

cosmopolitan ones, alongside embassies, high commissions, local politicians, and successful commercial families. At the same time, paradoxically, they maintained a strong emphasis on keeping a low profile. As visible strangers, even when holding a local passport, they perceived themselves to be vulnerable. Similar developments can be seen with Indians in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. But there are also some fascinating differences. After Lebanese independence in 1943, the Lebanese government recognized the importance of its diaspora in terms of remittances, investments, charities, and knowledge. The government encouraged the Lebanese emigrants to come back and participate in the newborn state. By contrast, the Indian government began overtures towards its diaspora almost fifty years after its independence.

I would have liked to see this study more generously framed within the most recent debates on diaspora and compared with other diasporas. We might then have been able to answer questions such as: what makes the Lebanese case unique, and where do we see similar patterns with other diasporas? However, I deeply appreciate Arsan's attempt to describe the experience of migrants who live ordinary lives, try to make a living, and seek new opportunities in the context of imperialism, racism, state-building projects, and a constantly changing local and global environment. This book deserves a wide readership in migration studies, African studies, cultural studies, and political science.

GIJSBERT OONK

Erasmus School of History Culture and Communication, Rotterdam

THE ERITREAN MUSLIM LEAGUE

Paths Toward the Nation: Islam, Community, and Early Nationalist Mobilization in Eritrea, 1941–1961.

By Joseph L. Venosa.

Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2014. Pp. xix + 283. \$29.95, paperback (ISBN 978-0-89680-289-6).

doi:10.1017/S0021853716000116

Key Words: Eritrea, decolonization, identity, Islam, nationalism, religion.

The present work is a major contribution to the history of Eritrean nationalism and Islamic movements in Northeast Africa. It is a political and social history of the Eritrean Muslim League; its evolving 'righteous struggle'; its major personalities, and its various antecedents, successors, opponents, and antagonists. The author makes three principle arguments. First, the Muslim League was a critical public forum for the emergence and articulation of Eritrean national identity. Second, the Muslim League emerged from a confluence of local dynamics and developments in the wider Muslim world that shaped its distinctive organizational identity and, in turn, the larger nationalist movement of which it was a part. And finally, Joseph L. Venosa argues that it was a key precursor to the nationalist armed struggle. These arguments rest upon the author's adept survey of an impressive range of under-utilized sources: a considerable number of Arabic and Tigrinya newspapers published by the organizations in question; numerous interviews

with former activists and their relations; and archival material from institutions in Eritrea, Great Britain, and the United States. As such, this work is a welcome addition to the specialist literature on Eritrean politics during the eras of the British Military Administration and the subsequent federation with Ethiopia, with which it systematically engages.

The book is a rigorously chronological study in nine parts. The Introduction surveys the main arguments, the local and international context for Islamic modernism, and the underlying source material. Seven narrative chapters follow. Chapter One sets the stage by examining the ferment of the early 1940s, focusing on rural unrest amongst Tigre-speakers, the emergence of Mahber Fikri Hager, and the Bet Giyorgis conference. Chapter Two examines the foundation of the Muslim League in 1946 and related formative developments, which include the expansion of its membership, the issues taken up in its newspaper *Sawt al-rabita al-islamiyya*, and the arrival of the Four Power Commission. Chapter Three considers the stormy events of 1948–9, which included heightened Ethiopian intervention, brigandage, the defection of league President Sayyid Abu Bakr al-Mirghani, the assassination of Abdul Kadire, and the emergence of the Independence Bloc. Chapter Four examines the fascinating schisms that developed in 1949–50 that produced the Massawa-based Independent Muslim League, the Muslim League of the Western Provinces, and occasional Salafist voices. Chapter Five takes up the strategic repositioning just prior to federation, while Chapter Six explores the fate of the Muslim League amid the broken promises and increasing anti-Muslim sectarianism of the federal era. Chapter Seven examines the proliferation of Muslim political organizations in the early years of the armed struggle, the emergence of diasporic nationalist activism, and the impact of these on the Eritrean Liberation Front. The Epilogue recapitulates the main arguments.

Rich in detail and drama, this nuanced analysis offers many provocative insights. One relates to the heterogeneity and cosmopolitanism of the Muslim League's base and leadership, themes illuminated by the author's heuristic model of a 'nationalist contact zone'. Venosa ably documents how the programs and civil society institutions of the Muslim League accommodated a diverse range of actors, spanning the divides of town and country, activist and scholar, and language and sect. The author expertly outlines the shifting politics of this distinctive nationalist coalition, which were manifest in organizational and interpersonal conflicts as well as disputes over strategy. An equally fascinating finding relates to the impact of extra-regional and/or international developments on the course of local events: these linkages are manifest in the influence of political discourse from the wider Muslim world, such as pan-Arabism and the implications of the Pakistani model for Eritrea, as well as Atlanticism and human rights discourse.

This work has greatly enhanced our understanding of the political, intellectual, and social history of Eritrea's Muslim communities in a pivotal though comparatively understudied era. It is for this reason an important contribution to the specialist literature on the modern history of Ethiopia and Eritrea and their fraught political relationship. The book's later chapters on the student movement offer a welcome addition to the debate that is currently raging over the nature of student radicalism in these countries and the revolutionary movements they spawned. The book will attract the interest of specialists

of Islamic Africa, British imperial history, early United Nations history, and of decolonization more generally.

JAMES DE LORENZI
CUNY John Jay College

VIOLENCE EXCEPTIONAL AND UNEXCEPTIONAL

In Idi Amin's Shadow: Women, Gender, and Militarism in Uganda.

By Alicia C. Decker.

Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2014. Pp. xviii + 244. \$80, hardcover (ISBN 978-0-8214-2117-8); \$32.95, paperback (ISBN 978-0-8214-2118-5).

doi:10.1017/S0021853716000128

Key Words: Uganda, gender, human rights, masculinity, memory, military, violence, war, women.

Alicia Decker's book can be characterized as a social history that focuses on women's experiences of the military state and the dialectical relationship between gender and militarism during the years of Idi Amin's regime (1970–9) in Uganda. Through successive chapters that deal with a diversity of women's lived experiences during the regime, she unravels the ways in which new constructions of masculinity and femininity emerged in the context a culture of state violence and militarism – and likewise, how these gender roles, behaviors, and practices influenced state-society relations on the ground. Decker also charts the ways in which emerging gender roles were related to the performance of gender during the military regime.

Chapter One makes use of primary and secondary sources such as published memoirs to unearth Amin's autobiography and the context of militarism and violence that shaped him. Chapter Two explores women's oral histories and memories to examine how Amin utilized violence and hyper-masculine performances to consolidate and maintain political power. Chapter Three assesses women's narratives and newspaper accounts to track state-led women's decency campaigns, such as the banning of the miniskirt in Amin's Uganda. Chapter Four details the contradictory effects of the Economic War and expulsion of the South Asian population in Uganda, outlining how racialized economic nationalism led to forms of economic empowerment for some urban Ugandan women. Chapter Five explores Amin's role in Uganda's participation in the UN decade for women and women's international politics, particularly through the lens of foreign affairs ambassador, Princess Elizabeth Bagaya of Toro. Finally, Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight use women's narratives and memories to discuss the impact of disappearances of women's male kin during the regime, the beginnings of state collapse, and gender-based violence, and how women dealt with the fall of the regime.

Decker's study is a fine contribution to histories of militarism in Africa, African gender studies, the study of the state in Africa, and scholarship on Uganda in the 1970s in particular. While Decker focuses largely on women's memories and experiences, she