict and small arms by KENNEDY AGADE MKUTU

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Armed conflict among pastoralist groups in northern Kenya and Uganda is a long-standing and persistent problem that gets relatively little attention both in the popular media and, according to Kennedy Mkutu, from academic researchers. He sets out in this book to bring needed focus to this issue through a detailed study of the proliferation of small arms, and how their widespread availability contributes to the continuation, escalation and intensification of such conflicts. He does this quite effectively for the most part, making the book a valuable addition to the literature on pastoralism, violence and conflict. It also has considerable relevance for policy makers and organisations that are working to reduce conflict.

Mkutu begins by outlining the scope of the problem of violence in Africa, and inter-ethnic violence in the Horn of Africa specifically. Moving to the case of pastoralists in particular, he notes that these smaller conflicts occur over resource competition among impoverished groups, and that the ready availability of small arms has increased the intensity and damage caused through cattle rustling as well as banditry on roads. Later he links these conflicts to commercial and political motivations as well, although precise details of these interconnections remain difficult to discern. Beyond the motives for violence and the organisation of those involved, the heart of the book provides an interesting analysis of how small arms infiltrate the region through a number of regional pathways. These descriptions illustrate both the spillover effects of large-scale conflicts in Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda, and also how local and regional social and economic dynamics operate within countries to spread weapons. Another chapter presents data from a variety of sources (primarily health centres and police records) documenting the impact of small arms in terms of fatalities and injuries, as well as the economic cost of cattle theft. While much of this data is admittedly incomplete, it begins to hint at the severity of the effects of on-going conflict. Mkutu also discusses some of the social impacts of violence, including population displacement and loss of accessible pastures due to insecurity. A final substantive chapter discusses government attempts to reduce violence, focusing particularly on attempts to disarm various pastoralist groups. Mkutu convincingly argues that