

## Reviews

**Politicians and Poachers: the political economy of wildlife policy in Africa** by CLARK C. GIBSON  
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Pp. 245. £40.00, £14.95 (pbk.).

Gibson's book provides an analysis of the politics of formulating and implementing wildlife policy. While the central focus is a case study of Zambia, useful comparisons are drawn in each chapter with the experiences of the politics of wildlife in Zimbabwe and Kenya. The book is packed with information about the political interest groups involved in Zambian wildlife policy at the local, national and international levels. As such, it seeks to offer a political economy analysis of wildlife policy-making, rather than the more familiar works on African wildlife that tend to be the preserve of environmental science, biology and geography. In fact the book makes the critical point that wildlife constitutes a major economic resource in Zambia (in particular) and Africa (in general). Since it is economically vital, Gibson argues that wildlife is a significant political commodity in Africa, and that wildlife policy-making indicates the struggle for access over lucrative resources between multiple actors. It is here that Gibson's book is at its most useful, in arguing that while biological and physical information about ecosystems is an entirely necessary part of conservation, it is not enough. Instead he argues for the importance of understanding human political systems in the process of conservation policy-making. Gibson suggests that African bureaucracies and rural people construct wildlife policies and interact with wildlife in ways that suit their preferences. As such, wildlife policies in Zambia reflect political competition which may not be what he calls an 'efficient' response to a social dilemma, and that the outcomes of those policies may not necessarily conserve wildlife.

However, in offering a political economy explanation for wildlife conservation policies in Zambia, Gibson places his case study strictly within the confines of what he terms a 'new institutionalism' analysis. In effect, this means that the very detailed and useful information about Zambian wildlife is straitjacketed within an economic model derived from rational actor analysis. As a result Gibson's book begins to be less like a work on Zambian wildlife and more about the effectiveness of applying game theory to explain human behaviour. A good example of this is the model of wildlife decision-making in the Zambian parliament (p. 68), which reduces complex political processes to an equation that can be used to predict the voting behaviour of Zambian MPs. The economic model of rational actor analysis is also applied to decisions made about hunting wildlife by rural people. This is bound up in arguments about wildlife as an open access resource, subject to free rider problems in any attempt to manage it. This approach to explaining community based wildlife management has been heavily criticised by a number of commentators. So the need to squeeze the material into a rational

actor analysis means that important points in the text are lost, namely that community based wildlife schemes across Africa have been widely touted as inclusive by numerous interest groups, when they can be incredibly exclusive and can replicate the problems associated with colonial wildlife policies. However, this is overshadowed by the enthusiasm for game theory and the argument that rural people should be analysed as individuals and not as groups. In the end, the theoretical framework of the book diverts attention away from the vital political information about Zambian decision-making structures and the rich material on wildlife conservation.

Nevertheless, the important contribution that Gibson's book makes is that often the study of wildlife is left to natural and physical sciences, when what conservation really requires is an understanding of human behaviour and politics. Since wildlife is an economically and politically significant African resource, studies of conservation need a politically astute analysis, and this is a welcome contribution to a growing debate.

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**Civil Wars in Africa: roots and resolution** edited by TAISIER M. ALI and ROBERT O. MATTHEWS  
Montreal and Kingston, Ontario: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999. Pp. 322. £32.95.

Conflict resolution in Africa is a growth industry, fuelled as much by the willingness of Western sponsors to fund studies of the subject, as by the continuing salience of the conflicts themselves. This largely Canadian contribution to the genre derives from an initial workshop in November 1994, and a subsequent conference in May 1995, but has taken a further four years to get into print, with the result that some of the chapters are already somewhat outdated: there is no reference, for example, to the Congo wars from late 1996 onwards, let alone to the Ethiopia–Eritrea war, while a good chapter on Liberia would have benefitted from an appraisal of the 1997 election. The format divides conflicts between those resolved largely by force (Uganda, Ethiopia, Rwanda), those resolved largely by negotiation (Liberia, Mozambique), protracted and unresolved conflicts (Somalia, Sudan), and 'civil wars forestalled' (Zimbabwe, Tanzania), with a general chapter on conflict management in Africa, all sandwiched between editorial introduction and conclusion. Five of the chapters are written by academics from the countries concerned, though it is a sad reflection on African academia that only one of these is still based in the continent.

The editors provide little by way of broad conceptual guidance, and such conclusions as they reach – for example that the incidence of conflicts can be explained largely by internal factors, and especially failures of elite leadership – are of relatively little value in shaping the case studies. The value of the book therefore very largely depends on the quality of the individual contributions,

and fortunately several of these are excellent. Pride of place in my view goes to Bruce Jones' discussion of the failure of the Rwanda peace process, in which detailed familiarity with the conflict and its attempted resolution is allied to an appreciation of its significance to broader issues in conflict resolution. This is essential reading. The one point at which I would challenge his analysis is that, while rightly noting that the Arusha accords were doomed by excluding the Hutu extremists subsequently responsible for genocide from the future government, while at the same time leaving intact their power in the present one, he leaves open the question of whether they could have been given a stake in the post-conflict regime, or whether it would have been necessary to remove and control them. It certainly became evident after the event, however, and should equally have been clear at the time, that incorporation was not a viable option: these people were utterly irreconcilable to a negotiated peace, which could have been made to work only by placing them under constraint. Jones also makes some controversial assertions – notably that Theonaste Bagosura 'appears to have been the principal architect of the assassination of Habyarimana' (p. 85), and that RPF leader Fred Rwigyema was killed by his own second-in-command (p. 83).

Another superb piece is John Saul's account of the resolution of Mozambique's 'un/civil war', which places the peace process firmly within the context of the 'recolonisation' of Mozambique, without however subscribing to conspiracy theories, or ignoring the role which ordinary Mozambicans took in ensuring that the process worked, or the benefits which peace on almost any terms brought them. Informed, honest, morally concerned and conceptually analytical, it provides the best analysis of the Mozambique settlement that I know. A third chapter well worth reading is James Busumtwi-Sam's discussion of the redefinition of security in post-Cold War Africa, and the role especially of the OAU; while the OAU is a subject so well worked that little remains to be said, he puts the key points across with admirable clarity. This is another chapter that I would recommend to students as the best thing written on the subject.

While none of the remaining chapters let the side down, there is no space to discuss them in a short review. The pair of case studies that do call for comment are those on Zimbabwe and Tanzania as 'wars forestalled'. That Zimbabwe appears in such a category at all will raise many eyebrows, given notably the vicious repression in Matabeleland in the mid-1980s, and the problems for the future evidently created by subsequent bad governance and economic mismanagement. Hevina Dashwood does not ignore these issues, but her conclusion that Zimbabwe has been 'relatively successful in maintaining both political and economic stability' (p. 224) is certainly open to question, and any judgement on the Mugabe regime will have to await an appreciation of its legacies. Cranford Pratt has an easier task on Tanzania, where Julius Nyerere's political legacy can certainly be seen as beneficial, despite his economic failure; but the question here is where the civil war was that he 'forestalled'. Tanzania's internal peace can arguably be ascribed as much to a favourable ethnic configuration as to government policy, and a more challenging case (such as Kenya or Zambia, perhaps) would have made for more interesting reading.

Poor editorial overview has resulted in a number of small errors, but this is a collection well worth publishing, for its case studies if not for any general appraisal of conflict resolution in Africa.

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**Healing Communities in Conflict: international assistance in complex emergencies** by KIMBERLY A. MAYNARD  
New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. Pp. 245. £21.95.

Since the end of the Cold War the world has seen an increase in violent internal conflict, often labelled complex emergencies. Although responses to these crises are becoming more proactive, evidenced by the explosion of NGOs, the situation has not necessarily improved. In her book, Kimberly Maynard points to the 'shortsightedness [which] often accompanies foreign involvement in countries torn by civil strife' (p. x). As an experienced practitioner Maynard recognises that foreign actors pursue their activities in good faith; however, she insists that given the increasing complexities of such crises, a new framework is needed in order to enable adequate responses to complex emergencies. The largely uncoordinated manner of international action since the Cold War often results in negative aspects of international aid coming to the fore, such as inadvertent favouritism or a lack of sensitivity to the complexity of ethnic relations which trigger a (sometimes renewed) increase in violence. She points out that the role of international actors is crucial in the recovery process of complex emergencies but that the negative impact of misguided activities has to be addressed.

Maynard proposes not only a conceptual framework of community-level healing, but also an operational framework which seeks to implement 'a comprehensive approach toward rebuilding community cohesion and reconciliation' (p. 125), that she calls a 'holistic' approach to assistance. After an outline of the changed post-Cold War context the book examines how violent conflict has evolved in the twentieth century in order to provide a setting to understand the conditions and consequences of complex emergencies. The book then addresses the problems for, and the implications on, the community and everyday life. While the first part explores the setting of violent conflict and its implications, the second part critically examines approaches which are meant to solve these crises. Here Maynard offers her theoretical approach 'to community-level reintegration and rebuilding cohesion' (p. xvi).

This well-structured and clear book offers the reader, novice or specialist, an insight into the conditions and changes in violent conflict since the Cold War, whilst pointing to the implications and consequences of international action in those crises. Maynard rightly indicates that in these new kind of conflicts all levels of society are involved and that consequently a new approach is needed to address such conflicts. In a well-argued attempt to combine a diverse range of scholarly research and the experience of practitioners, Maynard applies an interdisciplinary approach which opens up a vitally needed discussion in order to address the anomalies of international responses to violent conflict. In addition, she tries to provide a concept in order to bridge the gap between

those living in countries torn by violent conflict and the decision-makers in foreign countries who provide aid, and demonstrates how vital this cooperation is.

Although an agenda for future action provided in the last chapter of the book falls back into a theoretical vagueness which much of the literature on conflict prevention and post-conflict assistance struggle with, Maynard illustrates her theoretical framework well with various examples partly stemming from her own work in the field. This is the strength of the book, since she shows that her approach does not apply only to a regional context but that it underlines mistakes and possible improvements more generally. The book offers a framework for preventing increased tension and a return to violence as a result of ill-managed international action by examining the much understated community level experience of complex emergencies. Hence Maynard clearly contributes to the discussion on an adequate and effective response to complex emergencies in a post-Cold War context.

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**Identity and Ethnic Relations in Africa** by LEONARD BLOOM

Aldershot and Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1998. Pp. 201, £35.00.

*Identity and Ethnic Relations in Africa* is a disparate collection of nine essays written by Leonard Bloom, a self-described 'social psychologist with a psychoanalytic orientation' (p. xi). In this collection of essays, Bloom explores 'how individuals neutralise power emotionally so that the Self is not defeated by the assaults endured from those with authority' (p. xii). For Bloom, although people live collectively, they remain individuals – thus providing the intellectual foundation for a psychoanalytic approach to the study of identity and ethnicity in Africa and beyond.

The first two chapters set the conceptual stage for the loosely related case studies of Nigeria and South Africa. Bloom initially attempts to address a provocative question that transcends, but is inclusive of, the study of psychology: Can there be a psychology relevant to the 'Third World'? Bloom unequivocally answers yes to this question, but he cautions that the development of a relevant psychology is a difficult process, since it requires the synthesis of three complementary, yet different, psychological approaches. He also persuasively argues that the 'Third World' is similar to the advanced industrialised world in that both regions encompass a wide variation of people (p. 11) who have the psycho-political problem of restoring the 'Self' (p. 29). The author concludes that '[a] realistically relevant psychology has, therefore, to search for the universals as a corrective to those psychologies that overemphasize the superficial differences between communities' (p. 33). In the following chapter, Bloom explores the problems and prospects for social science in Africa, arguing that this approach to inquiry holds the key to 'liberating Africa rationally from ignorance, disease, poverty, and conflict' (p. 56).

The next two chapters focus on the relationship between psychotherapy and

culture (chapter 3) and culture and emotional distress (chapter 4), based on case studies of Nigeria. These chapters highlight the predominant theme of the book: the relevance of psychology to African society. Related to this theme, Bloom attempts to answer the following question: 'Is psychotherapy the white man's *juju*, a culture-specific medicine that travels badly beyond its own home?' (p. 58). In Bloom's attempt to unravel the 'dilemma of cultural relativism' (p. 64), he argues that scholars and practitioners of psychology should not reify or essentialise Africa and European heritage as separate entities that do not overlap, and that do not enable the development of a cross-cultural approach to psychology. For Bloom, this form of separation contradicts human nature and it borders on racism.

In the final five chapters, Bloom focuses on South Africa. In one of these chapters, he presents a psychoanalytic critique of ethnic identity as a 'collective defense mechanism' (p. xiii). This is the first chapter that actually reflects the title of the book. According to Bloom, '[t]he fostered and enforced delusion that South Africans are only, mainly, or exclusively Zulu, Afrikaner, so-called "Coloured", even children, women or men, persists almost unopposed as we limp into the newish [sic] South Africa' (p. 113). The remainder of this collection addresses the emotional impact of apartheid on children, with a personal account of the author's experience living with three Xhosa youths, and an overview of the limited impact of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission on promoting an enabling environment for democracy to flourish.

The main problem with this book is the lack of continuity; the essays do not integrate well, and they often betray the book's stated intent embedded in the title: that of elucidating of the relationship between identity and ethnic relations in Africa. In addition, while the array of personal accounts, statements of normative advocacy, theory building exercises, literature overviews, and methodological approaches are interesting, the readers are challenged to tie together the disparate chapters in search for a unified whole.

However, these limitations do not undermine Bloom's major contribution to African Studies and social science. In advocating a 'relevant' psychology for Africa, Bloom demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of, and respect for, the complex challenges that face Africa's diverse populations in the next millennium. Regrettably, many studies of identity and ethnicity in Africa fall short of this necessary prerequisite for thorough and informative social scientific inquiry.

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**Afrocentricism: mythical pasts and imagined homes** by STEPHEN HOWE

London and New York: Verso, 1998. Pp. x + 337. £22.00.

Most histories contain a good share of popularly held myths and fantasies which have either just emerged over time or that have been fabricated, promoted and advanced in response to a perceived grievance or condition. British history has had its fill: King Arthur and his knights of the Round

Table, the Norman yoke, the Angel of Mons, leylines; and the old crude sore, explicit and implicit in many school texts of my youth, that white people were superior to 'primitive' Africans. Populist history and anti-intellectualism often walk comfortably hand-in-hand. This is certainly so with Afrocentrism, that race-focused search for black origins and achievements which has caught the imagination and passion of certain African Americans and which occasionally is voiced among black Britons.

In tackling this subject Stephen Howe has, with considerable boldness and great clarity, made a very useful contribution to intellectual history. He shows that even the study of bad ideas can be part of that history! It is not difficult to understand the origins of the quest for a past and a home in Africa by disadvantaged black people. Predictably the ideas arose mainly among African Americans, people who were the victims of deracination and slavery, living in a white dominated state system which denigrated and discriminated against black peoples and their cultures. Afrocentric ideas have a long, and in their milder forms not altogether dishonourable, pedigree dating from the late eighteenth century. Significant proponents have been well-known figures such as Martin Delany, G. W. Williams, Africanus Horton, Theophilus Scholes, and of course, Marcus Garvey. Such ideas have been fuelled and reshaped, given new direction and stimulus, by continuing white racial arrogance. The result is a black racial assertiveness which, like the white dominance it challenges and denounces, eschews the scholarly principles of truth and fidelity.

Much Afrocentric writing has been contributionist, identifying significant achievements of black peoples, and also compensatory – what the black sociologist Orlando Patterson has called a quest for 'pyramids, princes and pageantry'. Thus significant figures from the past, for example Muhammad and Beethoven, are claimed as 'black', while the old white propounded Hamitic myth is turned on its head with the claim that all civilisation came from the black races of Africa. A handful of African scholars have contributed to such ideas, most notably the Senegalese historian and writer Cheikh Anta Diop with his thesis that classical Greece, and thus in turn all European civilisation, derived everything of value from an African-Egyptian culture. More recently such ideas have been given scholarly weight and the cloak of authority by Martin Bernal's volumes *Black Athena*. Several chapters in the second part of Howe's book provide masterly summaries of these ideas including two chapters dealing critically with Diop and Bernal. However, the greatest contribution to these 'romantic racialist' ideas has come from African American polemicists (who are dealt with in the third part of the book), many of whom are clustered around Temple University in Philadelphia, where almost 'religious' views about race have been promoted.

'Race' and 'culture', which were magnified by many nineteenth and early twentieth-century white European scholars, are not the real issues. Such issues have long been dealt with, and it is a sorry state of affairs when even a small number of black scholars choose to go on promulgating them although with a reversed emphasis. The important question raised by the Afrocentrists is about cultural influence over a long period of time, and that surely is not primarily concerned with 'race', in the narrower sense of the use of the word,



or in the 'colour' of peoples' skins. To promote such views in the late twentieth century is to play an intellectually meaningless card. The real question is political, or as Howe argues, 'race is everything' (p. 206).

Many of the more extreme Afrocentric views publicly paraded in the United States during the last decade (for example, by Lionel Jeffries and Yosef Ben-Jochannen) are little more than crude racist falsehoods. Were similar views to be proclaimed in Britain by white supremacists they would rightly be ignored or condemned, possibly even prosecuted under the race relations legislation. Contempt for such opinions may not be sufficient, however, as reputable bookshops in Britain carry the works of such writers and a small number of students of African descent arrive at university with their minds conditioned by such ideas. If scholarly critical inquiry is to have any intellectual authority it needs to draw a firm line between that which is reasonable and that which is not. Those who read Stephen Howe's generally charitable account of *Afrocentrism*, and it is to be hoped that many will do so, will undoubtedly be grateful that he has read and critically judged the large volume of writing that continues to promote such views. His bold study, along with the recent book by Jeremiah Moses on Afrotopia, should do much to warn the unwary that the spirit which attempted to split the American Africanist community in Montreal in 1968 is still active, and it may also serve to sharpen the critical faculties of those who would be tempted to view Africa's past and the African diaspora through a distorted racist lens.

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**Democratization in Africa**, edited by LARRY DIAMOND and MARC F. PLATTNER  
Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999. Pp. 254. £32.50, £12.50 (pbk.).

This book consists of sixteen essays originally published in the *Journal of Democracy* between 1996 and 1999. The editors regret that they could not include more articles from the journal, but this reviewer would have preferred fewer. This is no reflection on the quality of the scholarship, but there is too much overlap between the chapters.

In Section I, 'Assessing Africa's Third Wave', Michael Bratton's chapter on second elections and Richard Joseph's 'From Abertura to Closure' are the highlights. All the authors here emphasise such themes as the skill of (formerly authoritarian) incumbent rulers in securing re-election, the alleged inadequacy of foreign donors in pressing for greater democratisation, and the modest but uneven progress in developing democratic institutions, building civil society and expanding political liberties. The word 'democracy' generally follows such prefixes as 'electoral', 'pseudo' or 'virtual' rather than 'pluralist' or 'liberal'. Celestin Monga is the most pessimistic of the authors in this group with his 'Eight Problems with African Politics', ranging from suppressed civil societies to politicised armies. Bratton's emphasis on just one problem – the decline in the quality of elections – gives no greater grounds for optimism.



In Section II, 'South Africa: An African Success?' Hermann Giliomee and Robert Mattes and Herman Thiel suggest that the major problems for democracy in South Africa are, first, greater voter concern with the tangible benefits flowing from government than with the equity of democratic procedures and, second, the likelihood of indefinite rule by a party that is showing growing intolerance of criticism. The chapters on Tropical Africa highlight familiar challenges to democracy. Voting is still largely along ethnic lines, opposition parties are too busy squabbling with each other to displace governments, and former authoritarian rulers cannot easily break the habit of stamping on any institution that asserts undue autonomy. Add such individual ingredients as a largely politicised army in Ghana, government-sponsored violence in Kenya, the possibly unavailing search for an alternative to party politics in Uganda, and the wreckage caused by prolonged military rule in Nigeria, and the contributors may be forgiven for cheering such democratic advances as have been made. These include civil society insistence on fairer elections, greater freedom of expression and an apparent acceptance by rulers that they are accountable to the people in the same way as lesser mortals. John Wiseman preserves his reputation as a 'demo-optimist' by noting that The Gambia has at least moved from military dictatorship to 'liberalised authoritarianism'.

What general lessons can we draw? Going beyond the obvious points about the adequacy or otherwise of political and social institutions, economic development and political culture, we may note that, in five of the six countries studied, the transition to democracy was largely government controlled. In four of these five, the incumbents ensured that the new rules guaranteed their own re-election. But for the death of General Abacha in Nigeria, it might have been five out of five, and even there power passed to another military man. Such 'controlled' transitions would themselves help to explain many undemocratic survivals, but we also need to look at the nature of political competition. Many of the contributors note the ethnic basis of most voting, with the result that any change of government depends more on key ethnic groups changing their allegiance, which they seldom do, than on the performance of governments. When policies are frequently made in (or constrained by) Washington, the notion of choosing between rival party programmes may anyway be fanciful. There is a feeling in several contributions that foreign donors have let democracy down because their attention span does not extend far beyond witnessing semi-free elections. This may be a little unfair but, even if it is true, can democracy really be sustained by donor pressure without greater discipline among opposition politicians and a greater will to displace politicians who are found wanting?

Although Diamond's introductory chapter is useful in setting the scene, readers might have benefited from some consolidation of the chapters. In the first section, two of the chapters might have been replaced by an expanded version of Joseph's contribution without too much being lost. Similarly, an expanded version of Giliomee's chapter on South Africa could have displaced two of the others, and one chapter on Ghana would have been sufficient. This would have left room for a concluding chapter reflecting on the relevance for democracy of such phenomena as government-controlled transitions, the re-

election of authoritarian rulers, ethnic voting and external constraints. As it is, there is a gap between Diamond's general level of analysis and the thorough, largely empirical case studies. But for students of democratic consolidation, and for those interested in the fortunes of the individual countries, there is ample material to stimulate discussion. The book will add to the continued academic speculation on whether, and how, something approaching pluralist democracy in Africa can spread beyond a few enclaves such as Botswana and Mauritius.

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**In Search of Africa** by MANTHIA DIAWARA

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998. Pp. ix + 288. £17.50.

The Malian film-maker Manthia Diawara, author of *African Cinema* (1992), constructs his book with a double focus. Part is narrative, part is reflective 'situations', spin-offs from his teaching as director of African Studies at New York University. If the result seems somewhat disorganised it may be because 'I wrote the entire book in cafés and hotel lobbies'.

The narrative is autobiographical. He grew up in Sekou Toure's Guinea amid all the excitement of those euphoric early days of independence, inspired by the thrilling vision of an Africa revolutionised into 'modernity'. Then, in 1964, Sekou Toure deported all the Malians. His family moved to Bamako where he became obsessed by African-American youth culture (he and his friends organised a 'Woodstock in Bamako'), and eventually moved to the United States, 'my second home'. But he still retained a nostalgic vision of Guinea, and in 1996 returned to see what remained of it, also to locate a boyhood friend and hero, Sidime Laye.

Legends of Sekou Toure as a great magician survived in the mouths of taxi-drivers, but the vision of a modernising revolution had long faded into the reality of a corrupt, broken-down state and the memory of his brutal concentration camps. Sidime, when located, had reverted to his family's traditional occupation as a sculptor, carving masks and figures in the styles defined by the Euro-American gallery and museum market (he was at work on a 'Baga' mask). Diawara contrasts his devotion to the market stereotypes with the work of the Zairean painter Chéri Samba ('the Amos Tutuola of African art' – an inspired analogy) who creates, not follows, his market, the stereotype striking back.

The 'situations' begin with the Harlem renaissance which had so deep an influence on the francophone *Négritude* intellectuals – though not, as Wole Soyinka has recalled recently in *The Burden of Memory, the Muse of Forgiveness* (1999), on the 'tigritudinarian' anglophones. But when it came to a real face-to-face Harlem/Paris conference, organised in 1956, Richard Wright dismayed the audience by denouncing *Négritude* as a reactionary colonial vestige that ought to be swept away by the revolutionary impetus of a modernised, industrialised Africa. He had already delivered this message in his *Black Power* (1954) which Diawara sees as 'one of the most important books

ever written on Africa'. For Diawara still clings to 'modernity' as the way to transform Africa – not the corrupting neocolonial modernity which has reduced it to its present state but the 'authentic modernity' of black America 'which serves as a culture to conquer America and the world'.

This brings us to black culture which he defines, not from its particular manifestations in the church, the arts or politics, but 'as a way of life aimed at producing the black good life...created through attempts to liberate everyday life from colonizing systems...the last frontier of American modernism'. He begins with Malcolm X who at first exemplified the black modernist 'homeboy' culture but then turned away into the discourse of 'conversionism' which treats black culture as pathology. Diawara goes on with a survey of the 'homeboy cosmopolitan' black culture as he has observed it from his Greenwich Village domicile. The hip-hop youth culture he sees as creating 'a heroic space for the wretched of the earth'. It is persistently demonised, he maintains, not for its antisocial violence, which already pervades American society, but because it is a manifestation of black creativity.

He notes the influence of increased immigration from Africa and the Caribbean, whose young people know nothing of the traditional issues of Black American history (they 'are to African Americans what post-Soviet bloc Jewish *émigrés* are to American Jews'), and share the hip-hop generation's values, 'shaped in the public sphere, where performance and competition define the individual's worth', creating a transnational mentality which celebrates difference and rejects the ethnocentrism of the melting-pot philosophy. And here Diawara stops. The search for Africa seems to have been forgotten – or maybe only suspended. In 1997 he returned to Guinea and made a short documentary. Now perhaps he will go back and rework his provocative, idiosyncratic book as a film-script.

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**Growth or Stagnation? South Africa heading for the year 2000** by  
MATS LUNDAHL  
Aldershot, Brookfield, MO, Singapore and Sydney: Ashgate, 1999. Pp. 151.  
£35.

This book brings together a series of clear, coherent articles that Mats Lundahl published between 1995 and 1999, in which he outlines the debate that developed in South Africa on economic policy, and the progress (or lack of it) in policy implementation.

In sketching the background to the debate, Lundahl notes that until the 1970s the economy grew steadily, despite the government's political difficulties. From the 1970s, however, the economy went into decline, so that by the 1980s there was little or no growth in a country with a rapidly expanding population. Apartheid had proved to be both morally indefensible and economically disastrous – with its ill-educated workforce, bureaucratic rigidity, political instability and increasing international isolation. As a result, when de Klerk transformed the political scene in 1990 – partly as a result of

economic pressures – the economy was characterised by both deep inequality and widespread inefficiency.

In the new political context of the 1990s there was broad agreement that the aims of policy were to achieve both growth and redistribution. But there was disagreement about how to achieve these ideals, and, if push came to shove, where the priority should lie. The ANC, which soon became the major political player, entered the new arena with (claims Lundahl) only the vaguest economic ideas, drawn from the Freedom Charter. The ANC's first attempt to fill the policy gap resulted in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). This gave priority to redistribution, and was designed to satisfy the needs of the oppressed majority: in housing, jobs, land, water, electrification and education. It was also based on the optimistic assumption that it was possible to kick-start growth through redistribution, while, at the same time, redirecting but not increasing government expenditure.

When it became clear that the RDP was more a wish list than a sound policy the ANC replaced it with GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) in which the emphasis moved towards growth as the top priority. However, Lundahl has little faith in the success of GEAR. He argues that so far growth has been weak and uneven, and looking to the future he believes that the country will fail to attract sufficient foreign investment, and fail to control its budget deficit. The result will be continuing economic inequality, in which a favoured black elite will join 'the haves' while the great mass will remain 'have nots'. This will result in political discontent and he even discusses the possibility of an African populist party replacing the ANC at the next election in 2004.

It is clear from Lundahl's study that there is no easy way to resolve South Africa's economic dilemmas. Inequality, unemployment and lack of skills can only be remedied (if at all) over the long term; nor can redistribution be achieved by large tax increases in an already heavily taxed country. Finally, the South African government is not master of its own economic fate. It is subject to the vagaries and pressures of international developments in terms of markets and investments – as witnessed by the drop in the price of gold, the competition for investment, and the need to conform to the GATT rules. Yet, in my view, for all its problems, the new government can claim economic successes as well as failures. And my money for 2004 will be on another ANC victory.

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**The Race Game: sport and politics in South Africa** by DOUGLAS BOOTH

London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1998. Pp. 250. £37.50, £17.50 (pbk.).

In no country has the nexus between sport and politics received more attention than in South Africa. Until the 1990s, this attention was focused principally on the effects of apartheid in sport, and the campaign to isolate South African sports organisations and athletes. Events such as the 1995

Rugby World Cup and South Africa's unsuccessful bid to host the 2004 Olympics have clearly demonstrated the continued political salience of sport in post-apartheid South Africa however. Douglas Booth's *The Race Game* provides the most thorough, interesting and sophisticated treatment of this fascinating nexus to date, combining excellent research, theoretical sophistication and lucidity.

One of the great strengths of this book is that the politics of sport in and around South Africa is carefully situated in relation to both wider politico-historical developments in the country, and the scholarly literature on its political economy. It is also buttressed by valuable primary research, including interviews with key figures in South African sport and the records of parliamentary debates. Booth traces the story of sport in South Africa back to the emergence of racialism and segregation in the colonial era, to underscore the familiar but nevertheless crucial point that the dawning of apartheid in 1948 marked not a departure in South African race relations, but rather an extension of pre-existing identities and practices. He then provides a compelling account of the appalling impact of apartheid policies on sportspersons and organisations in the country. This is followed by a discussion of the escalating campaign to boycott 'establishment' (mainly white) South African sport, both outside and especially inside the country, and the contorted efforts of the National Party government and establishment sports bodies to 'reform' sports policies in an effort to stem the boycott, while simultaneously reassuring white South Africans that sporting practices would remain essentially unaltered. Booth continues with a discussion of the fraught process of negotiating the transition to 'unified' sports structures and international 'normalisation' in the midst of the wider process of transition, touching on such issues as rebel tours, sport development programmes, strategic divisions within the non-racial sport movement, and the pre-emptive role of international sports federations in fostering a shallow and illusory form of 'unity'. Finally, in a theoretically rich and illuminating conclusion, the author applies Etienne Balibar's notion of the need to 'nationalise' a country's peoples to the still-divided context of contemporary South Africa. He uses this notion to analyse the divisive politics of sporting symbols (in particular the [in]famous Springbok) and the apparently miraculous events surrounding South Africa's victorious hosting of the 1995 Rugby World Cup. On closer analysis, the 'common sense' concerning sport's unifying effects turns out to be largely illusory – in this case as in others.

Besides this original angle on the challenge of forging a new, 'rainbow' South African identity, several elements of Booth's analysis are particularly interesting and provocative. For example, he provides a sophisticated and sympathetic, yet critical treatment of the non-racial sports movement, led from the early 1970s by the South African Council on Sport (SACOS) and later by the National Sports Congress (NSC). Booth demonstrates how SACOS made a 'critical intellectual contribution to the sports debate' (p. 118), especially in the 1970s, but eventually became trapped by its own principled commitment to non-collaboration ('no normal sport in an abnormal society') and lack of strategic sophistication. Similarly, the NSC scored some early successes through a strategic combination of opposition to

rebel tours and sport-by-sport negotiations for unity (stick and carrot) but later lost control of the negotiations, muscled aside by both the ANC and international sports federations (notably the International Amateur Athletic Federation and the International Olympic Committee) as they pursued larger agendas. Also fascinating are his occasional exegeses on individuals who critically influenced South African sport. Among his 'targets' are the long-time president of the IOC, Avery Brundage, and in particular the legendary patriarch of South African establishment rugby, Danie Craven (see pp. 24–5).

In light of these strengths, there are things one might have wished for more of in *The Race Game*. For example, a fully analysis of the role of externally based anti-apartheid sports activists aligned with the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC), including pivotal non-racial sports leaders such as Denis Brutus and Sam Ramsamy, would have been welcome – all the more so because some such leaders have become prominent in 'normalised' South African sport while others have been marginalised. Booth could also have developed more fully the distinct profiles and cultural meanings of different sporting 'codes' in South Africa – notably rugby, cricket and soccer, as well as sports such as swimming and tennis. In this connection, he could have given more prominence to key divisions among white South Africans, whether real or illusory, such as those between English and Afrikaans speakers and indeed among Afrikaners. Booth occasionally indulges in sweeping statements about *all* white and/or Afrikaner South Africans (e.g. that the National Party 'captured the imagination of whites at the 1948 election', p. 27) which are at odds with the analytical depth and sophistication of the text as a whole.

These are minor limitations, however. *The Race Game* is, overall, an engaging and important study. It should be of great interest to students of both South African politics and history, and sport studies.

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**Developing Financial Services: a case against sustainability** by NORA MCNAMARA and STEPHEN MORSE

County Cork: Onstream Publications, 1998. Pp. 168. £16.99 (pbk.).

**Poverty and Debt in the Third World: confronting a global crisis** by MARTIN DENT and BILL PETERS

Leamington: RISCT, 1998. Pp. 24. £10.00 (pbk.).

These two books come from the opposite end of the spectrum on development in the Third World. Dent and Peters 'examine the case' for debt forgiveness. McNamara and Morse look at the process of promoting savings in a small part of one African country, Nigeria. To a considerable extent the books tell of two success stories. But both are flawed along the lines 'the path to hell is lined with good intentions'.

Dent and Peters argue the case for debt forgiveness for the poorest of Third World countries within the context of the campaign group Jubilee 2000, a group with which they are closely associated. The name is derived from the biblical concept of Jubilee. They show the obvious, that debt repayment, particularly the interest component, is severely limiting many developing countries' ability to make social and economic progress. The argument is made both in global terms and with reference to three 'case studies' relating to Nigeria, Malawi and Nicaragua. In reality these are a relatively short rendition of a selective series of statistics, facts and chronological events, with that for Nigeria about two pages long and less than half of that for Malawi. Perhaps one should not be too critical as this book would appear to be written more as a propaganda pamphlet than a rigorous attempt at academic discourse. But even on these limited grounds it has shortcomings. The flaw in the debt forgiveness argument lies with the moral hazard problem. Forgiving bad behaviour sets a poor precedent. Those countries who behaved with prudence will feel let down. Those who squandered loans on ill-advised projects and corruption will feel vindicated. The result is that within a few years of continuing loans, and the authors want the loans to continue, the problem will be replicated with a vengeance. The authors talk in vague terms of linking debt forgiveness to fiscal and financial responsibility, but this is unspecific and vague. They also talk about the possible impact linking debt forgiveness to environmental, drug and mass population migration issues – again waffle without substance. The Jubilee 2000 group can be rightly proud of their campaign achievements, this book adds little to the record of achievement.

The book by McNamara and Morse is much more substantial, both in length and content. Its strength lies in the account given of the problems facing attempts to promote financial responsibility and awareness at the micro level from those with 'hands on experience'. But this strength is also its weakness. The authors are too closely involved from a particular perspective to be able to give a dispassionate analysis of events, issues and problems. The focus of the analysis is on the 4,900 square miles of Nigeria which constitutes the Diocese of Idah. The story begins in 1970 when McNamara was appointed by the (Catholic) Church to analyse the development situation in the area. Inevitably, lack of money and its associated ramifications figured heavily in the list of problems. A savings scheme based on a number, initially 16, of farmers councils (FCs) was introduced. This was quickly supplemented by an interest bearing loan scheme, with the somewhat novel requirement that the loan must be repaid. From the outset the intention was that the scheme would eventually become self-sustaining.

The scheme was initially very popular and, although numbers have waxed and waned partly with the economic cycle, by 1997 the number of FCs had grown to 1907. The attraction for many farmers was the loan element, but the size of the loan was linked to the savings element and hence the concept of self-help was nurtured. Also critical was the enforcement of loan repayment by denying to FCs any new loans until old ones had been fully repaid. There were many positive spin-offs from the scheme and linkages with other projects in health and education, broadly defined. The key is trust, once this has been



established in one area, it lubricates progress elsewhere. Woman only FCs were also set up. There were also problems, and mistakes were made. In all of this the book provides a valuable resource on how to promote financial self-help at the micro level and much more besides. Where the book falls down is in its analysis of more strategic issues. Take for example their view on other agency involvement, particularly that of the World Bank. They question structural adjustment programmes imposed from above. The authors argue that there should be dialogue between donor, beneficiary and local NGO personnel on the ground. But is this realistic given the number of local practitioners the World Bank has to deal with? They complain that the donor from many thousand miles away cannot know what is best, but equally can locally based personnel always see the big picture or have the specialist knowledge to understand it if even they glimpse it? They question too, as the title of the book suggests, the concept of self-sustainability, damning it with faint praise, arguing that although, of course, desirable, it may be impossible to achieve in all but the very long run and that attempts to do so can be counter-productive. One is tempted to say 'try harder'.

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**Politische Transition und Demokratisierung in Malawi** by HEIKO MEINHARDT

Hamburg, Germany: Institut für Afrika-Kunde, 1997 (Hamburger Beiträge zur Afrika-Kunde, no 53). Pp. 432. DM. 90.

This is the second of Heiko Meinhardt's works published in the Hamburg University Africa series. The first was his study of the role of parliament in Malawi, published in 1993. Meinhardt acted as an observer during the 1993 referendum on multipartyism in Malawi. The work considered here is a study of the events before, during and after the intervention by the churches into the political arena in 1992, which subsequently led to a wider opening of the Malawian political system and to changes which culminated in multipartyism.

The research is based upon interviews, numerous newspaper reports, and also field studies conducted in 1994 and 1995: some specialised sources of documentation such as the records of Banda's economic arm (Press Holdings) have also been consulted. Relevant factors are traced, both those of general application and those unique to Malawi. The theoretical framework used is derived from Samuel P. Huntington, and attention is paid to processes which are fairly general in application but also to factors specific to Malawi (such as the age of the president, and the role of the Young Pioneers). The structure of Malawi under Kamuzu Banda is analysed, and there is a particularly useful examination of the system of patronage which operated, bearing in mind Banda's economic power with respect to both the public and the private sector. Other relevant issues considered include the heavy dependence of Malawi upon aid from developed countries, and the corresponding pressure exercised by donors at different stages in the democratisation process.

The story of the intervention of the Catholic bishops has now been told a number of times before, but Meinhardt adds new information concerning the activities of an earlier small group concerned to fight for change, which however realised the impossibility of reaching a wide audience. The Catholic Church, however, had the potential to provide a wider platform, and the 'pastoral letter' was used to promote the message. The subsequent referendum on multipartyism, and the multiparty election are examined in detail. Meinhardt notes that before the referendum Banda initiated a number of reforms and continued to use his paternal image, in the expectation that the majority would vote to support the one-party system. There was also some harassment of advocates of multipartyism, and in the Central Region even Nyau (a masked society linked to boys' initiations) was called in to discourage the campaign for change. Though Banda's hopes were not realised, it is of interest that the peasantry have not felt that they have derived much benefit from the changes. Meinhardt notes that the move to multipartyism in Malawi was very much a 'top-down' measure. Urban-dwellers, especially those literate in English, were the most active in their support for change, though the message did have some impact on the rural population as well. He goes on to show that there are substantial elements among the peasantry who have a nostalgia for the Banda government. He does, however, recognise that structural adjustment is partly responsible for recent economic difficulties which have affected the masses; and that the peasantry, even in the Central Region (which was the heartland of Banda's authority) were glad to see the end of bullying such as pressure from Youth Leaguers to buy party cards. Fieldwork which uncovered such information was not very systematic but the results seem plausible. One disappointment, however, is the fact that very little fieldwork was done among the peasants of the Northern Region, whose responses would have proved to be of particular interest. There is also a certain amount of repetition in the text.

There is detailed discussion of the role of the media, trade unions, lawyers, the business lobby and other significant actors; and also of the internal workings of the parties. The story is continued till the later 1990s, and the examination of the new developing political culture is of interest. This text provides a useful comprehensive introduction to recent political change.

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**The Invention of Woman; making an African sense of Western gender discourses** by OYÈRÓNKÉ OYEWÙMI

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. Pp. 229. £16.95 (pbk.).

*The Invention of Woman* is a challenging presentation by a Yorùbá scholar who illustrates with her work the inapposite nature of Western feminist beliefs about sex and gender in other cultures, namely her own. The point she makes is that the Western concentration on the status of women, which assumes a

category of 'woman' usually seen as powerless and disadvantaged, is inappropriate and misleading when applied to Oyo-Yòrùba where women are not strictly defined in gender terms. In pre-nineteenth-century Yòrùba society, social hierarchy was determined by social relations and the principle which determined social organisation was seniority which was based on chronological age (p. 13). Yorùbá is a genderless language, she says, but it is not androgynous. Instead 'it is genderless because human attributes are not gender specific' (p. 174). Western feminists and those influenced by them have been blind to the fact that women were not differentiated from men or subordinated to them in Yorùbá society. Oyèrónké Oyewùmi's book presents insights based on serious scholarly delving into language and historical archives of the role of women and men in the Yorùbá history. She discusses the imposition of Western ideas and customs through colonialism and in the post-colonial period. She does not spare feminist scholars, even including some who have studied the same culture but who have 'bought' the Western perspective and have insisted upon viewing Yorùbá society through its glasses.

Oyèrónké Oyewùmi's book is a departure from the majority – both Western and African – of feminist writers on Africa. Where she, like them, condemns the exploitation and distortion caused by Western domination, she goes further to show a society almost unintelligible using the common set of presumptions in feminist literature about how society is organised. Not all scholars will agree with her perspective or, perhaps, her interpretation of the evidence. But her indignation is real and forceful and her research and lucid presentation admirable.

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**Islam in Contemporary Egypt: civil society vs. the state** by DENIS J. SULLIVAN and SANA ABED-KOTOB  
Boulder, CO and London: Lynne Rienner, 1999. Pp. + 159. £39.95, £12.99 (pbk.).

This is a very clear and well-organised book on an important subject. There has been a large amount of writing on Islam in Egypt, especially since the assassination of President Sadat by Islamic militants in 1981. There has also been quite a lot on the Arab world's most populous state, though not as much as on Islam. The virtue of this book is that it relates these two themes – Islam and the state in Egypt – in a compact and clear form.

The book opens with a review of the discussion of civil society in the Middle East generally and Egypt in particular. As would be expected from the title the authors make out the case for the concept of civil society in Egypt, but they do so comparatively briefly and clearly take the view that in spite of many critics of the compatibility of Islam and civil society, the two concepts have often been mutually supporting. This is then illustrated by sketching the reform movement in Egypt historically, and showing how there have long

been Islamic as well as secular components of the emerging civil society in Egypt.

Chapters 2–5 form the core of the book. The second chapter looks at the wide character of Islamic groups in Egypt. Far from being predominantly political, Islamic groups have developed in many different spheres and are outlined here. Community and professional organisations of an Islamic character have proliferated, especially since the death of Nasser in 1970. I particularly liked a brief section on the ‘corrupt and self-serving organisations’, which have surfaced from time to time. However by chapter 3 there is a focus on the most famous movement in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood founded by Hasan al-Bana in 1928. The Brotherhood has had mixed fortunes and varied relations with the state down the years, and is fairly estimated here as an established part of Egypt’s social and political landscape. Less established are the numerous smaller groups which generally seem both more militant and more murky, one of which was responsible for Sadat’s assassination. A brief but useful survey of various groups is given here in chapter 4; concluding with an appeal to the state for tolerance of groups engaged in non-criminal activities, rather than repression of all Islamic movements. The final substantial chapter is on ‘Gender, Islam and Civil Society’. In this field so much stems from Nawal al-Saadawi and her well-known writings on women in Egypt in particular. There is comparatively little that is new here, although the authors have conducted some interviews with women in the professions. The conclusion is to link women and the question of Islam through the development of the whole of civil society: while some Islamic groups specifically embrace women members.

The conclusion turns to the theme of civil society, including peaceful Islamic groups, *versus* the state. This has certainly been the image of much of the period since World War II, but it has not been a consistent conflict. Rulers have tried to embrace some movements at least, as Sadat did with the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1970s. At the same time in a variety of ways the state has tried to make itself more acceptable to at least its moderate Muslim critics; in the process giving rise to some apprehension amongst Egypt’s important Coptic minority. It is in the opportunity for cooperation replacing conflict that the authors see the road to progress in Egypt. Islamic movements should refrain from violent political challenges to the state; while the latter should be encouraged by its friends and allies to work cooperatively with moderate Islamic groups. In this way Egypt can develop a stronger civil society. It sounds good, and some might argue that it has been the drift on both sides in the last couple of years. Some Islamic groups have renounced violence, and the state has felt itself less threatened. But how far it will go remains questionable. Those less optimistic than these authors might argue that for the moment at least the state has been successful in repressing the most extreme of Islamists, and that behind softer words and slightly Islamic gestures stands still the strong autocratic state that has been built up since the 1952 revolution overthrew many of the former vestiges of civil society and liberal-democratic government in Egypt.

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**The Sudan: contested national identities** by ANN MOSLEY LESCH  
Oxford and Bloomington: James Currey and Indiana University Press, 1999.  
Pp. xii + 299. £40.00, £12.99 (pbk.).

The title of this book reveals clearly the focus of the work. At bottom it is about the racial and religious categories which have divided Sudanese politics for almost all of the years since independence. The emphasis here is on the years since the second civil war began in 1983, and as this is the period for Sudan as a whole on which less has been produced than the earlier war and the Addis Ababa agreement, the book is to be welcomed.

The opening chapter of Part I is a discussion of the concept of national identity, including the distinction between the 'control model' of imposed identity, and the 'ethnic pluralist model' requiring some form of constitutional construct such as federalism appears to offer. And when these fail, there is the inevitable discussion of self-determination and secession. All these issues have been relevant to Sudan, though they remain largely implicit in the core chapters of the work rather than being deployed as a conceptual frame of reference for the narrative. The rest of the chapter is a brief introduction to Sudan's diversity. Part I then goes on to discuss Sudan's historical legacies; and the presidency of Numairi, which contained an extraordinary series of somersaults of lasting significance.

Part II is on the 'Democratic Period, 1985–1989' and contains three chapters: the transition, the parliamentary period, and peace efforts. It was a tragic period of lost opportunities from the moment of Numairi's downfall onwards. It showed Sudanese politics at its most factional and confusing, and ultimately most frustrating for all involved. It was like a game of chess in which the pieces made up the rules and rushed all over the board in mutually bewildering moves. It ended with the Islamist coup of 1989, which itself was, in part at least, a counter move to possible peace in the south. So many identities competing for so many agendas.

Part III is entitled 'Polarization under the Islamist Government'. The six chapters (including the conclusion) chart the way in which the new regime created its political system, both formally and informally; it then turns to the opposition which tried to overcome its fragmentation as it became clear that the Islamists were digging in; and then moves to the continuing but unsuccessful efforts at negotiation, in which many outside actors have shared the frustrations of the Sudanese. The overall conclusion is inevitably that the struggle continues and with it the attempt to find 'a consensus on the nature of the Sudanese nation-state'.

Students of Sudanese studies will be grateful to Ann Lesch for pulling so much material together in this book, though there are few new revelations. Perhaps though one has to recognise that events in Sudan are not only about contested identities; rather there are, and always have been, multiple contests. Sudan's political economy receives little mention here, but many would argue that the Islamic banking system introduced under Numairi was something of a Trojan horse for the Islamists (as well as 'entryism' into the state, especially the army). Indeed there has been a growing financial polarisation as Islamists have built new mansions and mosques (the latter allowing tax exempt import

of building materials) in quarters of the capital, while living conditions and public services for the majority have plummeted. Much of the anger felt towards the present regime is less for its attempt to impose identity than the perceived hypocrisy of Islamist affluence amidst Sudanese suffering. At the same time, the state which the Islamists have taken over and have sought to use to impose their control model remains comparatively weak: a strong grip on a weak state is a recipe for growing opposition, even amongst Sudan's squabbling factions. But the outcome of a failure of the control model may not be consensual pluralism or secession, but the continuing decay of the remnants of the state.

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**Fighting Corruption in Uganda: the process of building a national integrity system** edited by A. RUSIDAMA and P. LANGSETH  
Kampala: Fountain Publishers (distributed by African Books Collective Ltd., Oxford), 1998. Pp. 181. £9.95 (pbk.).

In a society where the individual has, traditionally, relied upon the support of the extended family, nepotism is not so much a sin as an obligation. When poverty then becomes endemic, as a result of eight years of mindless tyranny followed almost immediately by five years of debilitating civil war, the fulfilment of that obligation is widely deemed to be a virtue. It is then an easy step for those who have seized control of the tattered remnants of the economy to convert benevolent nepotism into high-level corruption. Uganda is not alone among African countries to have taken that step but, according to the contributors to this collection of essays, it is, at least, taking the lead in attempting to reverse it.

The problem, as in other African countries, is that, as yet, virtually the only means of improving one's financial status and so benefiting one's dependants is to become a member of the government – whether as a minor immigration official demanding a bribe for issuing a passport or as a senior minister taking his cut for awarding a valuable contract. In such circumstances, to try to arouse public protest against corruption is to ask the beneficiaries of the system to condemn it. As one contributor remarks, 'the problem is not just about dealing with corruption, but rather getting the subject understood at all'.

These essays reflect the views of several commentators, most of them office-holders, some of them journalists, in Uganda, and of others working for international bodies concerned with the campaign against corruption worldwide, and were presented at seminars in Uganda in 1994 and 1995. The contributors were not unaware of the formidable task which reformers face, but several of them were prepared to suggest what appear to be constructive suggestions for tackling the problem. It is, they believe, primarily one of educating public opinion and of enforcing penalties against offenders, and, of course, of paying the sort of salaries and wages which should discourage office-holders from seeking to acquire money by questionable means.

Devolving responsibility for, and the means to implement, public services upon local authorities is said by Francis Lubanga, permanent secretary in the

Ministry of Local Government, to have already encouraged public awareness of the need to get value for money. But until enforcement is clearly seen in action no amount of devolvement will convince a sceptical public, long accustomed to arbitrary action by those in authority, that change is imminent.

Enforcement, however, is not easy, as Alfred Nasaba, former director of public prosecutions, points out, because the numbers of qualified staff and the quantity of appropriate equipment in crucial departments is woefully below what is needed to perform the task. His own former office, the Auditor General's Department, the Criminal Investigation Department and the police force provide depressing examples of these shortages. Even the judiciary, one external observer notes, is not uniformly above reproach.

Augustine Ruzindama, chairman of Uganda's Public Accounts Committee and a former inspector general of government, indicates the frustration felt by those striving to bring about reform, listing a number of high-profile cases of corruption to which the inspector general's office had drawn attention but which resulted in not a single prosecution, even if lesser forms of disciplinary action were taken in some cases. Corruption, he says, cannot exist without the connivance, even if passive, of the political leadership. When the vice-president, who is responsible for overseeing the campaign, is reported in one essay as having said that to clamp down on junior staff whose wages were less than a pittance would be an injustice while to select and make examples of those higher up would create areas of extreme ill-will, decisiveness at least seems to have been lacking at the highest level.

These essays were written four or five years ago and it is possible that the government's campaign may have gained momentum in that time. The inspector general of government has, moreover, been given new powers to prosecute offenders under the 1995 constitution. But with such immense benefits at stake it will be difficult, the readers must infer, to wean officials from their old ways, and until that happens education of the masses to oppose corruption will be an unrewarding task.

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**Decentralisation and Civil Society in Uganda: the quest for good governance** edited by APOLO NSIBAMBI

Kampala Uganda: Fountain Publishers, 1998. Pp. 154. £9.95 (pbk.).

This book represents a series of essays on decentralisation in Uganda arising from a research project funded by the Ford Foundation and is available through African Books Collective (ABC). Since coming to power, the NRM government sought to establish a political-administrative framework whereby decision-making would be devolved down from the village level upwards. This provides the basis for the Decentralisation Statute which was formalised in 1993 and entrenched in the 1995 Constitution. This lays the groundwork for an ambitious programme which aimed at encouraging democratic participation by allowing local governments to take control over decisions which affected the people within their jurisdiction. This is considered to be an



important element to combatting corruption by countering the potential lack of transparency and accountability in centralised systems of government. The book proposes to answer a series of fundamental questions relating to the role and function of local governments, and in particular, in relation to finance, human resources, democracy and the capacity to deliver services. It also attempts to address the contentious issue of whether decentralisation actually empowers local populations and subsequently leads to democratisation and good governance. This book rests on the premise that decentralisation and civil society are 'indispensable pillars of democracy' by bringing decision-making closer to the people. The book is divided into six chapters with an introduction and conclusion.

The first chapter examines the role of district councils and the validity of their internal management systems. Although not particularly well organised, the chapter provides an interesting account of the many problems faced by district councils in this respect. The second chapter deals with the complex legal and institutional relationships between political and administrative leaders, and between the central and local authorities within the context of decentralisation. Although lacking a conclusion, the chapter raises some interesting points about the complex and often conflicting nature of relationships between the various actors at district level and the problems which can arise as a result. Following on from this, chapter 3 is concerned primarily with the decentralisation of public finances which is considered to be one of the 'litmus tests for genuine empowerment of the local people'. The chapter makes some important points about the weakness of audit functions at the district level and the need for training in financial management to enhance accountability. Chapter 4 addresses the issue of the human resources and personnel dimension of decentralisation, and concludes that this process has enhanced the responsiveness of service providers to the needs of the citizenry by making local officials more accountable for their actions. The fifth chapter looks into the problematic issue of where traditional leaders fit into the decentralisation process, what role they can play and the tension which can arise between these traditional elements and the political system. The final chapter provides a useful assessment of the interface between NGOs and local authorities in the provision of health and water services, and how this balance has changed with the decentralisation of power. It is clear that Uganda's decentralisation programme represents a radical attempt at building capacity and accountability at the lower levels. However, the book does not adequately address the fact that, in many districts of Uganda, the process has been plagued by inefficiency, scarcity and poor performance largely due to the lack of capacity in terms of institutional arrangements, personnel and training. There have been numerous examples of financial abuse with money being misused, 'diverted' or simply disappearing.

The book is worth reading as it provides a lot of detailed information on a subject which has received little attention to date and could provide generic lessons applicable to other countries. However, the subject is not treated in a particularly systematic manner and appears rather fragmented with some inconsistent viewpoints and repetition in parts. Furthermore, the book would have benefited from more systematic proof-reading and editing prior to being

published, as the index is inadequate and the text contains a surprising number of grammatical, typographical and referencing errors with some authors being left out of the bibliography all together.

Whilst the book provides a useful contribution to a rather small, but growing body of literature assessing the efficacy of decentralisation as a panacea for attaining popular participation and democracy, the text comes across as too pro-NRM with a lack of critical analysis, and therefore loses some credibility. This is not surprising given that a number of the authors are government ministers.

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**Marxist Modern: an ethnographic history of the Ethiopian revolution**

by DONALD L. DONHAM

Oxford: James Currey, 1999. Pp. 236. £40.00, £14.95 (pbk.).

Ethiopia's road to modernisation has been prolonged, frequently violent and beset by contradictions. Alone in Africa and one of only a handful of countries in the developing world, Ethiopia was never colonised and thus carried into the modern era its ancient polity, feudal-like system of land tenure, ruling classes, ethnocentric patterns of domination and authoritarian political culture. Unable to reform, and facing a growing challenge from the forces unleashed by modernisation programmes that Emperor Haile-Selassie initiated but could not control, the regime exploded in 1974 in the closest example of a classic revolution yet witnessed in Africa.

The very breadth of the revolution encouraged considerable academic interest, but with few exceptions this literature was centrist in focus and told us very little of how peoples outside the country's core experienced, adapted to, carried forward and ultimately rejected the revolution. Through anthropological lenses and based on some two decades of studies Donham has analysed the course and impact of the revolution on the Maale people in what is now Ethiopia's southern region. By simultaneously analysing unfolding events in Addis Ababa and Maale, and juxtaposing this with brief contrasting and confirming events and processes of the classic revolutions of France, Russia and China, Donham paints a fascinating picture of a peripheral people's experience of revolution and situates it within a national and global context. As well as contributing to understanding of the experience of late modernising countries, Donham's findings challenge some key elements of the work of Eric Wolfe, James Scott and others writing from the perspective of moral economy on the role of peasants in politics and revolution. And in the process Donham has written a very readable and sometimes even amusing book – an unusual feat in academia – even if allusions to people like Elvis Presley and Jerry Falwell may be lost on those not well versed in American pop culture.

While summarising political developments in Addis Ababa is necessary, most interesting are Donham's discussion of how modernity in the guise of Marxist revolution proceeded and the forms it took through the inter-play

between outside forces and competing local interests among the Maale. Unlike Tigrayans and Eritreans in the more politically developed north of Ethiopia, who were effectively mobilised to conduct far-reaching armed struggles against the military regime, the Maale and other peoples in the ethnically diverse south of the country initially welcomed the revolution and even in its final stages when it had little popular support did not provide a sustained opposition.

But that is to put it too bluntly; Donham shows how from the beginning the Marxist revolution made alliances with what might be called modernising elements and at the same time marginalised – but never effectively undermined – traditional elements and their many sympathisers. That chiefs and elders dominated the local opposition is not unexpected, but the fact that the regime's allies and subsequent leaders in local government were evangelical Christians from the Sudan Interior Mission is on the surface surprising. Donham explains this apparent anomaly in terms of their rejection of traditional society and higher levels of education, or in other words their commitment to modernisation. However, while the local and Addis Ababa centred modernisers initially had many interests in common, the Marxism and nationalism of the regime could not indefinitely coexist with religion, particularly one with ties to imperialist North America. Just as the first victims of the revolution in the centre were its student advocates, so its strongest supporters among the Maale were eventually cast aside as alliances were created and destroyed.

Donham's study casts new light on the conundrum and challenges of modernity in the developing world. Students of Ethiopian politics will hope that he continues his research on the confrontation between the Maale and modernity in the post-1991 period, and that Donham's study will encourage further studies from the periphery on similar themes.

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**Urban Obsessions, Urban Fears: the postcolonial Kenyan novel** by  
J. ROGER KURTZ  
Oxford and Trenton, NJ: James Currey and Africa World Press, 1998. Pp.  
228. £12.95 (pbk.).

J. Roger Kurtz's *Urban Obsessions, Urban Fears* offers a clearly written, accessible overview of an area of post-colonial writing which continues to suffer from extremely unbalanced critical attention. The towering figure of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, one of the most written-about post-colonial authors, obscures the presence of a steadily growing number of Kenyan novelists. The fact that some of these are working in popular genres such as thrillers or detective fiction also helps to account for the critical neglect, but Kurtz is concerned to include both popular and 'serious' writers in his study. (Something of the same desire for inclusiveness leads Kurtz to devote almost 30 per cent of the book to a comprehensive annotated bibliography of

anglophone Kenyan novels.) Also, while the book does not specifically position itself as an introduction, the same level of user-friendliness which is indicated by the annotated bibliography is present in the fact that in general very little is assumed in terms of prior knowledge of the subject.

The book is divided into three main sections: 'A Brief History of the Kenyan Novel'; a series of more specific, often thematic, analyses under the heading 'Urban Obsessions, Urban Fears' and the extensive bibliography. The first section is subdivided into chapters on the historical context, the 'first generation' of the 1960s, the 'golden age' of the 1970s, and the post-Kenyatta period of the 1980s and 1990s, while the second has chapters on post-colonial urban geography, popular fiction, the novels of Meja Mwangi and gender issues in contemporary Kenyan fiction. Kurtz's discussion of these covers a lot of ground, and has useful and informative things to say along the way.

Although *Urban Obsessions, Urban Fears* represents a commendable attempt to fill an undoubted gap in studies of contemporary African literature, it has to be said that it is not an absolutely successful attempt. One of the particular problems with the book is that it seems unable to decide quite what it is aiming to do/be – a general survey of the Kenyan novel, or a study of the specific terms of its title. In the end, it probably works better as the former, not least because the 'urban' tends to disappear from the discussion quite often. Indeed, we only really get to an examination of the city in chapter 5, 'Postcolonial Urban Geography', which, if we discount the Bibliography, is almost half way through the book. Even then, we don't necessarily stay with the city, still less with the ideas in the title.

Although as mentioned earlier *Urban Obsessions, Urban Fears* has an accessible, generally unthreatening air – which is definitely a positive factor – that comes at a certain price, notably in terms of its relation to critical and theoretical material. For a book of this nature, there is surprisingly little reference to secondary material, and where such material is mentioned there is little sense of engagement with debates. One example of this would be where Kurtz mentions the question of prostitution, and, in relation to that, Florence Stratton's *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender*, but fails to engage with Stratton's powerful – if ultimately wayward – argument about the way in which prostitution functions in African fiction. Surprisingly, Kurtz does not mention Ngugi's later novels in this context, when prostitution is central to *Petals of Blood* and figures significantly in *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*. In relation to Ngugi there is also the undiscussed question of why if, as Kurtz claims, the growth of the city marks such a decisive shift in Kenyan novel writing, Kenya's major novelist has only produced one book which could be said to concern itself with the city in any substantial fashion. The problems concerning critical material/debates are compounded when we turn to theory. Post-colonial theory is almost completely ignored. Scattered references to Jameson or Bakhtin give the impression of having come at second hand, and perhaps for that reason are often incorrect: thus, for example, Bakhtin becomes a Formalist, while Jameson's conception of the way in which texts attempt to deal formally and ideologically with real social contradictions is fundamentally misconstrued. Finally, in this unfortunate litany, the referencing is inadequate, particularly since there is no bibliography of

secondary and theoretical material, and the index is woefully incomplete (for instance, Ngugi is, supposedly, only mentioned once in the entire book). At one point in his discussion, Kurtz says of a novel 'It only wants a competent editor'; it is hard not to feel, with regret, that the comment applies even more to his own book.

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**Walter Rodney's Intellectual and Political Thought** by RUPERT C. LEWIS

Kingston: The University of the West Indies Press and Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998. Pp. 298. US\$39.95, US\$19.95 (pbk.).

The challenge of the modernist paradigm in areas of diasporic history and political economy by Eric Williams, C. L. R. James, Raul Prebisch and others was instrumental in shaping the thrust of what later became the dependency perspective of the 1960s and 1970s. This perspective added another chapter to modern Marxist scholarship and popularised the study of the political economy of development. Rupert Lewis' wide-ranging biographical and analytical account of Walter Rodney's political practice and writings on Africa and the Caribbean, encourages a reflection of a very fertile period of radicalised expression and thought. The life and work of Rodney spoke to the tensions and shortcomings of the Cold War era as both capitalism and Soviet-styled socialism, two claimants to the heir of Enlightenment, each invoked the logic and language of liberty and emancipation while waging terror in their names. The historical moment of decolonisation would however afford a sense of destiny and mission for Rodney. This led to a rich intellectual output, part pragmatic, part impatient activism and, unfortunately, his untimely death. Overall, Rodney aimed at raising consciousness among post-colonial peoples and centring social justice and anti-imperialism within national development schemes.

Although it was not intended, this book is a welcome boon against the rapidly growing tide of publications reflective of our time that eschew the 'political' when tackling the globalisation theme. While bemoaning putatively evaporating state authority, these texts often fail to reassert the values of the broad social and political left. Lewis is at ease with the biographical narration, inserting the 'I' in attempts to revalidate old values, such as worker solidarity, democracy, state intervention, welfare and redistribution, while also proposing new ones, such as gender equality and the right of civil society to reconstitute itself. In a cinematic sense, Rodney's life is typecast in the mould of an incorrigible progressivist optimist, non-dogmatic in method, and resistant to anti-politics discourses that immobilise agency.

The first three chapters expose the reader to the prevailing material, emotional and cultural forces that shaped Rodney's progressivism. The attempt is to establish Rodney's radicalism from his early years as the son of

Percival Rodney, a member of the Guyanese nationalist movement, onward to his exposure to C. L. R. James whilst attending the University College of the West Indies (forerunner to the University of the West Indies), through to his doctoral experiences at the School of Oriental and African Studies. Lewis thereafter manages to construct a narrative coherence in the account of Rodney's life as intellectual and activist, piecing together 'selections' of his writings and other previously unpublished documentary and anecdotal information. The selections provide theoretical and historical takes on social change and world development.

Chapter 4 discusses his important historical work, including, *A History of the Guyanese Working People, 1881–1905*, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800*, and *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. The following chapters on Rodney's 'groundings' with Rastafarianism and Pan-Africanism feature his role as political activist and the mutual feedback with his intellectual work. Before this, attention is paid to academic debates generated in the wake of the above-mentioned publications and how Rodney responded to critics who charged that his work was 'ideological'. Rodney would expose supposedly value-neutral, fact-grubbing approaches to historical writing as indeed ideological, often founded upon ethnocentric precepts and hence pro-status quo in its orientation. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* would however come to reflect Rodney's sensitivity to the empiricist bent of establishment historians, as each chapter stockpiled assets, records and documents to establish the fact of a transfer of surplus from Africa to Europe.

The effort at mapping out a coherent strand to Rodney's thought and politics invariably brings the book close to an interdisciplinary reader into the complexity and ubiquity of the problems generated by race, ethnicity, colonialism and classism. When the tone and tenor of the narrative moved from the biographical to the polemical, it seemed intended for scholars in 'developing area studies', political thought, and social history – especially those of the 'dissident' strain. Rodney, as Lewis explains, was a creative social thinker in the C. L. R. James mode, partial to neo-Marxist frames for explanation, and a political activist in service of the working majority. While acknowledging James' own decisive mentorship as historian, theoretician and activist, Lewis is careful to state that Rodney is not being compared to James. Yet through the text, James would come to function as dean and elder scholar in radical, black diasporic scholarship, providing a standard against which Rodney's work is measured. To the extent that Rodney approximates James in terms of his command of Marxian insight and his flexible use of the materialist method, the reader is encouraged to appreciate Rodney as an intellectual and historical figure of the black diaspora. This is where Rodney is eulogised.

But there are selections that make up Walter Rodney's body of work that beckon critique, chiefly his ideas on 'the politics of disengagement' or autarky, recolonisation and more generally 'dependency'. These rudimentary ideas and concepts are left unspecified by Lewis. An opportunity is missed to situate/engage these ideas alongside wider theoretical debates that have shaped development studies in the last two decades. The whole thrust of structuralist scholarship, for instance, has been to establish interconnectivity

in the texture of global relations, the impossibility of any single actor rigging the international system to its eternal benefit, and the feature of constant movement in the political economy of the world system. Whatever the intellectual forays into the subject of social change, a consensus has emerged around the modalities of ascent or upward status mobility, emphasising one: that development in the international system is always *dependent* development; two: that augmented state and private sector capacities, as well as effective bargains at the foreign and domestic level, prove crucial to development outcomes; and three: that centre–periphery arrangements are neither fixed nor pre-determined. Contra Rodney, centre–periphery relations are not immutable and more, not less, intensive linkage with the global economy conditions the structure of opportunities for an aspirant country.

This brings me to the normative bent of Walter Rodney's scholarship and Rupert Lewis' reluctance to effect a metatheoretical underclearing, or a deconstruction of Rodney's worldview. Lewis well establishes that Rodney's lifework was guided by a moral compass of concern for the problems of the Caribbean and most of Africa: racial and social injustice, pain, underdevelopment, unemployment, and agro-commercial models of accumulation. We are also told that explicit ideological critique constituted part of his political and intellectual enterprise. Currently there is an ongoing broad intellectual interrogation on the nature, character and impact of contemporary capitalism. Postmodernists, for instance, hold that people everywhere are increasingly aware of the dangers of the Enlightenment narrative of reason, knowledge, progress and freedom. What is under challenge, they argue, is the much vaunted notion that modern society girded by rational-scientific pursuits could deliver the good life. They hence recommend a willingness to confront the ways we think and act, to strip bare the very basis of thinking and acting, to interrogate its meaning and the ways we legitimate the social and intellectual 'givens' of a so-called 'reality out there'. Other critical thinkers stop short of a grand condemnation of the Enlightenment for fear of appearing to be without ground, preferring instead to query the 'state of the left' and associated orthodoxies of dissent. The point shared by Adorno, Marcuse, Wallerstein, Amin and a host of other critical intellectuals is that orthodoxies of dissent remain vulnerable as they are entrapped in the conceptual masonry of liberalism and positivism. Briefly, the liberal, positivist edifice divides global social relations into 'national' and 'international' levels and 'political' and 'economic' categories. These issues may fall outside the parameters of Lewis' project but if Rodney's intellectual work is to be rendered wholly relevant today then surely it is incumbent upon us to think about his epistemological foundations, the optimism of the intellect, and what this means for thought and action today. Surely the African and Caribbean intellectual tradition challenges the liberal worldview employing Marxian and critical concepts, but does so within the distinctly liberal architecture so described above. Lewis' affirmative reading and re/commendation of Rodney's thought would do better if acknowledgement was made of the parallel need by the Third World left to challenge this Cartesian division of our social world, or positivist ontologies. Perhaps a dash of Derrida would not be too bad, after all!



This book nevertheless remains a good companion reader for the undergraduate community interested in the dependency tradition and neo-Marxist writing in the Third World.

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**Class Formation and Civil Society: the politics of education in Africa**

by PATRICK M. BOYLE

Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999. Pp. 200. £37.50.

This book is concerned with the decreasing role of the state in providing mass public education in Africa. Economic decline in Africa has resulted in reduced state budgets for education during a period when there has also been a significant rise in demand caused by population growth. The result has been both a deterioration in the quality and effectiveness of state education and a dramatic increase in the number of private schools, particularly in urban areas. The new private schools have mainly catered for the children of well-to-do elites and the book argues that this is laying the foundation for the emergence of new forms of social stratification based on unequal educational opportunity. The 'politics' in the title of the book therefore refers to the contribution of education to the formation of power elites through separate provision, rather than how the processes and practices of such schools contribute to differential forms of political socialisation.

The book contains a useful review of debates about the nature of elites, social classes and civil society in Africa and how, over the last decade or so, the wealthy have switched from using state education to private education as a way of perpetuating their privileged position. On the positive side the result has been much greater diversity within educational systems, but this has been at the expense of equity in provision for all. The book presents empirical data from three case studies – Kinshasa, Yaounde and Nairobi – in support of the argument that the standard of public education has declined with the result that, on the one hand, there are more and more street children and local communities are more and more involved in directly financing their own schools while, on the other, that private education has both increased in quantity and improved in quality. Indeed, the European orientation of such private schools in terms of language and curriculum and their clear attempt to prepare students for higher education abroad means that they could be said to be quite consciously and explicitly creating neo-colonial elites.

I think that the initial analysis would have been improved by more discussion of the role of the World Bank in helping to create this situation – has its free market economic ideology as manifested in structural adjustment programmes actually hastened the decline of public education and increased inequality in the countries concerned? Also, I would have liked more discussion, however speculative, on the nature of the new social classes emerging from educational change. However, the book is clearly written and provides useful information on an important topic.

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**Planning & Management in the African Power Sector** by LUCY KHALEMA-REDEBY, HAILU MARIAM, ABEL MBEWE and BEN RAMASEDI

London and New York: Zed Books in association with the African Energy Policy Research Network (AFREPREN), 1998. Pp. 302 + xvi. £45.00, £16.95 (pbk.).

This book examines the power (electricity) sectors of four African countries: Botswana, Ethiopia, Lesotho and Zambia. After an introductory chapter by Professor V. Ranganathan, in which he presents an overview and identifies some of the key themes arising from the subsequent chapters, attention is turned to the four individual countries. Each of these country analyses, though presented in their own individual manner, covers some similar territory: there is a history of the national power sector, an outline of the physical arrangements (distribution of sources and loads, for example), a description of the institutional structure and a measure of the 'efficiency' of that particular country's power sector. The book concludes with a postscript, in which Stephen Karekezi (AFREPREN's director), Lugard Majoro and John Kimani explore the issues raised in the book, particularly in light of some of the events that have occurred since the authors completed their respective chapters.

Among the book's strengths, two in particular stand out. One is the wealth of data about these four countries' electricity industries that has been brought together in this volume. Given the difficulties that are often associated with securing information about some parts of African countries' economies, analysts will find this book to be a valuable resource. The second is the deep understanding of the countries' electricity supply industries that the four authors bring to their studies. Information is presented with confidence, and the wealth of statistical data is complemented by clear qualitative descriptions of the individual national power sectors.

Moreover, the book should not only prove useful to those who are interested in any of Botswana, Ethiopia, Lesotho or Zambia: it presents material that has wider applicability as well. In particular, various institutional structures are described and investigated; the economics of various generation and transmission alternatives are presented; and some of the key dilemmas presently facing power utilities are identified. Among these are questions of revenue generation, the access to electricity (and equity issues more generally) and the impacts of the world's (and the continent's) growing interest in regionalisation. Virtually all electricity analysts in sub-Saharan Africa have to confront these issues.

But – as recognised by Karekezi and his colleagues in the book's postscript – other issues that are presently near the top of the agenda for most African energy planners receive much less attention. The structural changes that many electricity utilities around the world (including several in Africa) are presently experiencing are creating new challenges – many of which are critical to effective 'planning and management'. These include, for example, deciding the appropriate role for independent power producers; determining the extent to which the traditional power monopoly should be 'unbundled' (if at all); and managing the transition from 'government as owner/operator' to

‘government as regulator’. Given the rapid pace of change in the electricity industry during the 1990s, this is not meant to be a criticism of the book; instead, it is meant to alert the reader to the fact that the book might occasionally need to be used in association with more recent publications.

Additionally, the book is less about the ‘African Power Sector’ than it is about three national power sectors in southern Africa and one in Eastern Africa. Though, as mentioned above, many of the issues investigated have relevance beyond these four countries’ borders, it is largely left to the reader to make explicit the connections. West Africa, with its different resource mix and institutional influences (particularly those of the French) is not covered, nor is North Africa, which has particular characteristics again. Again, however, this observation is offered simply to give the reader a sense of the range of issues covered in this book. Indeed, the issues that are covered are generally covered effectively. For this reason, *Planning & Management in the African Power Sector* should prove to be a valuable resource for many.

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**On Crown Service: a history of HM Colonial and Overseas Civil Services, 1837–1997** by ANTHONY KIRK-GREENE

London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 1999. Pp. 276. £25.

This book, in a very real sense, marks the end of an era. When Hong Kong was returned to China, HM Overseas Civil Service (the successor to the Colonial Service) was wound up. Moreover, the Corona Club, the ‘nearest thing ... to a notional Colonial Service Club’, disbanded itself in 1999 after a hundred-year history. It is the Corona Club which, as one of its final acts, commissioned the publication of this book. There would never have been any doubt that the Club would turn to Anthony Kirk-Greene to write it. Kirk-Greene has devoted his entire career to the Colonial Service, both as its servant in Nigeria and as its student and scholar in Oxford.

Kirk-Greene faced very real problems in researching and writing it (obviously to a tight schedule). On the one hand, the PRO sources were almost limitless. On the other, many materials were either closed (personal files) or destroyed under statute. Moreover, publications, autobiographies and memoirs by former members of the Colonial Service are almost legion. To all of these we can add records and papers at Rhodes House and the National Library of Scotland (among others) and oral history projects at Oxford and the Empire and Commonwealth Museum in Bristol as well as publications in the ‘Plain Tales’ form. Perhaps sensibly, he decided that only an administrative history ‘from above’ was possible, a decision which inevitably shifted the centre of gravity into the twentieth century. The nineteenth-century background is disposed of in fewer than ten pages and the majority of the secondary text is devoted to the Second World War and after. It is a thoroughly authoritative empirical account, fleshed out with extremely valuable tables, a number of them dealing with Africa.

Given the manner in which the book was commissioned, it would have been

tempting for Kirk-Greene to produce a purely celebratory account. There is an element of celebration here, but the author has included criticisms of the Service, particularly those by insiders like Leonard Barnes and Leonard Woolf, as well as Harold Laski's famous 1938 assault. By Kirk-Greene's own admission, the most notable gap in the book is the relative paucity of material on the technical and professional services. Here is an area of increasing significance to scholars of colonialism, in the histories of medicine, scientific services and the environment which figure so prominently in modern studies. They were often Cinderella services and they remain so here. While Kirk-Greene was of course attempting to span the entire colonial empire, it is surprising that he made such little use of Hailey's *Surveys* or E. B. Worthington's *Science in Africa* of 1938, a remarkable compendium. Even J. W. Cell's book on Hailey (Cambridge University, 1992), which contains several relevant chapters, is omitted.

A great deal remains to be written about the Colonial Service and scholars will, of course, produce more critical accounts, particularly relating to specific territories and regions. But all will find this book a vital starting point, not least because of the richness of its appendices, which take up more than half its length. It is an invaluable source in a number of respects. It contains the fullest bibliography of books about the Colonial and Overseas Services yet published. Useful lists are provided for technical services and for women, either as employees or as wives. There are extracts from Colonial Service Regulations, white papers and speeches; material on recruitment, appointment and training; key policy despatches; as well as an abridged history of the Corona Club. In all of these, Africa figures prominently.

Despite his retirement, Kirk-Greene has other projects in hand, and it is apparent that he will continue to illuminate the workings of the Colonial and Overseas Services, as well as point the way to the most valuable sources for some time to come. His has been a remarkable odyssey and, as this book illustrates, he has bridged the worlds of administration and scholarship with considerable acuity, balance, and elegance.

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