

in their view tends to substitute noncontroversial traditional “culture” for history and continues the unfortunate trend of centering historical presentation on “the triumphs of ‘big men’” (especially Mau Mau heroes) rather than on “ordinary people’s struggles” (205). Moreover, the tendency of the exhibit to encourage “binary oppositions” (e.g., resisters versus collaborators) discourages “critical inquiry” into the complex realities of the past (212). The book’s conclusion quotes the response of “one elderly Maasai woman” to a survey questioner who asked her “What makes you Kenyan?” Her answer was telling: “Being a Swahili speaker, holding a national identity card, and nothing beyond this” (232). The authors lay most of the blame on “the political class,” whose self-serving actions since 1963 have fueled the desire of ordinary citizens “to retreat into the comfort of localized ethnicities” (232).

A few concluding remarks of my own. On the continent, Kenya’s struggles with history and memory may most closely resemble South Africa’s, with the key role of white settlers in both countries. Annie E. Coombes’s fine earlier work dealt, in part, with tensions over monuments and memorialization in South Africa. *Managing Heritage, Making Peace* is a sensitive, thought-provoking work. My only serious criticism deals with the limited role of Karega-Munene in the book; he wrote the admirable first chapter, “Origins and Development of Institutionalised Heritage Management in Kenya,” but he was not, at least apparently, involved in the rest of it. I was disappointed that the introduction and conclusion were written just by Annie Coombes and Lotte Hughes.

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**Myles Osborne, ed. *The Life and Times of General China: Mau Mau and the End of Empire in Kenya*.** Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2015. xviii + 282 pp. Map. Notes. Index. \$26.95. Paper.

General China (Waruhiu Itote) was one of the three senior Mau Mau forest generals, and the only one to survive. Wounded and captured in January 1954, he was tried and convicted but saved from execution and spent the rest of the Emergency in detention, where he became close to Kenyatta. After independence he took up a career in public service, wrote his memoirs, and died a hero in 1993. However, like his fellow forest leaders Dedan Kimathi and Stanley Mathenge, though for different reasons, he was a controversial figure, denounced by some as a turncoat who saved his neck by betraying others. As Miles Osborne makes clear, he was a man plagued by uncertainty and deep conflicts, characteristics he shared with many on both sides of the war: that is one reason

that Mau Mau continues to haunt the imagination, and why Itote's career deserves attention.

Osborne has put together an important collection of documents, primarily for upper level undergraduate teaching but also of interest to scholars. It includes archival material that is not otherwise easily accessible, together with a characteristically nuanced and thoughtful forward by John Lonsdale, an introduction that explores Itote's life and times and provides full context for the sources, and a short but useful discussion of the development of the historiography of Mau Mau. Wisely, however, Osborne does not venture too far into the thickets of historical debate, which have made Mau Mau as conflicted in memory as it was in life. Like all primary documents, the texts published here raise problems of interpretation and require careful analysis, with due consideration of the purposes they served and the circumstances under which they were produced. They include an abridgement of Itote's memoir (*"Mau Mau" General*, published 1967), the notes of his lengthy interrogation after capture, the transcript of his trial, and a transcript of the only handwritten letter that appears to have survived. The interrogation notes were written up after the fact for wide circulation and drew on additional material. They focus almost exclusively on military matters, providing the fullest picture of Mau Mau organization then available. If Itote and his interrogator discussed other concerns, they were unfortunately not recorded. Even if the collection is necessarily focused rather narrowly on the war itself, undergraduates will get a good sense of the procedures that determined life and death during the Emergency.

Osborne's introduction is thorough and evenhanded, and it deals directly with the central issue of Itote's career after capture: his involvement in an abortive government attempt to persuade forest fighters to surrender en masse. The fact that this move to end the war in early 1954 failed, through miscommunication or possibly sabotage, does not minimize its potential importance—much suffering might have been avoided—but it did perhaps cloud Itote's reputation. His assertion that he was actually on his way to surrender (and to claim amnesty) when he was captured seems implausible and was rejected in court, but his expressed wish to end the fighting is far less so. His interrogation and trial statements contain clues suggesting a desire to limit the impact of violence on ordinary Kikuyu, and what we now know of debate and dissension in the forest provides further context for such a view. While the full force of counter-insurgency had yet to hit civilians in the Reserve, and it was probably too early to conclude that the war in the forest was already lost—the security forces did not think so, hence the importance of Itote's capture and interrogation—he may well have come to believe that by taking up arms Mau Mau had already earned the right to be heard and that escalating violence might destroy the community. We cannot know, but this possibility is worth debating.

In all this is an excellent and expertly compiled collection. Those teaching seminars on late colonial insurgencies or on Mau Mau and Kenya

specifically will be glad to have it, and the volume also adds to the ongoing scholarly debates over Mau Mau.

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## **POLITICS, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, AND GLOBALIZATION**

**Susan Thomson. *Whispering Truth to Power: Everyday Resistance to Reconciliation in Postgenocide Rwanda*.** Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013. xxvii + 258 pp. List of illustrations. List of abbreviations. Note on Kinyarwanda language. Glossary. Index. \$27.95. Paper.

In this book Susan Thomson analyzes peasants' everyday resistance strategies to Rwanda's National Policy of Unity and Reconciliation, shedding light on how state power interacts with everyday life in the politically tense context of postgenocide Rwanda. Through its bottom-up perspective, the book is an important and innovative contribution to the literature on this intensely researched country.

The introduction frames the author's research as a lived experience. Thomson provides rich insights into the story behind the findings and the life path that led her to engage in this research, an important but often ignored aspect of ethnographic studies. The first chapter explains the book's methodology, which is based largely upon participant observation and life history interviewing. Thomson is a careful researcher and meticulously explains the judicious ways in which she engaged with her participants. Her account of the safeguards to guarantee the well-being of her participants may serve as important guidance to others conducting research in highly tense political environments. Most primary data in the book are drawn from detailed life histories of thirty-seven Rwandans in Southern Rwanda. Given that this is a limited sample, it would have been interesting to have more information about how and to what extent these peasants represent a cross-section of the Rwandan peasantry.

The second chapter provides a historical overview of Rwandan state-building and how it has instrumentalized ethnicity as a tool for domination and consolidation of power. The chapter offers an interesting overview of the important scholarship on Rwandan history that was produced before 1994. The chapter illustrates how the strategic design and reconfiguration of history on the part of political elites seeking to reinforce their own power positions have been practiced in both the past and the present.

The third chapter builds upon the second by analyzing in more depth how the postgenocide regime has instrumentalized its own (re)interpretation