

## Reviews

**Democracy in Africa: The Hard Road Ahead** edited by MARINA OTTAWAY  
London and Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997. Pp. 176, Hb. £35.95.

This admirable compilation of thoughtful essays reviews the balance sheet of political transformation in sub-Saharan Africa at mid-decade. It offers a clear-eyed and hard-nosed assessment of the obstacles to constructing democracy on a continent where supportive social and economic conditions are largely absent. While sceptical about democratic prospects for most African countries, the contributors arrive at their conclusions through seasoned reflection rather than prejudicial pessimism. With few exceptions, these realistic essays are well worth reading.

The volume originated in a 1996 workshop on Democracy in Africa organised by the African Studies Program of the School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at the Johns Hopkins University. Editor Marina Ottaway set the tone for the project by rejecting the paradigm of democratic ‘consolidation’ as both too premature and overly teleological for Africa’s divergent and extended transitions. Instead, she urges attention to political power, especially as exercised by incumbent leaders (even elected ones) who resist the redistribution of authority that necessarily accompanies democratisation. In the ‘dangerous in-between period’ immediately following political openings, she sees politics as being concerned primarily with ongoing power struggles rather than the construction of formal political institutions. In a related subtext, Ottaway argues that democracies cannot be deliberately engineered, least of all by outside aid donors who seek to force the pace of founding elections or institution-building.

Some chapter authors faithfully follow the editor’s framework. Several themes keep recurring: for example, the difficulty of legitimating democratic regimes under conditions of persistent economic crisis; the small size of the politically active middle classes and their lack of economic autonomy from the state; and the hijacking of political reform initiatives by authoritarians bent on clinging to power. On this last topic, Michael Schatzberg’s comparative analysis of Zaire, Kenya and Cameroon is helpful in clarifying the dynamics and explanatory factors behind blocked reform. And David Gordon’s piece on the international context warns us not to harbour unrealistic expectations about the ambiguous will and very limited experience and capacity of foreign aid donors as agents of democratisation in Africa.

Other contributors break with the editor’s admonitions by adopting the language of consolidology along with its concern for political institutionalisation. Some chapters even focus on the roles of specific institutions – political parties, interest associations and civilian control of the military – in deepening shallow democracies. At least one author (Eboe Hutchful) perceives a ‘transformed’ political landscape in Africa that contrasts with the editor’s view that ‘the continuity appears much more striking than the change’.

But differences of opinion are welcome on a subject on which the dust has barely settled. The merit of this volume is that it raises many interesting issues about post-transition politics, only a couple of which can be selectively considered in the remainder of this short review.

In separate chapters, Nicolas van de Walle and Carol Graham begin to explore the complex connections between political and economic reform processes. These authors arrive at the strikingly similar (and perhaps counter-intuitive) conclusion that democratic change and economic stabilisation are basically compatible. While van de Walle proposes a political explanation for the feasibility of economic reform in some neo-democracies (hinging on short transitions and long honeymoons, as well as the cohesion and strength of the ruling group), Graham is much more cautious about the direction of causality (seeing rapid economic adjustment as a prerequisite for breaking up entrenched political interests). Further debate along lines opened up by these authors should help to reveal the assorted dynamics and sequences of dual transitions in different African countries.

Another pair of chapters takes up the issue of state–society relations, but from a novel angle. Peter Lewis and Jennifer Widner independently hone in on the linkages between interest associations and political parties. Based on case materials from Nigeria, Kenya and Côte d’Ivoire, both authors paint a picture of a fragmented civil society with few durable bonds to a factionalised class of politicians. They concur that party systems have been shaped more by ties of identity and patronage than by the aggregation of shared material interests. While Lewis explains these characteristics in politico-cultural terms (state repression and the ethnic segmentation of society), Widner takes a political economy tack (based on the scarcity of private resources and the cost calculations of political leaders). Both authors agree, however, that a lack of cohesion among non-state groupings in most African countries undermines the possibility of sustainable opposition movements and of the effective institutionalisation of countervailing power.

Because this book puts such important but understudied items on the research agenda, it can be recommended to anyone with a serious interest in understanding Africa’s contemporary political challenges. While not everyone will agree that raw power always trumps political institutions in determining Africa’s democratic prospects, it is surely an argument that is worth debating.

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**Subsaharan Africa in the 1990s: Challenges to Democracy and Development** edited by RUKHSANA A. SIDDIQUI  
Westport and London, Praeger Publishers, 1997. Pp. 221, Hb. £47.95.

In her introduction to this volume, the editor assures the reader that ‘this book surveys the major political, economic, social, ecological, and gender-related aspects of Africa’s struggle toward democracy in the 1990s’ (p. xiii). Based on this one might have expected that these, undoubtedly important, topics would

have been handled in such a way as to relate them closely to the overarching theme of democratisation, thus producing a thematically coherent collection of essays. Unfortunately, as with many edited collections, the overall focus is extremely loose and we are presented with a very diverse group of essays each of which essentially follows its own agenda. A further problem is that the book as a whole suffers from a marked lack of original empirical research in Africa (Mary Osirim's essay on women in Nigeria is a partial exception to this). In addition, most of the authors adopt a rather prescriptive approach, suggesting what ought to happen in Africa rather than analysing what has happened.

In spite of the above general criticisms it must be said that some of the individual contributions merit serious attention. Larry Diamond's largely conceptual discussion of civil society and the building of a 'culture of democracy' tackles important questions with an analytical rigour which could have usefully been applied more widely within the book. My only query is his decision to define civil society in such a way as to make its positive relationship to democracy purely axiomatic. Rather than defining civil society in solely structural terms, locating it between the state and society in general, Diamond adds a normative ideological dimension based on acceptance by units within civil society of notions of 'partialness and pluralism'. In this way one can 'define out' of civil society any groups which fail to pass this democratic litmus test. In reality, acceptance of partialness and pluralism by groups is likely to be fluid, situational, ambiguous and changeable.

William Minter provides a thoughtful and interesting examination of the conventional wisdoms put forward to explain the breakdown of the democratisation process in Angola in 1992, when UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi pulled out of an election in which he appeared to be heading for defeat. In examining the frequently voiced criticism that the process was too much based on 'winner take all' rather than aiming at a power sharing outcome, Minter poses the largely rhetorical question, 'did Savimbi return to war because he did not get a *share* of power or because he did not get it *all*?' (p. 49) (author's emphases). Earlier in his analysis Minter has already made clear that, whilst Savimbi (and some of his international supporters) may have anticipated electoral victory, the UNITA leader had largely avoided the demobilisation of his army (as agreed in the Bicesse negotiations) thus retaining the military option if the desired political outcome was not forthcoming. One of the most refreshing aspects of Minter's essay is that it avoids all the cold war ideological rhetoric which has so often obfuscated discussions of the interminable Angolan crisis.

Larry Swatuk contributes a challenging analysis of the potential economic and political problems facing Botswana, hitherto regarded as post-independence Africa's greatest success story. Problems arising from a restructured regional political economy are exacerbated by the operation of sets of vested interests amongst the political elite. However, whilst Swatuk provides a useful corrective to uncritical optimism, his view of Botswana potentially heading 'down the road toward a Kaplanesque "coming anarchy"' (p. 103) appears, to this reviewer at least, as presenting an exaggerated doom and gloom scenario.

If Siddiqui had exercised rather greater editorial discipline over some of her

contributors, a better, more coherent book might have emerged. As it stands, the book's merits, especially in relation to its cost, must be regarded as distinctly moderate.

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**African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters between Sufis and Islamists** edited by DAVID WESTERLUND and EVA EVERS ROSANDER  
London, Hurst, 1997. Hb. £40.00 Pb. £15.95.

This is an interesting and timely collection of articles which seeks to discuss the various forms of Islam found in Africa today, and how they interact. The reference to 'African Islam' is concerned primarily with the often localised forms of Islam, especially those portrayed by Sufism, while 'Islam in Africa' is used to refer to the modern or reformist Islamist tendencies which have been growing in the continent. The collection falls into three parts: the opening chapters cover general themes; the central chapters are country cases; while the later chapters are on a number of field studies.

The thematic section opens with John Hunwick on 'Sub-Saharan Africa and the wider world of Islam' in which he points out that the historic flow of travellers to and from the great centres of Islamic theology has long kept Islamic links alive in the continent. Today that relationship still exists, and thus, while Africa is sometimes regarded in the west as marginalised, that is not how it is regarded in the Muslim world as a whole. Gerge Joffe follows with a discussion of the Maghrib in which he focuses on the delicate balance between Sufistic popular Islam and the rise of Islamism. Abdullahi An-Na'im moves on to a more legalistic and philosophical approach in examining issues of Islam and human rights in the Sahel region, especially the extent to which applications of sharia in Sudan in particular have rejected 'Western' concepts of human rights. In contrast, he argues that there can be a marriage of cultural diversity, including Islam, and international human rights norms. An unusual contribution is offered by Justo Lacunza-Balda on 'Translations of the Quran into Swahili'. While many Muslims argue that the Quran cannot be translated since Arabic is the language of Allah's revelation, it is argued that Muslim translators into Swahili have in fact contributed significantly to the Islamist movement in East Africa.

The country cases begin with Tomas Gerholm on contemporary Egypt. Though in many ways more Middle Eastern than African, its historic role has been such that a knowledge of developments in Egypt is very relevant for Islam in Africa, and this chapter provides an excellent summary. He reminds us that having once been seen in terms of Arab secularism, manifestations of Islam have increased dramatically in recent years, extending far more widely than simply the Islamist movement itself. Indeed such has been its resurgence at a popular level, that the government has had to seek to improve its Islamic credentials as well. From Egypt the collection moves up the Nile to Sudan where the Islamists, in the form of a coup backed by the National Islamic Front (NIF), took power in 1989. Muhammad Mahmoud's chapter ranges in

time from the rise of the Sufi orders in the Funj period, to their involvement in party political rivalry in the years before and after independence, and on to the challenge to Sufism mounted by the Islamists in power. (It is worth adding that the NIF was originally an offshoot of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, and that since 1989 it has been repeatedly charged by Egypt with helping terrorist acts by Egyptian Islamists.)

Sossie Andezian opens the field studies with a discussion of Sufi women in an Algerian pilgrimage ritual. Though apparently marginalised in the ritual, Andezian argues that they are in fact able to express their overall integration into the rituals. Rose Lake discusses a Senegalese mahdi with the intention of illustrating the complex and delicate ways in which Sufism and politics interact in Senegal. She also shows the gap that may exist between African Sufis and the influences of more orthodox Islam powered by Arab oil money. The life of an Islamic judge in northern Cameroon is the subject of the chapter by Lisbet Holtedahl and Mahmoudou Djingui, and in particular, the manner in which he became threatened by the Islamist movement. Islamic reform is also at the core of Roman Loimeier's chapter on Abubakar Gumi and the Yan Izala Movement in Northern Nigeria.

The collection concludes with a discussion by David Westerlund of reasons for the rise of Islamism. His argument that the rise of Islamism reflects a reaction to Western influence is unremarkable, as is his emphasis on the positive provisions made by the modern Islamic movements to impoverished African communities, whether Sufi or non-Muslim. In claiming to provide a moral order for modernity as well, the impact of Islamism in Africa is not so different from that which it has had elsewhere in the world, albeit sometimes with significantly different outcomes: let us hope that the Taliban are kept at a distance from Africa.

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### **Political Ascent: Contemporary Islamic Movements in North Africa**

by EMAD ELDIN SHAHIN

Boulder, CO and Oxford, Westview, 1997. Pp. 275, Hb £43.

This volume is a detailed survey of contemporary Islamic movements in Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria. It is to be particularly welcomed since a large proportion of the literature in this area is published in French. The author identifies four major approaches adopted by analysts towards understanding Islamic revivalist movements – those of 'crisis' in which Islamism is derived from a phase of crisis in a society's social relations, the 'success' or triumphalist approach, the 'developmental-social' whereby Islamism is seen as largely accruing from social and economic development, and the 'historical-cultural' perspective. The last of these perspectives is adopted in this book, which explains the rise of Islamism in terms of a Toynbee-esque theory of challenge and response.

The book is written in a generally accessible style and should prove useful for those teaching courses on the Maghreb and Islamic politics. The roots of

contemporary Islamism in North Africa can be found in the colonial past, during which Islamic revivalist movements surfaced in a variety of forms in the three societies encompassed in this volume. Islamic revivalists were anxious to purify what they considered to be a corrupted Islam that was infused with mystical Sufi ideas and prone to collaborate with French colonial authority. The overthrow of French colonialism, led, though, to the emergence of secular-orientated nationalist movements and the marginalisation of Islamic revivalism. In the case of Algeria, especially, Islamic revivalists were persecuted for their opposition to land reform and nationalisation of business. It was only in the latter part of the 1970s, especially in the wake of the 1979 Iranian revolution, that Islamic revivalism began to resurface in any serious manner in North Africa. Shahin's study is good in detailing the rise of Islamist movements in the 1980s and enriching his analysis with accounts of ideas of the key leaders involved in them, such as Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj in Algeria and Rashed al-Ghannoushi in Tunisia. There is also a survey of articles in various Islamist journals of this period in order to reveal the general intellectual climate from which Islamic revivalism emerged.

This survey also details the progressive politicisation of Islamism and drift towards confrontation with the governing regimes of the three countries surveyed. Shahin sees Islamist political movements in the region as populist and continually prone to being captured by the demands and pressures of the streets. His account of this process is uneven, with quite competent portrayals of the Tunisian and Algerian cases but on rather weaker ground with Morocco, which he confidently predicts will not reproduce the growing chaos of Algeria. In the latter case, Shahin narrates the drift towards civil war after the suspension of the 1991–2 elections and the failure of the Rome Platform of 1994, though he fails to explain why the civil war has developed with such savagery. Also, the book offers no insights into how far Islam can influence diplomatic mediation in the escalating Algerian crisis which threatens to destabilise the whole Maghreb region. Nor does it examine the role played in the development of Islamism by diaspora communities from the Maghreb in Europe, especially France. Overall though, this is an impressive study which is likely to establish itself as a generally reliable guide to Islamic revivalism in the Maghreb.

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**HIV and AIDS in Africa** by DOUGLAS WEBB

London, Pluto Press, and David Phillip Publishers and University Of Natal Press, South Africa, 1997. Pp. 258, Hb. £35.00 Pb. £13.99.

Douglas Webb states that this is not a textbook but a volume intended 'to present a study of the epidemic in a way which is accessible to all' (p. xii). Certainly this clearly written text takes an holistic view of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa with a view to making recommendations for effective prevention programmes.

In the first chapter Webb presents us with a 'social geography' of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Southern Africa, including data on epidemiology, transmission patterns, age and gender differences in infection and maps charting regional patterns of infection. The second chapter provides us with his quick sketch of previous work on the HIV epidemiology. He criticises early anthropological research which defined African sexuality as 'deviant', calling it 'racist arm-chair anthropology' seeking easy explanations. It would have been preferable here to have named sources. Subsequent research on HIV/AIDS was an extreme 'knee jerk reaction of some analysts away from the focus on culturally determined automaton towards the political economy' (p. 32) (again without naming sources). As a social geographer, Webb's theoretical position combines Giddens's ideas of structuration with a concern for the 'influence of place'. His primary data were collected in five sites (two sites in the Transvaal including Soweto, two in Natal and one in Namibia). Consistency in naming the sites in the charts would have saved the reader a great deal of time, e.g. sites are referred to variously by the name of the village, the district, the province or by site number.

His methodology generated data on both the objective analysis of the context of HIV spread and the subjective environment of individual perceptions and behaviour. Five 'units of scale' (the individual, household, community, region and nation) are used. Primary data were collected on individuals, households and communities through semi-structured, open-ended questionnaire interviews (500 people in the five sites plus focus group discussions in three sites). Data on the region and the nation are from secondary sources. Chapter 3 is a comprehensive description of the political economy of HIV/AIDS in South Africa, the macro-determinants of the pandemic, government and NGO responses, and the context of HIV/AIDS (migrant labour, transport networks and health structures). Chapter 4 presents the behavioural contexts of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. His questionnaires explored the perceptions of the sample communities about sexual behaviour relevant to HIV/AIDS, proxy indicators for sexual behaviour such as teenage pregnancy, determinants of STDs, prostitution and condom use. Chapter 5 further explores the community responses to HIV/AIDS... including awareness of AIDS as a problem, the stigma which attaches to those suffering from HIV or AIDS and attitudes to AIDS orphans. These were, for me, the most interesting chapters, providing glimpses of real peoples' views and attitudes.

Finally, in keeping with his concern with the application of knowledge to prevention the last chapter addresses the effectiveness of prevention programmes. He rightly asserts that prevention packages must be wideranging and holistic. To be effective, they must address environmental aspects affecting sexual behaviour as well as the behavioural motivations of the individual. Too many programmes address symptoms not causes, ignoring contextual factors which might have been addressed at a local level. Programmes have concentrated on short-term, technical interventions to halt transmission of the virus. In Webb's view, the major problem of HIV/AIDS prevention programmes is that ordinary people prioritise the economic crisis over the threat of HIV/AIDS. In light of this, effective prevention programmes



should in the medium and long term generate services and employment as well as initiatives to restructure gender relations (lessening women's dependence on men with fairer allocation of land, inheritance and division of property after divorce). In my experience he has put his finger on the greatest difficulties in slowing the spread of HIV/AIDS. The necessary inputs would be so large and go so far beyond epidemiology that HIV/AIDS must be regarded as a development not a health issue. This requires an infinity of resources and a major conceptual shift by the medical profession, researchers and the state.

This book has much to offer. It is a thorough examination of HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa with much interesting and useful information about the incidence, geographical spread and behavioural determinants of sexual behaviour (Chapter 4) and community resistance to HIV/AIDS (Chapter 5). The final chapter on HIV/AIDS development programmes pinpoints how the cause, spread and continuation of the disease owes more to issues of development than to medicine. My major reservation is that Webb does not quite manage to integrate the quantitative and qualitative data. His qualitative data gives glimpses into people's attitudes but not a sense of an integrated daily life of meaning and practice. Neither is the qualitative data adequately integrated into the macro data on political economy. Too few connections are made between community attitudes and perceptions and the material and economic realities of the area. As a result, the conclusions of the last chapter, excellent as they are, are less convincing than they might have been.

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**Regional Integration and Co-operation in West Africa: A Multi-dimensional Perspective** edited by REAL LAVERGNE

Trenton, New Jersey and Ottawa, Africa World Press and International Development Research Centre, 1997. Pp. 350.

There seems to be a new realism sweeping through the African continent, which has impelled some commentators to talk of the 'African Renaissance'. This 'reawakening' has an economic and political dimension, as witnessed by the various democratic transitions, and the growing confidence to seek and implement African solutions to African problems. Economically, there is the pragmatic embrace of the market, and the revitalisation of civil society. This renaissance also involves a re-thinking of pre-independence borders and a move towards regional cooperation. None the less, the discourse on the balkanisation of African economies is not new, and was central to Nkrumah's *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, in which he argued that the balkanised nature of African economy and society was a major obstacle to economic and political transformation. He saw economic integration as a major step towards continental unity, a *sine qua non* for political and economic development.

Globalisation has been accompanied by the growth of 'regional economic'



centres such as the EU, NAFTA, ASEAN and SADC. Regional integration is most highly evolved among advanced capitalist nations, and least developed among Third World nations, particular among those in Africa. In both developed and underdeveloped countries, economic integration always seems more palatable to politicians and policy makers than political integration, as sovereignty is jealously protected.

This volume examines various aspects of regional integration: theoretical, economic and cultural, and also regional institutions, donor perspectives and human rights. It is largely the outcome of a conference on Regional Integration in West Africa, held in Dakar, Senegal, in January 1993. It is the most significant text on this topic since Arthur Hazlewood's, *African Integration and Disintegration*. Contributors include academics, politicians and policy makers whose stated objective was to examine the reasons for the failure of regional integration and cooperation in West Africa. The prerequisites necessary to put regional integration back on the agenda are identified. The book is divided into three main sections and sixteen chapters.

The major achievement in the area of regional integration in West Africa has been the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States. In his contribution, Bundu points to some of the obstacles impeding regional integration, such as: the absence of integration culture; excessive concern with nation building in the post-independence period; political instability and suspicion among African leaders about each others' intention; and colonial legacy as reflected in the Francophone/Anglophone divide. Other factors not fully discussed in the text include the paucity of intra-African trade, particularly in industrial products, and the lack of complementarity of African exports. Adotevi in his contribution implores African leaders to ground regional integration in their own historical and cultural roots, by doing away with what is seen as the artificial colonial construction which now represents the African nation-state, as opposed to the more inclusive cultural forms of the pre-colonial era. The role of informal cross-border trade is a source of disagreement between contributors. Bach and Meagher see informal trade as destructive since it tends to undermine the legitimacy of the state as well as hindering the process of regional integration. By contrast, for Adotevi the growth of informal cross-border trade is indicative of the fact that social and cultural identities transcend national borders. This assertion tends to underestimate the impact the nation-state has had on the cultural and political identity of individuals.

The inclusion of a human rights aspect of regional integration is a welcome development. Widespread transgression on human rights with impunity is all too common a feature of the African political landscape. Quashigah's contribution points to the need to strengthen regional institutions to enable them to support the cause of human rights, not just in West Africa, but in Africa as a whole. However, what is lacking in this contribution, as with most of the others, is the absence of a sociological perspective on human rights. In a region which has witnessed bloody civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, where the major victims of human rights violation have been women and children, very little is said about these groups. Presumably this is the product of the narrow concern with legal and political institutions, rather than human

agency; or perhaps it is a reflection of the gender skewedness of the contributors. This observation apart, those interested in regional integration in Africa will find the collection a useful reference on which to draw.

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**Gendered Encounters: Challenging cultural boundaries and social hierarchies in Africa** edited by MARIA GROSZ-NGATE and OMARI-H. KOKOLE

New York and London: Routledge, 1997. Pp. 243. Hb. £45 Pb. £14.99.

The contributors to *Gendered Encounters* explore the 'gendered nature' of the 'cultural flows' that traverse cultures in Africa, cultures that were once represented as bounded and homogenous. The comprehensive introduction by Grosz-Ngate and the postlude by Kokole, frame the ten essay contributions. The essays draw upon detailed ethnographic studies carried out on the continent, to examine how local cultures are informed by global cultural forces, 'through the prism of gender' (p. 1). The theme of the 'gendered nature' of cultural flows is innovative, challenging the notion that ethnic identity is the fundamental cultural identity, a concept common in ethnographic studies of cultures as bounded wholes. In this respect the collection is a valuable addition to recent studies of multiple cultural identities in Africa (Werbner and Ranger 1996).

Greene examines the gendered constructions of pre-colonial and colonial Anlo-Ewe ethnicity. In pre-colonial Anlo-Ewe society, enslaved women were integrated into Anlo families and their marriages to stranger men served to forge economic alliances. When colonial administration allocated headships to descendants of enslaved women, women were redefined as 'insiders' in Anlo politics, leading descendants to emphasise enslaved women over paternal links to stranger men (p. 34). Feeley-Harnick examines how gendered European theories of political hierarchy and reproduction informed colonial representations of Malagasy female political leaders. Aware of the political implications of European representations, Malagasy leaders sought to protect the 'generative force' of the polyarchy by portraying female leaders as the marginal 'figureheads' expected by Europeans, while safeguarding Malagasy sovereignty over land (p. 164).

The contributions by Moss, Hodgson, Rosenthal and Bernal explore how gendered religious identities inform constructions of modern and traditional political economy. Moss analyses how the Methodist missionaries in colonial Southern Africa instructed African women to redefine their cultural identities in the process of conversion to Christianity. While men were restricted to the domain of wage labour, women were redefined as dependent housewives, encouraged to consume 'modern' European goods. Hodgson and Rosenthal analyse the gendered nature of spirit possession. Hodgson examines *orpeko* possession among Maasai women in Tanzania, arguing that *orpeko* spirit possession is a 'gendered mediation of modernity' (p. 112) which articulates women's opposition both to the male domination of economic and political

domains and to male definitions of Maasai 'tradition'. Rosenthal examines how, through possession by 'northern' slaves, southerners within religious orders in Ghana, Benin and Togo seek to transcend past inequalities of slave owning. In doing so, Rosenthal concludes, gender is 'leveled out', working as a 'traveling sort of trope' (p. 199), rather than a bodily reality. Bernal examines how Sudanese male migrant labourers working in Saudi Arabia have introduced a new 'modern' Islam to the village. The Islamic practices of village women are denigrated by the returned migrants as 'backward' and 'less Muslim' (p. 148).

The focus upon gendered cultural flows, rather than static socio-economic positions, gives nuances to the contributions that deal with political, economic and social issues. Concentration upon the cultural also encourages the examination of new themes in African gender studies. Gondola analyses how participation in popular music in colonial Kinshasa allowed women to renegotiate gender relations. Women were defined as the 'traditional' element within colonial urban centres, yet performing African music provided women with a medium through which they could question the European values that marginalised them within the urban economy. Mugambi examines how 'traditional' oral narratives are used in contemporary radio songs to construct collective gender identities and articulate a gendered construction of the nation. Lake and Ebron reflect on the theme of gendered mobility between the West and Africa. Lake focuses upon gendered identities within the diaspora of slavery, examining processes of identity formation among contemporary diaspora repatriates to Africa. Ebron analyses Western sex-tourism in the Gambia, illustrating how post-colonial power differences are 'inscribed in different configurations of mobility' (p. 242).

The contributions provide new perspectives for the study of gender in Africa and raise several issues for further research. However, the one weakness in the collection is that, with the exception of Rosenthal (p. 199), the authors do not explain exactly how they define the concept of identity, and psychological and social constructions of identity are intertwined in an uncritical way. Given that the use of the cross-cultural concept of identity has been problematised relatively recently (Rouse 1995), it would have been interesting to find out how the contributors approached this question.

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**Foreign Aid in a Changing World** by PETER BURNELL

Buckingham and Philadelphia, Open University Press, 1997. Pp. 268. Hb. £50.00 Pb. £18.99.

This useful introduction to the study of foreign aid offers an informative survey and whets the appetite for further research. Although the literature is rather mechanically surveyed (in 'point by point' form), the points raised are insightful.

The book begins with a definition of foreign aid, drawing attention to the importance of 'quality'. The difficulties of defining 'quality' arise throughout

the book but, in Chapter 1, 'quality' is defined with reference to such factors as: recipient countries' characteristics (e.g. whether aid is focused mainly on the lowest income per capita); the extent to which aid is grant (rather than loan) related; the extent to which aid is channelled through multilateral institutions (e.g. the World Bank). Donor countries seek to improve 'quality' by attaching conditions for recipients but 'aid's worth as an instrument of leverage can easily be overestimated' (p. 26). Decisions on aid allocation affect quality. Chapter 2 considers allocation criteria (e.g. a country's demography, economics, poverty and suffering, special relationships, and past performance). However, 'experience has taught the enduring importance of political, commercial and other non-developmental influences...' (p. 43).

The moral case for giving is considered in Chapter 3 but, in this highly charged normative literature, it is not surprising that 'the most critical weakness of moral and related arguments for foreign aid is that they fail the test of universal acceptance' (p. 62). Chapter 4 turns to a justification for giving based on enlightened self-interest. It can be argued that resource transfers generate increased demand for goods in developed countries, diminish threats to world peace, and promote environmental concerns related to the 'survival of the planet'. Again the author provides a 'point by point' critique.

Chapter 5 considers the 'need' for development assistance. While there is discussion of savings-investment and foreign exchange 'gaps', the failure of aid programmes over so many years is also relevant. Chapter 6 continues the 'case for the prosecution', i.e. that foreign aid has no justification. Criticism from the 'left' (e.g. that aid simply promotes capitalism) and from the 'right' (e.g. that aid is wastefully dissipated in the public sectors of recipient countries) are evaluated.

Chapter 7 marks a change in orientation from general issues to specific concerns. Initially the focus is on aid receivers. Although 180 countries receive foreign aid, around 50 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have an increasing share of total assistance (up from 27.9 per cent in 1982–3 to 35 per cent in 1994). North Africa takes between 10 and 15 per cent of total overseas development aid. Aid is not perfectly focused on low-income recipients (e.g. per capita aid to Israel in 1987–8 was twenty-six times the average of all aid recipients and more than the average income of people in Tanzania and Zambia). The chapter considers countries of the 'third world' and 'second world' and later (in Chapter 11), attention focuses on the transition economies of Eastern Europe. Chapter 8 deals with specific donor countries and Chapter 9 with multilateral agencies and non-governmental bodies.

One of the most interesting chapters (Chapter 10) focuses on the 'modern politics of aid' (i.e. the declared intention in the 1990s to employ aid for the purpose of engineering systematic political reform in recipient countries). The World Bank's declaration of interest in governance in Sub-Saharan Africa in 1989 arose from dissatisfaction with the record of adjustment lending. However, it was Western political leaders who seemed enthusiastic to link aid to democratic considerations and human rights. The end of the Cold War and popular revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe highlighted an opportunity; the waning of public support for overseas aid emphasised the need

for a more expansive aid agenda. Even so, evidence suggests that a 'competitive political system' is not essential for the efficacy of overseas aid. Kenya (1991) and Malawi (1992) provided early cases of collective donor action to withhold or suspend new aid in order to apply pressure for political reform and improvement in human rights. However, a consensus emerged that, outside exceptional circumstances, threats to sever aid in the event of non-compliance with political conditions would not be effective. Moreover, the commitment of donor countries to such goals has also been questioned.

With an expansion of the objectives attached to aid provision, the problem of assessing the 'quality' of overseas aid has become more difficult at the very time that government budgets in donor countries have faced increased pressure. However the author concludes that poverty continues to generate a 'need' for foreign aid (29.4 per cent of the world population lived on under \$1 a day in 1993 as compared with 30.1 per cent in 1987). This introductory text provides a critique of 'broad' issues and supplies specific, detailed, information. However, the critique of 'broader' issues serves to highlight the problems of any specific evaluation of the 'quality' of foreign aid.

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**The United States and the Horn of Africa** by OKBAZGHI YOHANNES  
Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 1997. Pp. 353. b. £50.00.

Okbazghi Yohannes has produced a richly detailed chronicle of the intersection of United States foreign policy and political developments in four Horn of Africa countries in the post-World War II era. The author relies heavily upon official documentary sources, his own personal knowledge of politics in the region, and supplementation principally by periodical sources. On this foundation he guides the reader through the intricacies, problems and outcomes of political developments in this deeply troubled region as they have been interpreted and influenced by domestic actors and the American foreign policy community from presidents on down through ambassadors.

The author brings to bear upon his subject the theoretical perspective that US foreign policy is animated primarily by the interests of American capitalism, though he does not suggest that American foreign policy is in any way unique in this regard. He argues that under 'introverted' Hamiltonianism in the nineteenth century 'the primary responsibilities of the state were to provide subsidies and protection for domestic enterprises and to promote foreign trade' (p. 3). With American industrialisation went an internationalisation of the interests of capitalists, such that 'external markets and investment outlets had become indispensable' (p. 3) and with it the imperative of an 'internationalised' foreign policy. It is through such lenses that Ogbazghi Yohannes invites us to examine the practice of foreign policy in the Horn of Africa. He contends that four structural factors underpin what he perceives to be a private-sector dominated foreign policy: (1) the 25 per cent

or more of US GDP that is produced by US overseas business operation; (2) his assertion that ‘the US the leading exporter of goods and services to the rest of the world’ (p. 336); (3) a ‘widening and deepening of global capitalism’ under the influence of the on-going scientific and technological revolution which produces ‘a more or less homogeneous international labor market, accentuating the redundancy of labor everywhere’ (p. 336); and (4) his assertion that the US economy ‘is essentially a permanent war economy’ that has been driven by ‘the logic of the Cold War and military Keynesianism’. He argues that ‘the inescapable result’ of his last factor has been that ‘defense corporations have become the driving engine, not only of the American economy, but also of American foreign policy pertaining to the international accumulation and transfer of arms’ (p. 338).

Through such lenses Ogbazghi concludes that, after much debate and pulling and hauling, America has sustained its Cold War era perception of Ethiopia as the ‘natural anchor’ of its regional policy, working with a new post-Mengistu regime, of which he appears to approve, against regional rather than Cold War era-based threats to security. He chronicles a US foreign policy suspicious of Eritrean nationalism, skeptical of an independent Eritrea’s importance to its interests, and an essentially pro-Ethiopian rather than pro-Eritrean foreign policy, shaded by gestures aimed at reconciliation between the two countries prior to Eritrean victory. He traces the debacle of US foreign policy in Somalia, noting that without the ‘destruction of pre-capitalist decentralization and primordial traditions’ this state that is not truly a state cannot ‘complete its evolution’ (p. 255). Nor, he perhaps implies, can it be of much use to what he regards as materially driven US foreign policy. He concludes that while Sudan’s on-going divisions ‘problematize world capitalism’ (p. 331), the US will continue to view Sudan for its ‘proximity to the oil riches of the Middle East’ even as its previous interest in Sudan as bulwark against communism, in the author’s view, prepared for the current Islamic regime’s antipathy to western dominance.

The book’s strength is also its principal weakness. In its attention to policy setting detail it overlooks some broad political dynamics of fundamental importance in the four countries, e.g. the impact of the 1992 elections in Ethiopia that shipwrecked its path to true democracy. In dealing country by country it neglects to address political patterns distinctive to the Horn that influence each country, e.g. the fragility of colonially defined states. Its emphasis on the importance of economic interests in American foreign policy, while unquestionably important, detracts from the balancing of many interests which the book itself shows clearly were at play in each country. It also leads the author to ignore, quite unfortunately, the contributions and insights of many well-informed scholars on all four countries, some of whom he simply dismisses, for example, as ‘Ethiophiles’ in the case of Ethiopia.

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**Social and Political Dynamics of the Informal Economy in African Cities: Nairobi and Harare** by KINUTHIA MACHARIA  
Lanham and Oxford, University Press of America, 1997. Pp. 221. Hb. 54.

This book is a welcome addition to the literature on African urban economies, by a Kenyan sociologist now teaching in the United States. In one sense its title is very accurate, for this study of the informal urban economy focuses on social and political dynamics more sharply than any previous African study, its main message being the paramount importance of social connections and networks in the functioning of small-scale economic activity. In another sense, the title is less exact, for this is essentially a study of Nairobi, where intensive fieldwork was undertaken in 1987–9, with only brief comments on Harare, and with no discussion of how far these are representative of ‘African cities’. As cities established within tropical Africa by Europeans, largely for Europeans, they are of course rather exceptional, although their distinctiveness has been sharply reduced in recent years. In most African cities micro-enterprise was well established long before it began to emerge in post-independence Nairobi. However, there is little doubt that most of the findings of this study would prove to be at least equally valid, and perhaps even more salient, in Lagos, in Abidjan or in Kinshasa.

The ‘informal economy’ is here rather narrowly defined, embracing only legal occupations, and excluding activities such as urban agriculture. The Nairobi fieldwork involved a questionnaire survey of 200 garment makers, metal workers, metal drum sellers and food sellers. The study provides much valuable insight into the operation of these enterprises, including the mixture of harassment and support from state agencies. Chapters 4 and 5 explain the development and implementation of policies by the Kenya government to support the *Jua Kali* (literally ‘hot sun’) sector of the urban economy, and to report on inquiries in several towns in the early 1990s regarding their impact – clearly positive in some cases. However, the core of the book is Chapter 7, entitled ‘Social networks and the dynamism of the informal sector’, which stresses the great importance of ethnicity, kinship, friendship and trust as prime determinants of how things work. Superficially, there might seem to be a clear dichotomy between these influences on the one hand and the state on the other: but, of course, such a dichotomy is far from clear-cut due to the recent ‘Informalisation of the state’ – the title of the tantalisingly brief Chapter 6, which indicates how these influences operate within the state also. Clearly, friends in high places are essential if the state is to provide support rather than harassment for any particular group.

There are useful chapters on the gender dimension, and on the role of the small enterprise in poverty alleviation; but both seem to be appended rather than integral to the main discussion. And the book ends with policy recommendations which are so brief that it might have been better to omit them. After all, this book is saying little that is new to decision-makers in Nairobi, or even African cities in general: its value will be mainly in injecting more reality into the academic study of African urban economies by outsiders.

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**Keep On Knocking. A history of The Labour Movement in Zimbabwe 1900–1997** edited by BRIAN RAFTOPOULOS and IAN PHIMISTER  
Harare, Zimbabwe, Baobab Books, 1997. Pp. 164. Pb. \$16.00/£8.95.

This slim volume was written ‘primarily to provide the labour movement in Zimbabwe with a general overview of its history’, with the title coming from a unionist’s urgings to an audience seventy years ago. It is published at a time when organised labour is playing a very prominent role in Zimbabwean politics, with the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) recently being castigated as an opposition political party by the president, and its general secretary, Morgan Tsvangirai (who gives a foreword to the book), being assaulted and hospitalised by ZANU supporters. As a collaborative project with a number of leading academics it is also addressed to a much wider audience concerned about urban politics in Zimbabwe (and it is exclusively available in the UK through African Books Collective Ltd., Oxford).

The book consists of four differently authored chapters, structured chronologically, which present narratives of the roles of organised labour. The narratives draw on a bank of oral testimonies taken from activists by the ZCTU’s own Oral History Project (begun in 1994 and funded by the German foundation, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung), as well as more established academic research (published and unpublished). The chapters are uninterrupted by references, but livened with quotes (archival and from interviews) and photographs (from the National Archives and newspapers). General acknowledgement of the main sources used, and advice on further reading, is given at the end of each chapter, and appendices give information about the Oral History Project, summary biographies of interviewees, and a chronology of events. Not surprisingly, each of the chapters has a different style and relies on different types of sources, but all follow more or less the same structure of a chronological account of the ways in which workers managed to organise their lives in response to the oppressive and violent actions and ambitions of employers and the state in colonial Rhodesia and independent Zimbabwe. The text celebrates the achievements of past and hidden heroes, and documents long and difficult struggles, but also contains political lessons and insights for the present, although the latter are left implicit for readers to draw independently.

The first chapter (by Ian Phimister and Charles van Onselen) covers the period 1900–45. Both the authors have published major works on this period and draw on their own and others’ research to summarise this turbulent, violent and very eventful period of labour relations. They also review some of the more dramatic implications for gender relations of the ruptures in the social fabric caused by employment practices on the mines.

The other chapters cover periods of roughly half the length and are able to draw on fuller records of labour history. The second period, 1945–65 is covered by Brian Raftopoulos, who has also published on urban history elsewhere, and here begins to make use of the oral testimonies of the ZCTU project. He sets out a history which is today often forgotten, and which has parallels elsewhere on the continent, where a full-time proletariat was in the

making and activists were engaged in a struggle to claim rights in the new urban space. The period 1965–80 (by Julie Britain, who is the coordinator of the Oral History Project, and Brian Raftopoulos) covers a period in which workers' struggles were caught up with nationalist politics and the struggle for independence, the historiography of which to date has more often tended to focus on the roles of leaders and rural activists. The chapter's narrative also highlights the ways in which Cold War politics were played out through international trade union networks and organisations. The final chapter focuses on the period since independence, and is written by another accomplished researcher, Lloyd Sachikonye. He highlights the role of ZCTU and workers more generally in public protests against the government, once the honeymoon period after independence was past, on issues which range much wider than workers' rights, including government corruption and economic policy.

There evidently is need for such a book as this; so much more scholarship on Zimbabwe has had a rural focus that the recent resurgence of urban politics has often been analysed in ignorance or neglect of the country's long histories of urban and industrial organisation and political action. None the less, as with all texts which force a singular narrative, there is a sense in parts of the book of a closing off, rather than opening up, of history. Disputes and divisions in the movement find rather muted expression here, and where there might be differences in interpretation in the sources used these are not made explicit or possible to trace in the text because of the absence of references. Moreover, the focus on the male worker is only erratically counterbalanced by a glance at the social terms on which men were able to win battles and build trades union organisations. Ironically, the first chapter, where the sources are mostly archival, pays most attention to the implications for gender relations, and only tantalising mention is made in the others of the kinds of sacrifices made by women and older people; whether these were made willingly or not is left unexplored.

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**Reconciliation through Truth: A Reckoning of Apartheid's Criminal Governance** by KADER ASMAL, LOUISE ASMAL and RONALD SURESH ROBERTS

Cape Town, David Philip, New York, St Martin's Press, Oxford, James Currey, 2nd edn 1998. Pp. 231. Pb. £12.95.

This is the ultimate castigation of apartheid rule in South Africa. Apartheid is described as an evil crime against humanity, a heresy, a form of genocide, a deliberate policy of socio-economic pillage, an anathema, by design a tribal exercise in state-sponsored looting. With all that, Verwoerd is described as paternalistic!

Genocide, it is explained, is a legal concept, not a question left to 'subjective impression and linguistics', and includes measures which destroy national culture, political rights and national will. There need not be a specific

intention to cause deaths (nor, presumably, actual deaths) for genocide to take place. The book raises the question whether family planning authorities under apartheid were accomplices in genocide.

Apartheid was directly inspired by Nazism; the Broederbond was remodelled on the lines of the Nazi Party, and whites, including liberals, were its collaborators.

Whites – ‘South Africa’s Aryans’ – are collectively responsible for apartheid, comparable to the ordinary Germans who were Hitler’s willing executioners. Daniel Goldhagen’s book of that title is the sole authority on the Holocaust cited here. Another construct which the authors canvass is the ‘corporate war criminal’ for which Japanese precedent is cited.

The Political Interference Act of 1968 which banned parties with non-racial memberships is mentioned, but not its intention to destroy the Liberal Party with its sizeable black membership and following, and to emasculate the Progressive Party. Liberal and radical whites outside the ANC get short shrift: Jill Wentzel is an apartheid apologist; Charles van Onselen a Verwoerdian. Surprisingly, only Margaret Ballinger, the leader of the elitist and gradualist element in the Liberal Party committed to the Cape liberal tradition of political rights for ‘civilised’ persons, is mentioned with approval.

The ANC was the world’s most law-abiding liberation movement, guided by the Freedom Charter which provided a beacon for liberation across the globe, ‘both anticipating and contributing to the global human rights consensus’. The history of the ANC was suffused with the principles of non-racialism; its armed struggle guided by an unimpeachable morality. (When the present reviewer tried to join it in 1958, he was directed to the whites-only Congress of Democrats.)

The book is partly intended to exculpate members of the liberation movement from crimes committed in the course of the struggle against apartheid. It argues that offences against the regime should be nullified, for ‘one cannot sin against a system that is sin itself’. The task of the new state is to perform ‘what amounts to a secular sacrament; defining what is criminal and what is not’.

The protagonist of this book is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a strange melange of confessional, tribunal and recording angel, which is influential far beyond its power to grant amnesty to the perpetrators of crimes committed during the apartheid era. Its task will be to lay bare and roots of South Africa’s violent past, including confronting South Africa’s privileged (i.e. whites) with their complicity in that past. Its ultimate task is to build ‘a new and ethically decisive’ political culture.

The authors reject a Nuremburg Trial – this would allow ordinary people to remain outside the process and ‘parrot the world’s demonisation of the few in the dock’. However, earlier this year one of the authors, an ANC cabinet minister, shouted at the opposition in the parliament at Cape Town: ‘if you want a Nuremburg Trial you will get one’. After P. W. Botha’s appearance in court for refusing to appear before the Commission, its chairman, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, referred to a Nuremburg Trial as undesirable. Clearly the issue weighs on the ANC.

With a foreword by Nelson Mandela, this book provides insights into the

thinking of the new South Africa's intelligentsia, and the political interests which they legitimise. It is written in a racy, sometimes poetic and occasionally perfervid style. For all the moral fervour, its analysis of apartheid is banal and pedestrian, a scissors-and-paste job which ignores most contemporary scholarship on South Africa.

ALF STADLER

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**The Political Economy of South Africa. From Minerals-Energy Complex to Industrialisation** by BEN FINE and ZAVAREH RUSTOMJEE  
London, Hurst and Company, 1996. Pp. 278. Hb. £35.00 Pb. £14.95.

This book provides a new look at the history of economic development and industrialisation in South Africa. The authors base their analysis on two criticisms they have of the current literature on this subject, namely; an ignorance of the 'social relations' of production, and the failure of current theories to be rooted 'in the realities of the South African economy'. Their main concern is that scholars have under appreciated the dominant role of the minerals-energy complex (MEC) in shaping South African industrial policy. In response, the authors endorse a more active role for the state in guiding economic development and argue that 'restructuring the balancing class interests' should be a goal of state policy makers. Specifically, they suggest the South Korean model of 'extensive state intervention' in the economy to bring about 'successful industrialization'. Though they raise several interesting questions about the course of economic development in South Africa, their solutions to these problems are ultimately unsatisfying.

They begin by recognising that the 'acclaim by which democratization was greeted has to be tempered by the understanding that it is compatible with continuing, even deepening, economic inequalities'. This remains a challenge facing many political leaders throughout Africa. The authors believe these inequalities are caused, in part, by the fact that policy makers downplay the role class interests play in shaping the patterns of industrialisation.

To support this argument the authors present a wealth of data on the history of industrial development in South Africa between 1950 and 1990. These are the book's strongest chapters. Their descriptions of the shifting nature of corporate interests, the development of industrial conglomerates, and the ascendancy of 'Afrikaner capital centers', *vis-à-vis* those controlled by Europeans, are especially compelling.

However, the methodological approach they use to analyse these data is insufficient to fully answer the questions they raise. Their *agency-linkage* model is underidentified and fails to convince the reader that previous studies have seriously misrepresented the role of class interests in state policy. Nor is this problem unique. They are unable to overcome questions that have dogged other class-based approaches to economic development. For example, which socio-economic 'classes' are more important, and why? Do racial and ethnic identities always equate with socio-economic classes? If so, data are needed to support that argument. Moreover, how might socio-economic classes change

within the context of an increasingly open economy? For example, would increased popular participation in the Johannesburg stock market influence their conclusions?

This book appropriately highlights the state's role in economic development. The authors show that both liberal and radical perspectives define a role for the state, either as an entrepreneur to overcome collective action problems, compensate for market inefficiencies, or as a reflection (and, consequently, instrument) of social interests. But which perspective is more appropriate? The authors believe that South Africa should follow the South Korean model in which the state plays an 'instrumental role ... in promoting industrialisation and economic development'. The comparison is an interesting one because the data they present on the rise of South African industrial conglomerates parallels the development of similar industrial *chaebol* in South Korea. Both countries' economies are dominated by these large, vertically integrated corporations whose subsidiaries are dependent on each other and whose developments were financed by targeted government assistance policies.

None the less, the recent collapse of South Korea's economy highlights the inherent danger in having state-led industrial policies pick 'winners' in economic markets. If South African industrial policy *has* been dominated by the minerals–energy complex, the government institutions that serve these interests would seem to be those least able to solve burgeoning socio-economic problems. South Korea's expensive and inefficient forays into automobile manufacturing and steel production highlight the inability of state institutions to stay ahead of competitively driven corporations operating in an economic free market. Moreover, if recent policy prescriptions have primarily benefited the entrenched members of the MEC, such as the privatisation of formerly state-owned firms, why would increased state involvement better protect the interests of the poor in the post-apartheid era?

The authors present a wealth of interesting data on the development of the minerals–energy complex in South Africa. Their interpretation of the state's historical role in shaping industrial policy is unique. Its weakness as a guide for potential policy markers should not obscure this interesting and important contribution to the literature.

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**Small African Towns – between Rural Networks and Urban Hierarchies** by POUL OVE PEDERSEN

Aldershot, Brookfield USA, Hong Kong, Singapore and Sydney, Avebury, 1997. Pp. 220. Hb. £39.95.

Theories of spatial planning in developing countries have been abstract and elusive. They have invariably been based on Western models, which were either inappropriate or needed careful adaptation to local circumstances. Spatial strategies based on such theories have tended to view settlement in isolation from its socio-economic context. Too often they have treated symptoms rather than underlying causes of poverty and inequality. Such

strategies are more likely to succeed if they seek to respond to particular development problems, and are based on the social and economic processes underlying these problems. *Small African Towns* reflects the meticulous field work which is necessary if we are to grasp the full complexity of such problems and processes in their specific socio-economic context.

The book is a product of the ongoing work of researchers at the Centre for Development Research in Copenhagen who have been studying small enterprises in development since 1987, mainly in countries of eastern and central Africa. Their focus is the interaction between small enterprises and the environment in which they operate, comprising local and non-local actors, small and large enterprises, public, private and cooperative organisations, households and social relations. This book employs such an approach to focus more specifically on the small town itself and its role in the rural production and distribution system. It examines the structure and development of the small town economy, and its external relations to the rural hinterland, the larger urban centres and the national and international economy. It is based on detailed field studies in Gutu and Gokwe, two district centres in the communal areas of Zimbabwe, and also draws on Jesper Rasmussen's fieldwork in Gutu and a third district centre, Murewa.

After a brief introduction to the structure of the book, it is divided into three parts. The first, labelled 'theoretical and general', examines changing perceptions of small towns in development theory, the growth of small towns in eastern and southern Africa, and the relationship between enterprises and small town development. The second, 'empirical and specific', section is the major part of the book. It begins with a background chapter on the development of small towns in Zimbabwe's communal areas, and then examines retail and wholesale trade, agricultural processing and marketing and the clothing and construction sectors in considerable detail. This section concludes with chapters on external and internal forces shaping the dynamics of growth in district service centres. The third section consists of a single chapter dealing with theoretical and policy conclusions. There is an extensive and useful bibliography but, frustratingly, no index.

The role of small towns in the development process has been relatively neglected in favour of large cities, industrialisation and a view of rural development which often takes the settlement pattern as a given. In Africa, more people currently live and work in small towns than in either large cities or rural areas. The importance of this book rests in its focus on the small town, and especially in the wealth of empirical field data which provide a remarkably detailed description and analysis of the economies of the district centres in question, even focusing on individual businesses at many points. Where generalisations are made, we can be confident that they are based on a thorough grasp of empirical reality. The factors conditioning the behaviour of individual entrepreneurs and the groups they represent are carefully dissected, as are the processes and trends arising from the behaviour of different groups of actors.

Some reservations are almost inevitable: as the author admits, the towns selected cannot be regarded as typical, and the very richness of empirical detail here underlines the relative information vacuum in which policy

decisions must of necessity be made in most places most of the time. Much of the field work reported here dates from 1989 and 1990, although useful attempts are made to bring it up to date in critical respects, especially in relation to the effects of drought and Zimbabwe's structural adjustment programme, both of which caused contraction of the rural economy. More frustrating (especially perhaps to a geographer) is the book's limited attention to space and spatial relationships. Although these are clearly central to any study of the role of small towns in a national settlement system, and the author's awareness of this is clearly implicit at many points (including a belated and dominantly economic discussion of central place theory, in Chapter 12), the expectations aroused by the use of the words 'networks' and 'urban hierarchies' in the title are not wholly realised. There is no discussion of Zimbabwe's urban hierarchy as such, and the one map of the country as a whole distinguishes only between towns and district centres. There is no specific discussion of the extent and population size and density of the hinterlands of the centres investigated, nor of their relationships with the higher-order centres around them. Much that is said has clear significance for these themes, but the author's central focus on enterprises and the behaviour of entrepreneurs tends to leave spatial relations implicit most of the time.

Notwithstanding these reservations, the value of such detailed field research is undisputed. It is to be hoped that planners and policy-makers will not confine themselves to the tantalisingly short final section on strategies for small town development: true understanding comes from the richness of the empirical evidence.

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**Bureaucracy and Race: Native Administration in South Africa** by  
IVAN EVANS  
Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1997. Pp. 403 + xiii, £42 cloth.

In the aftermath of the 1976 Soweto revolt it became increasingly apparent that the apartheid state was not the simple monolith that many politicians and observers thought it to be. Reformist initiatives revealed divisions within various arms of the apartheid administration and the moral foundations of apartheid were themselves subjected to increasing internal critique. The limitations of Marxist analysis (which dominated historical understanding of South African political economy during the 1970s) were also becoming more evident in so far as it purported to explain the totality of segregation and apartheid.

From the late 1980s a number of academic studies emerged which duly emphasised divisions and contradictions within the state: for example, Adam Ashforth applied discourse analysis to a series of landmark twentieth-century government commissions and showed how these official reports revealed contestations over the nature and form of white supremacy; Deborah Posel examined conflicts and contradictions within the sphere of urban labour policy and practice from the 1940s and demonstrated that apartheid did not



develop according to a simple Verwoerdian masterplan; Stanley Greenberg studied the decay of the labour bureaux system in the 1980s and used this to highlight the crisis of legitimacy and sense of administrative paralysis characteristic of the final years of apartheid; while I considered the development of competing styles and traditions of 'native administration' in the 1920s and 1930s, arguing that these helped to explain the portmanteau-like nature of segregationist ideology and politics.

Ivan Evans also wrote an excellent doctoral thesis on the subject of native administration at this time pursuing similar lines of inquiry, but it remained unpublished and did not attract the attention that it otherwise deserved. In the ensuing decade, he has reworked his doctoral thesis substantially as well as considerably extending its scope. The result, *Bureaucracy and Race*, is the sophisticated product of mature reflection and stands as the most comprehensive and considered analysis we have of the history of native administration during the segregationist and apartheid eras in both the urban and the rural contexts.

Evans contrasts the paternalistic and protective ethos of native administration in the segregationist era with its purposive and authoritarian character from the 1950s. Notwithstanding the increased centralisation and enhanced powers which accrued to the Native Administration Department (NAD) with the passing of the 1927 Native Administration Act, the Department's power and influence within the state remained somewhat marginal. The core of the Department remained focused on its traditional preserve, the rural African reserves. The NAD was unable and to a considerable degree unwilling to exert too strong a hand in the labour market and on urban affairs more generally, seeking instead to ameliorate and manage the stresses and strains of segregationist policy rather than to shape these. Largely staffed by English-speaking moderates steeped in the custodial traditions of indirect rule, the department was, by the 1940s, generally considered to be faltering, indecisive and lacklustre. As elsewhere in colonial Africa, the extension of the wage economy, the process of rapid urbanisation, and the emergence of sustained African political opposition to white authority during the war years, spelled the end of the paternalist attitudes and practices which characterised indirect rule. But, whereas decolonisation was the ultimate result in colonial Africa, the response in South Africa took the form of apartheid.

The continuities and discontinuities which marked the transition from segregation to apartheid remain undertheorised and poorly explained. Evans makes a significant contribution to this problem by detailing the high degree of deliberate planning, intervention and reliance on 'scientific' management which characterised native administration from the 1950s. As Minister of Native Affairs, Verwoerd developed the NAD as his personal fiefdom, transforming it from an obscure part of the government to the centrepiece of the developing apartheid state, and replacing traditions of deference with demands for total submission to authority. It has been widely noted by writers like Lazar and Miller that Verwoerd was rather more of a pragmatist than this widespread reputation as the unrivalled ideological architect of apartheid suggests. Evans helps to resolve this paradox by arguing that Verwoerd was, more than anything else, a brilliant administrator, and therefore literally

rather than metaphorically the architect of apartheid. Evans shows Verwoerd's administrative genius to particular effect in his highly original chapter on the 'properly planned location' which details the ways in which Verwoerd pioneered mass modern African urban housing projects designed to house a socially undifferentiated, controllable and spatially segregated workforce. (And, in a wry concluding comment, he contrasts the managerial competence and vigour which underlay the building of thousands of cheap houses for Africans in the 1950s with the incapacity of the ANC government to make any real impact on the contemporary housing crisis.)

Evans's stress on planning together with his penetrating analysis of the development of urban administration and mechanisms of labour control underpin his central argument that the NAD played a crucial role in transforming the often vague and contradictory theories of apartheid into 'a viable and durable project' (p. ix). It was thus the routine practice of administration which, perhaps more than any other single factor, gave shape to the apartheid state as well as sustained its existence. On this account, it matters rather less to our understanding of apartheid whether the system was economically efficient or not or, indeed, whether it suited the interests of capitalist development; the crucial point was the administration's ubiquitous 'dispersal into everyday life' (p. 8), a factor which significantly reduced the need for displays of outright repressive force.

Evans is also good at showing how Verwoerdian apartheid secured the compliance and sometimes the consent of hostile elements. Within the NAD a residual group of paternalist and liberal officials fought a rearguard action against the authoritarian turn of the omnipresent administration and greatly resented the systematic 'Afrikanerisation' of the department. However, these administrators could not but fail to be impressed with the enhanced status, professionalisation and capacity to deliver policy that characterised the NAD from the 1950s. More controversially, Evans suggests that outright African opposition to apartheid was muted by the opportunities it offered. The process of forced population removals from urban areas like Sophiatown was facilitated by the fact that many ordinary slumdweller were, for the first time, presented with the possibility of living in their own houses with access to waterborne sewerage – however unattractive and inconvenient the new far-flung locations may have been. In his treatment of the Transkei, Evans argues, further, that the evolution of the bantustan policy from the late 1950s successfully exploited the contradictory position of chiefs and headmen who found their authority marginalised and their careers stymied by the segregationist state. Moreover, Verwoerd was able to argue that, in offering independence to the Transkei, he was answering the Bunga's 'sudden and unexpected embrace of the Bantu Authorities system' (pp. 246–7) in 1955, as well as its call for sovereign rights in the administration of government a decade earlier, notwithstanding the assembly's long-standing hostility to segregationist policy.

In these and other examples, Evans succeeds in his claim that the binary opposition which suffuses much of the literature on apartheid – between repression and resistance – is an oversimplification which neglects the fact that apartheid was largely created and maintained, at least until 1960, through

civil administration rather than military rule. *Bureaucracy and Race* therefore stands as a major achievement. It confirms much recent work on the history of segregation and apartheid with fresh evidence and new insights, it opens up promising new lines of inquiry, and it serves as the most considered statement on the institutional development of segregation and apartheid that we yet have. Evans's well-written, largely persuasive, and sometimes provocative book, will undoubtedly prove essential reading for scholars interested in the history of segregation and apartheid in South Africa, as well as those concerned with the development of the colonial state in Africa more generally.

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**Death of Dignity. Angola's Civil War** by VICTORIA BRITAIN  
London, Pluto Press, 1998. Pp. 108, Hb. £35.00 Pb. £9.99.

Victoria Britain has written a personal and passionate account of the long suffering experienced by the Angolan people, trapped as they are by a series of wars, anti-colonial then civil, the flames of which were fanned by Cold War confrontation and the protracted struggle for the maintenance of white power by the government in South Africa. Yet, as one would expect from the deputy foreign editor of *The Guardian*, the study is suffused with political insights revealed in long conversations with senior MPLA figures who knew her and trusted her and took her into their confidence, and by her keen observations on various visits made to different parts of the country. As a frequent visitor myself to Angola, I was particularly impressed by the Preface, which truly brings alive the strange reality of the country as seen through the eyes of a new visitor, describing her own first visit in 1984.

The author was a great admirer of the original revolutionary aspirations of the radical ruling party, the MPLA. She makes no claim to be dispassionate as between who was in the right and who in the wrong, in the MPLA's long struggle against UNITA forces—backed by South Africa and the US well into the 1990s. Yet this cannot be dismissed as merely being a narrow partisan account. Instead it is an honest endeavour to explain what happened to bring the despair and death of dignity to potentially the richest country on the continent, which possesses oil and diamond wealth, and mineral and agricultural potential in abundance. The author's early enthusiasm for the MPLA's revolutionary project is explained, as is the degeneration of idealism into self-serving materialism by the small ruling party elite, albeit in somewhat muted terms. Many of those with integrity, she argues, have now left the state.

The cause of the country's destruction is laid firmly at the door of Savimbi and his unwillingness to accept defeat in the country's democratic elections, throwing the country back into its most horrific period of conflict, which in just two years, 1992 to 1994, dwarfed all of the destruction caused in the previous thirty years of fighting! The strength of the book is its catalogue of misdemeanours and lies on the side of UNITA and its autocratic dictator. Its

weaknesses are that whilst the balance of blame for the suffering and catastrophes may indeed lie on the side of UNITA, the government and its leadership have been woefully incompetent and increasingly self-serving if not as venal. This is the tragedy of Angola, which leaves all those trying to build a more positive future for the country in great difficulties.

Cuito, in the central highlands, has arguably suffered more than anywhere else. On the main street no roof and no window survived the effects of the fifteen-month UNITA siege. Mass graves of 30,000 people who died in the 1993 to 1994 period lie under the flowerbeds now lining the town square. The author tells the stories of some of the people she interviewed who had survived the nightmare – the man blown up on three separate occasions by mines, the six-year-old who had lost his father, mother and all of his brothers and sisters, and the MPLA governor who was initiating a mine clearance programme in a place where he wanted to start a cross-country motorbike racing venture. Corruption amongst the ruling MPLA elite is discussed by the author. She mentions the governor of Malange with his vibrant and extensive business interests thriving in the midst of the desolation of this northern province.

An epilogue discusses the importance of the Kabila factor in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo. The cataclysmic transformation in Central African politics and geopolitics in 1997 was to have major repercussions, not least in Angola, seriously reducing the options of Savimbi and UNITA. President Museveni of Uganda and General Paul Kagame, vice-president of Rwanda and a former officer in Museveni's army, worked with Tanzania, Eritrea and Angola's leaders to support Kabila's push to topple the Mobutu dictatorship in Zaire. The catalyst was the impotence of the international community either to solve the problem of the orchestrators of the Rwandan genocide remaining in control of the Hutu refugee camps in eastern Zaire, or to give credence to the UN Tribunal in Arusha, which was charged with bringing the perpetrators of the genocide to justice. The Rwandan military had a core of well-trained Tutsi soldiers and the Tutsi diaspora included of course Uganda, eastern Zaire and Burundi. Under the banner of the Alliance of Democratic Forces of Liberation, Kabila led the coalition to attack the camps in Zaire and break the hold of the Hutu *Interahamwe* militia responsible for the genocide. The old Katangese opposition forces which the MPLA had harboured in Angola were thrown into the fray and backed by Angolan government equipment, transport and logistics – Kabila deposed Mobutu. These dramatic developments deprived Savimbi of his former secure rear base in Zaire, which had served as a conduit for arms coming in and the diamonds going out to pay for them.

Savimbi remains down but not out. The peace process will remain fragile for some time to come. Yet there are some encouraging signs. It would be nice to think that Victoria Britain's book might be seen as one epitaph for Angola's civil war rather than as a report of a tragedy still in process.

BARRY MUNSLow  
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**Imperfect Interpreters: South Africa's Anthropologists, 1920–1990** by  
W. D. HAMMOND-TOOKE  
Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1997. Pp. 239, Pb. R70.00.

There are more and more histories of anthropology on the market, and increasingly they are being written by practising anthropologists rather than historians of the discipline. David Hammond-Tooke is one such practising anthropologist, Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand and well known for his structuralist analyses of Cape Nguni belief systems. What makes his history different is its focus on anthropology in South Africa, a country with profound importance in the discipline, but whose story has been under-represented in the literature on the emergence of the discipline.

South African anthropology has an importance at least as great as any other national tradition, for two reasons. First, anthropology in South Africa has always been far more than mere intellectual curiosity. Throughout its history, the discipline has had a close association with reactionary social forces such as those of the apartheid regime, and with liberal and radical opposition to that regime and its precursors. Second, many of South Africa's anthropologists have had a profound effect on the discipline as a whole. Modern 'British' anthropology, in a very real sense, is South African in origin, and both South African *émigrés* and South African-based anthropologists have been important in the development of approaches to the understanding of social organisation, social change and social inequalities.

Hammond-Tooke's book concentrates on the theoretical and political motivations of key players in South African anthropology, but he touches on the work of many interesting minor figures as well. He emphasises those who stayed in South Africa and those who went to South Africa to work, rather than the *émigrés*. In spite of his modest denials about its coverage, the book is as comprehensive as is possible in the space of less than 200 pages of main text. It is organised by period and theme, from the structural-functionalism of A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Winifred Hoernlé in the 1920s, to the processualist studies of urbanisation and the Marxist-influenced studies of rural change and development (or lack of it) in the 1970s and 1980s. In between, there are chapters on the influence of Isaac Schapera at Cape Town and W. W. M. Eiselen at Stellenbosch, the 'Golden Age' of international impact in the 1930s and 1940s, the continuation of the 'Great Tradition' of English-language anthropology in later periods, and the role of N. J. van Warmelo, P. J. Coertze and others in the formulation of 'Native policy' in the apartheid era and the period leading up to it.

Hammond-Tooke describes well the work of those in both major traditions: the Afrikaans-speaking *volkekundiges* and the English-speaking *social anthropologists* (the latter including blacks as well as whites, immigrants as well as South African-born anthropologists). He avoids the all-too-common simplicity of those who see that divide as the only significant one, and he successfully brings out the complexity of both traditions in their respective encounters with the political situations they found and helped to mould. While both South African and foreign anthropologists generally know a bit about the English

tradition, the Afrikaans one is much less well known. This book will undoubtedly help to educate many on that tradition and especially on the role of some of its adherents in the construction and attempted intellectual justification of apartheid. That is the book's main strength. Its weakness is that little is said of relations between the traditions, which in the new South Africa are now merging, or of the differences between their respective past theoretical foundations.

Finally, it is worth adding that Hammond-Tooke has included not only factual biographies and summaries of important research and argument, but also his own critical evaluations of the protagonists, their efforts as ethnographers and their political impact. The book benefits too from the inclusion of both detailed references in endnote form and a full bibliography. It should interest not only anthropologists, but many others with a desire to understand the relation between academic life and the politics of academic collaboration with, and opposition to, the evils of state-sponsored racism and repression.

ALAN BARNARD  
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**Chad: A Nation in Search of its Future** by MARIO J. AZEVEDO and EMMANUEL U. NNADOZIE  
Boulder, CO and Oxford, Westview Press, 1998. Pp. 170, Hb. £53.00.

To publish a general introduction on Chad is in itself a good idea. Chad has been neglected and understudied by the scholarly community over the last thirty years, and more particularly by academics writing in English. Mario J. Azevedo and Emmanuel U. Nnadozie's *Chad: A Nation in Search of its Future* should therefore be welcomed. It certainly tries to present an overall view of Chad's problems, with chapters devoted to the geographical setting, history, the political evolution and the civil war, the economy, society and culture, and international relations. 'Our objective', claim the authors, 'is to explore the country's complexities in order to provide an understanding of contemporary Chad and to demythologize the events that have taken place since the mid-1960s.'

Unfortunately, the authors fail to achieve their goal, and their book has to be criticised on several points. First of all it is lacking in general analysis. Apart from the last six pages in which the authors do indeed make an effort to understand why Chad's history has been so turbulent since independence, most of the chapters are mainly providing facts, but do not uncover deeper lying tendencies or identify major complexes of problems. Some chapters, moreover, and particularly Chapter 3 on Chad's political development, are rather badly structured, going back and forth over the same historical periods, which is confusing, especially for readers who are not familiar with Chad.

Second, this book is largely running behind the facts and gives the impression of having been written six or seven years ago, with the exception, in part, of Chapter 3. Very important present-day issues such as the coming exploitation of Chadian oil or the raging debates in the country on the federal

state (and on the question of bilingualism) are simply not mentioned. Several times the authors deplore the absence of a population census in Chad and provide population estimates for the 1990s. They completely ignore the fact that a population census was held in April 1993 and that its first results were made public at least four years ago. Also, most data on agricultural production, the education system and health care do not extend beyond 1991. This problem also appears in the bibliography, where important recent publications such as S. C. Nolutshungu's *Limits of Anarchy* (an absolute must), J.-P. Magnant's *La terre sara*, or H. Coudray's article on Islam are missing.

Finally, this book is full of gross errors of detail. Just one example: on p. 95 the authors claim that the Arabs constitute almost 70 per cent of the present-day population of the capital city of N'Djamena. In fact, they only constitute 15.08 per cent of the city's population. For these reasons *Chad: A Nation in Search of Its Future* is not quite the book we were waiting for.

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**Structural Adjustment and Mass Poverty in Ghana** by KWABENA DONKOR

Aldershot and Brookfield, Vermont, Ashgate, 1997. Pp. xi + 265. Hb. £40.00.

This work originated in Bristol University's School of Policy Studies, which unhappily cannot be congratulated on its appearance. Its first hundred pages give an economic account of Ghana in the thirty years before the economic recovery programme was begun in 1982. The next hundred relate the evolution of that programme. There follows a chapter on poverty, drawing mainly on the living standards survey of 1987/8. Finally, Donkor lists his own prescriptions for economic development in Ghana, giving priority to the raising of agricultural productivity – as did Arthur Lewis, whose recommendations were dismissed earlier (pp. 19–20) as fundamentally erroneous. The author's failure to comprehend the arguments not only of Lewis but also of Hirschman (pp. 40, 42) and of this reviewer (pp. 9, 12) would have been heavily criticised had it appeared in an undergraduate dissertation.

The book warrants notice not for its merits, which are inconspicuous, but for the fact of its publication which begs the question whether the advice of a competent authority was either sought or taken. There is pathos in the author's thanks among his acknowledgements, to the editorial staff at Ashgate, since it is difficult to believe that he received the assistance of a copy-editor, and proofs cannot have been corrected. Not only are misprints copious, but the reader encounters such eccentricities as 'Magna Carter', 'Stirling' currency, an increased 'spasm of expertise', 'interior trade' (meaning imports), 'interwar' (meaning postwar), 'Keynesian prepositions', 'temporal' (for temporary), 'exasperating' income differential, a 'conservational' (for conservative) economic perspective, and 'appreciative' price changes. The foreign trade ratio is 'computed by dividing the sum of GDP and imports, this later sum being the total of available resources' (p. 75). At least a dozen works cited in the text do not appear in the bibliography, and the bibliography itself



contains such gems as 'The political economy of self-rule' by Jeffrey Richards, which Richard Jeffries may recognise as his 1989 paper on 'The political economy of personal rule'. Other citations are wayward: thus the famous Berg report of 1981 is in one place attributed to Robert J. Berg and Jennifer Seymour Whitaker. There are three instances of end-notes being repeated, and many of the end-notes are no more than subordinate clauses of sentences in the main text. On p. 86 the reader is referred to appendices that do not exist in this book, though presumably they do in some other publication. The book has no index.

More serious is the author's use without acknowledgement (although the original data sources are cited) of half a dozen tables from this reviewer's *Staying Poor: Ghana's Political Economy 1950–1990* (Oxford: Pergamon for the World Bank, 1992). Donkor's reliance on that work becomes evident in the sources he lists for his Table 3.2 (pp. 84–5); these sources are table numbers in *Staying Poor*, not in his own book. Donkor also reproduces a number of passages of text from that book, making only cosmetic adjustments in wording. The sources of tables later in Donkor's book appear to be more carefully acknowledged (except for one, for which the source is 'various'), but in most of them either the labelling of columns or lines or the numbers themselves contain mysteries. For example, in Table 6.1 annual food imports appear as exactly the same proportions of both total imports and total exports. Table 5.3, which gives breakdowns of government expenditures, is repeatedly referred to in the adjacent text, the author having apparently failed to notice that the text deals with revenues, not expenditures. Neither Donkor nor the publisher appears really at home with tabulation.

Author and publisher have combined to create a shoddy product unusable by serious students of its subject-matter. Caveat emptor.

DOUGLAS RIMMER  
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**Government in Kano, 1350–1950** by M. G. SMITH

Boulder, CO, Westview Press (Harper Collins), 1997. Pp. xxii, 594, \$85.00.

Where, authors of contemporary studies of Africa whose books have not yet found review space in a journal devoted to *modern* African studies may ask, is the justification for including a book which deals with 600 years of history dating back to medieval times – and at a time when studies of pre-colonial history have dropped out of fashion? The answer is threefold. One, the politico-cultural legacy of the Hausa kingdoms, which have long formed the core of the late M. G. Smith's research, is still, albeit now commonly redesignated by the hyphenated form of Hausa-Fulani, unambiguously a factor (how real or acutely perceived is beside the point here) in the dynamics of contemporary Nigerian politics. Two, in intellectual terms, the writing of M. G. Smith has been influential in African Studies because, apart from its subject importance, it challenges traditional disciplinary boundaries. It is at once political ethnography, social anthropology, narrative history and, methodologically, a meticulously crafted exercise in the science of historical

reconstruction and a theoretical programme for the study of structural change. That the disciplinary journals of African history, anthropology and sociology will carry their own professional reviews in no way means that other African Studies outlets should leave the field to them. Third, a review here allows Africanists, whatever their discipline and whatever their subject, to become aware of this important publication by – and to pay tribute to – one who, for over half a century, has made his mark as the leading scholar on the complex history of the political and governmental organisation of the major population and language group in one of the dominant states in post-colonial Africa, the Hausa of Nigeria.

Despite Smith's denial that it is not a history of Kano, this concentrated account of the growth and organisation of Kano (his 'historical study of the Kano polity') ineluctably emerges as at least an interim history: Smith's self-reduced 'narrative of the political evolution of Kano' seems destined to fill that larger role for a long time to come. Kano's supremacy among the city-states of Hausaland was second to none until the Fulani *jihad* of 1804–10, and it was the Lugardian occupation of the emirates which favoured the choice of spiritual Sokoto over economic Kano as the locus of political seniority. In fact, the sweep of the book's title is arguably misleading, for only three pages are devoted to the 450 years of Kano before the Fulani *jihad*, so that by Chapter 2 the reader has already reached the reign of the last Hausa ruler, Alwali (1781–1807). Nevertheless, and somewhat confusingly, a long Chapter 3 then takes the reader back to the origins of Kano (the well-known Bayajidda legend) and what Smith calls 'the historical threshold' of the celebrated *Kano Chronicle*. This in turn returns the narrative to the impact of the *jihad* on Kano. From here on, however, the closely argued narrative and interpretation, both of them drawing on a breathtaking range of oral, primary and secondary as well as unpublished sources in English, Hausa, Arabic and French, follow strict chronology, on through Ibrahim Dabo and his sons, Kano's devastating civil war of the 1890s, Lugard's conquest in 1903 and the emergence of Kano as a showpiece of his policy of native administration, up to the death of the widely respected Emir Abdullahi Bayero in 1953. Throughout, Smith is ceaselessly querying, comparing, warning, rejecting and correcting the huge array of data and opinion from which he draws his own interpretations. At the end of 500 pages of argued narrative there is no purple passage, no grand finale: with its choice of a strikingly intellectual excerpt from the British Resident's annual report (A. T. Weatherhead, Note 125 carrying a rare misprint), what Smith offers as 'an apt conclusion' to his history reads almost as bathos. There is, however, the dauntingly dense, concluding theoretical chapter, 'Analysis'. Sadly, the Kano of the subsequent, unchronicled forty years has been a catalogue of turbulence: enforced abdication, regional politics, ethnic pogroms, religious riots and military governments.

For all the minute historical reconstruction, it should not be overlooked that M. G. Smith is writing primarily as a social anthropologist and not as a historian. As Professor Last has noted, while Smith covers the same period as a historian would, it is always 'with an eye for material on which to draw out inductively the generalisations that would illuminate the underlying principles of Hausa political practice'. What fascinated Smith in each of his classic

studies of the Hausa kingdoms (Zaria, Daura and now Kano, with Katsina in draft) were the dynamics of organisational change. Always a theorist, Smith looked on his Hausa material on political change as a laboratory (he had studied chemistry) of political organisation from which to test the dynamics of other situations. To alter the metaphor, it was sometimes said in the Zaria of the early 1960s after the publication of his first book, *The Economy of Hausa Communities of Zaria* (1955), that Smith's probing application of the still evolving Africanist science of oral history was more in the style of a Perry Mason like attorney than a dispassionate fieldworker.

The meticulously recording Smith was not given to writing short books – nor books that are easy either to read (try the fifty pages of 'Analysis' or tackle his algebraic Tables 9:1–9:3) or to review. Together, his trilogy of studies of Hausa government comprises some 1,500 pages, with the present volume generously exceeding a quarter million words. Nor were they published in quick succession: that on Zaria in 1960, Daura in 1978 and now, posthumously (Smith died in 1983), Kano in 1997. Supplemented by a substantial output of articles and chapters on Hausa history, government and society, and reinforced by the complementary work of his wife Mary in her famous autobiography *Baba of Karo* (1954, with a Hausa text at last appearing in 1991), the Smith corpus – for one reason or another *Government in Zazzau* alone carries the conventional academic apparatus of a bibliography – stands as a notable intellectual achievement and a lasting contribution to the study of the history and government of the Hausa kingdoms of northern Nigeria. This reviewer is aware that the word 'authoritative' can be a deathknell in today's African studies, particularly (as M. G. Smith was himself aware) from students who once sat at the guru's feet. That said, it is hard to see M. G. Smith's contribution to the reconstruction of Hausa history ever being either supplanted or surpassed.

Lastly (and no pun is intended), a very necessary Foreword to Smith's long-delayed study of Kano is enlighteningly contributed by Murray Last of Smith's old University College London. For me, this is no commonplace or decorative addendum; it forms an integral and indispensable part of the book, and adds much that would otherwise have had to appear in a review.

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**Villes secondaires et pouvoirs locaux en Afrique sub-saharienne: Le Congo** by ROBERT E. ZIAVOULA

Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1996. Pp. 153, SEK 100.

The Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) is both underpopulated and highly urbanised. The last census was held in 1984, when the population was 1.9 million and 70 per cent of the people lived in urban areas, essentially in the two cities of Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire. The trend has continued since then and Ziavoula affirms that 'Congo is the most urbanised country South of the Sahara'. As early as 1988, an issue of *Politique Africaine* was entitled *Congo: Suburb of Brazzaville*.

Villages suffer from depopulation, agriculture is neglected and the cities are full of the unemployed. This process was accentuated by the oil boom in the mid 1970s. In an effort to slow the evolution down, a policy was elaborated as early as the 1960s for the development of 'secondary towns'. This policy was more precisely defined in the *schéma d'aménagement du territoire* (1984). The project was designed to contain the population in towns of less than 50,000 inhabitants. At the same time, *village-centres* were to be launched to improve agriculture, and to deliver administrative, health and education services. Unfortunately, this plan did not work out under the various political regimes which ruled the country.

Ziavoula describes the local institutions and their evolution since independence. He mentions many of the problems which rural and urban planning have to deal with in this country. Between 1960 and 1992, the population in the 'secondary towns' did not increase according to the plan, with the one exception of Dolisie (Loubomo). These small towns did not play their role of containment of immigration, even if one takes into account that the data for the period 1985–92 is simulated from the last census (1984). Ziavoula tries to compensate for this lack by using special surveys like the 1983–4 survey on public servants. Beyond the specific question of planning, this attempt to measure the principal demographic indicators has proved very useful. To get a more precise picture of the migrations in Congo, Ziavoula's study would need to be extended beyond the 1997 civil war. Because of insecurity, and the looting and destruction of houses in the city of Brazzaville, many families have fled to their villages and they may well stay there for a long time.

The description of political and administrative local institutions is presented in a rather formal way, neglecting the real mechanism of local power. However, this book offers an interesting historical approach to the status of local communities. For example, it explains how during the long period of 'scientific socialism' (1963–91) the elected positions were provided for by the one-party state system.

The last chapter, devoted to the 1992–3 local and parliamentary elections, provides the only available small-scale data ever published on Congo for this period. The data is given by districts, communes and arrondissements. This is also invaluable because such multiparty elections are not expected to take place again soon.

This book may be criticised according to the requisites of European research. The statistical data is sometimes out of date or not reliable and it may be difficult to use it for international comparisons. However, this work is important because quantitative arguments are rare in Congo – as in many African countries. The incapacity of the state to provide its own statistical data is obviously a sign of its weakness. The researcher cannot be held responsible for it.

PATRICK QUANTIN

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**Writers in Politics: A Re-engagement with Issues of Literature & Society** by NGUGI WA THIONG'O  
Oxford, James Currey, 1997. Pp. 167, Pb. £11.95, Hb. £35.00.

We are in something of a hiatus period in the world of Ngugi studies – he has published no major creative work in well over a decade, and there has been no major critical study of him for even longer than that. Nevertheless – and somewhat paradoxically, given the extent to which such things are usually so dependent upon critical and creative output – his status as a figure in world literature continues to grow. However, it is perhaps symptomatic of the period that we should get, in rapid succession, a re-worked version of one of his earlier collections of essays and a re-worked version of the last book to attempt a general critical overview of his writing (David Cook and Michael Okenimkpe, *Ngugi wa Thiong'o: An Exploration of His Writings.*, James Currey, Oxford, 1997, reviewed below).

The subtitle of Ngugi's collection might give a misleading impression, since it suggests that there had been an intervening period of disengagement from such issues. In fact, from the 1970s on, Ngugi's commitment has never faltered, and his involvement has only become more outspoken and uncompromising, and one function of the re-edition is to bring earlier material more in line with the developments in his political stance since the appearance of the original in 1981. Ngugi feels that 'This collection of essays is more a new book than a revised edition' (p. ix), whereas Cook and Okenimkpe suggest that 'If the same reader were to know both editions, he would probably be aware only vaguely of any differences between the two' (p. 222). That might seem an odd judgement, given the amount of space they devote to detailing the changes, but it is true that Ngugi retains three-quarters of the original pieces, though these are partly or substantially rewritten, as well as renamed and reordered.

Unsurprisingly, the role, and post-colonial plight, of writers (and intellectuals more generally) is a principal focus of Ngugi's book, though the writers are not necessarily privileged by this attention, since he tends to regard them as very much representative of the problems facing their societies, rather than somehow standing outside them. As well as giving attention to individuals (the Caribbean poet and historian Kamau Brathwaite; the murdered Kenyan historian and politician J. M. Kariuki) and even individual texts (including his own fourth novel *Petals of Blood*), Ngugi is concerned to stress connections within, and, even more so, beyond national cultures – represented, for instance, by the foregrounding in two new pieces of a rejuvenated Pan-Africanism. The focus on the politics of national and inter-national cultures carries inevitable echoes of Fanon, whose work has meant so much to Ngugi over the years, but is none the less contemporary and relevant for all that. Indeed, the re-emergence of Pan-Africanism indicates the refusal of African and other post-colonial intellectuals to abandon concepts or political possibilities which they considered important, simply because they happen not to be the most recent or the most fashionable.

At the level of national culture, Ngugi continues his powerful advocacy of the (still contentious for some) use of indigenous languages to express indigenous culture, and the essay 'Return to the Roots' prefigures the

argument set out at length in *Decolonising the Mind*. As well as being important for Kenya, the argument has relevance for Africa in general, and provides a different kind of international link, for instance, to Brathwaite and his influential concept of nation Language, asserting the linguistic and cultural validity of peoples of African descent in the Caribbean.

Another important intersection of the national and the international which the collection addresses occurs in relation to what has become one of Ngugi's central objects of critique – imperialism, as a transnational or globalising force, but also one which takes specific forms, and produces specific effects within particular nation states, especially in terms of the extent to which the black ruling classes allow themselves to be neo-colonised. The latter has been one of Ngugi's most enduring themes in his writing – not least because the problem it represents has not gone away. Against the divisive effects of imperialism and the oppressive indigenous regimes, Ngugi calls for different kinds of popular mobilisation (and indeed sees this already beginning to occur in a number of places). Once again, this is to operate nationally and internationally, within and between countries: social movements of resistance – women, students, workers – struggle within their own countries, but also forge links outside them, aiming to unite their campaigns, and it is the latter which is the key for Ngugi: 'Paramount in each country and between countries is the struggle for unity.... A united African response to the new world order is the only basis for our survival in the twenty first century' (p. 131).

And where are the writers in all this? At the forefront – or at least that is where Ngugi insists they must be, even though doubts remain about whether that can happen very easily: 'The tragic irony is that, even when intellectuals are not driven into exile, the colonial tradition of producing intellectuals who are cultural exiles from their own community continues into the independence era' (p. 150). Despite that, Ngugi manages to end with a vision of political hope, reaffirming the stance of the 1945 Pan-African Congress in its call for a combined politics of intellectuals and the masses as still the only way forward for Africa.

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**Ngugi wa Thiong'o: An Exploration of His Writings** by DAVID COOK  
and MICHAEL OKENIMKPE  
Oxford, James Currey, 1997. Pp. 283, Pb. £12.95.

Cook and Okenimkpe discuss the new version of *Writers in Politics*, and the way in which they do so typifies their book (old and new): readable, generally thorough and workmanlike (providing, as an extreme example, almost a paragraph by paragraph comparison of one of the essays in terms of the changes and retentions); oddly contentious at times (suggesting, as mentioned above, that a reader would scarcely be aware of the differences between the versions, or claiming without obvious supporting evidence that the role of

women is ‘something which had a doubly strong hold on him because of its connection with his mother’ (p. 225)); and not always factually accurate (stating, for instance, that in the new version Ngugi drops the short piece ‘On Civilisation’, which is not the case – it appears as an appendix). The first edition of their book was the most thorough discussion of Ngugi’s work up to that point – and in the curious and inexplicable absence of the necessary major study, it remains so. In 13 chapters and 280 pages of dense type, it covers everything from his biography and early journalism, via the novels (one chapter per book), the short stories and plays (one chapter per genre), to the essays (including, as we have seen, the most recent). There are also chapters on the relation of literature and society, and on Ngugi’s style. Each of the sections is updated, particularly to include the novels and essays written since the original publication. In doing so, the authors have retained the style and approach of the first edition, and while this is to the good in terms of overall coherence, it does rather stand as an opportunity missed in terms of drawing upon the wealth of post-colonial critical work which has appeared between the editions (not to mention that which appeared before the first edition). As a symptom of that absence, it is noticeable that the chapter on *Matigari*, the most recent of the novels, has no references to critical, theoretical or historical material (indeed, no references whatsoever). This pleasant but somewhat old-fashioned type of literary criticism produces, for example, confusion between (real) author and (textual) voice in *Petals of Blood*, though at the same time it is odd that the (very) close reading approach adopted also involves a range of errors or misidentifications. In the same chapter, for instance, we are told that ‘Among the villagers we meet Mwathi wa Mugo, the occult priest’ (p. 90), when the whole point about Mwathi is that we do not meet him – he remains invisible, his existence asserted but unconfirmed. We are also told that Abdulla is ‘born of an African mother and an Indian father’, when that refers to Ole Masai; and that ‘while in America, Karega has seen the true worship of Mammon’, when Karega never leaves the country (it is the lawyer who goes to America).

Re-reading the unchanged chapters from the first edition after some years, one of the over-riding impressions is of the number of confident (or strange) assertions which the book contains, interspersed among the general good sense of the critical judgements. These range from the literary: ‘The first reaction to *Petals of Blood* by many of us steeped in literary principles (and very fine principles and criteria they are) was to see it as a step backwards from *A Grain of Wheat*’ – where the nature, origin and justification for these ‘principles’ remains unexplained and unexplored, to the political: ‘Cabral in modifying and extending Marxist theory through a process of analysing a situation fundamentally different from that in Europe but common throughout the ex-colonial world, makes a clear distinction between the struggle for independence and the later campaign for national liberation’ – when Cabral, particularly in the quote which they use, is talking about one and the same struggle. No doubt it will seem a little unfair to concentrate on some of the weaknesses of what is still (for better or worse) the most useful general introduction to Ngugi’s work currently available. Nevertheless, it is difficult not to wish that in producing the second edition the authors had taken the



opportunity to iron out some of the inconsistencies, if not to bring the book up to the general (and generally exciting) standard of critical work being done in the field.

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