

REVIEWS

EGYPT AND NUBIA

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The Prehistory of Egypt, from the First Egyptians to the First Pharaohs. By BÉATRICE MIDANT-REYNES, translated from the French by IAN SHAW. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999. Pp. xv + 328. £55/\$64.95 (ISBN 0-631-201696), £15.99/\$29.95, paperback (ISBN 0-631-217878).

Early Dynastic Egypt. By TOBY A. H. WILKINSON. London: Routledge, 1999. Pp. 440 + 11 maps and 17 plates. £50 (ISBN 0-415-18633-1).

KEY WORDS: Egypt, archaeology.

Reviewing a volume dedicated to the prehistory of Egypt may seem beyond the scope of a journal dedicated to (especially recent) African history and, while the second volume reviewed here does examine the origins of Egyptian dynastic history, some defence may be offered for their inclusion among the *Journal's* reviews.

Scholarship in the formative periods of Egyptian civilization has been so fragmented, with so many changes of terminology and shifts of focus over the past century or so, that only a specialist would be able to correlate the mass of published information into a coherent structural assessment. Following on the heels of Michael Hoffman's hugely influential *Egypt before the Pharaohs* (1980), the past two decades have seen massive overall reassessment of the available evidence, emphasizing both regional differentiation and integration. A blanket C₁₄-dated infrastructure was finally introduced in the 1980s, overturning many previously held – and often contradictory – typologically-based analytical attempts at organizing often unstratified material, still mostly retrieved as isolated surface collections widely scattered throughout modern Egypt and the Sudan. Early publications are often still consulted as original site reports and their conclusions and terminologies continue to be employed in the literature; the non-specialist and beginning student walks away thoroughly confused and swearing s/he 'will never touch that stuff again.'

The Unification and Early Dynastic periods have fared somewhat better than the preceding millennia for the historian, as writing had appeared and is, with some limitations, understood. Royal names are known in general chronological order, development of élite and other monuments is indicated, and some sense of political events can be (and have been) inferred. Yet, again, the scattered archaeological remains were little correlated as a whole, and specific elements of that history had not been investigated within an overall perspective. A general scholarly overview, both historical and archaeological, was sorely needed to correlate the evidence of post-Hoffman discoveries with the earlier material, especially as many of the old excavations are themselves being reassessed – sometimes with much interpretative revision – in widely dispersed individual articles and monographs.

Hoffman investigated Egypt's earliest developments through into Dynasty II and therefore the volumes under review, which effectively are its 'next generation' successors, overlap its scope. The first is an updated translation of an earlier (1992) French edition, with the author's co-operation, while the other is an entirely new publication. Both follow a similar format, mainly chronological, and subdivided into specific topical and regional discussions. A short history of the discipline, with

its main players and their shifts in scholarly emphasis, serves both as a means of bringing the subject up to date and of introducing the main discussion. Major sites are presented individually in the light of recent excavations, the older excavations being reconsidered according to the present state of knowledge. This is particularly useful for the non-specialist, as it brings into focus how the latest investigations have altered original site report analyses and conclusions.

Both have a welcome appendix glossary, together with the expected maps, charts, tables, detailed index and very useful extensive up-to-date bibliography. Unfortunately, both also are minimally illustrated, to my mind detracting from their overall purpose when much of the evidence still consists of typological analysis of the excavated material remains. A scattering of, for example, typical lithic and pottery types for major periods would have helped the student and non-specialist considerably as this material is discussed in some detail, especially by Midant-Reynes.

While specialists no doubt will quibble or disagree with some of Wilkinson's conclusions, this volume will be a standard reference for years to come.¹ It discusses in detail individual aspects of the beginnings of the Egyptian state and political unification, individual kings and possible rulers, together with their monuments, the development of the social, political, administrative and religious systems, of regional differences and similarities, foreign contacts and influences, and the means by which all these were influenced by the immediate and further conditions in Egypt under which they developed up to and including Dynasty III, and which in large measure it retained thereafter. As an initial reference volume for further research, it is superb. Even if specialist readers disagree with some aspects, the evidence presented will give them pause for thought and consideration of Wilkinson's ideas. One need only compare the chapter on the 'Unification' period here with Midant-Reynes' chapter, to see that disagreements still persist between specialists, and how much still remains unclear and unknown for these formative periods of Egyptian history.

Midant-Reynes, while similarly all-encompassing in its documentation of development through to the Unification period and thus the precursor to Wilkinson, on the other hand is rather poorly edited and presented. It is difficult to praise the accuracy of a volume which begins with a glaring error (p. 1, 'In 1922, when J.-F. Champollion announced...').² How many others await the unwary? Referencing is inconsistent, with those for some individual site-industries cited, some alluded to in the text, and others frustratingly entirely lacking (compare, for instance, pp. 26 [Arkin 8] and 33 [Arkin 5]). It is thus difficult to pursue further, original, details. Are the latter otherwise unpublished?³ Other errors also persist (on p. 34, the survey located between the Second and Third Cataracts finds eleven concentrations of material clustering *north* of Wadi Halfa – itself located north of the Second.⁴ That said, the book does successfully integrate the prehistory of Egypt and Nubia through into the (Egyptian) Unification period, thus investigating the entire united Nile region and its flanking deserts in a logical but rarely encountered effort to develop a cohesive picture (Wilkinson extends only to the First Cataract). In this the book succeeds admirably. The title really should have included the words '*and Nubia*'. But the lack of consistency, accuracy and

¹ Historians also are now directed to Wilkinson's more detailed study of the 'Palermo Stone' fragments, *Royal Annals of Ancient Egypt* (London, 2000).

² Correctly cited as '1822' in the original French edition.

³ No. The two sites quoted here have the same original reference, in Wendorf, F. (ed.), *The Prehistory of Nubia* (1968).

⁴ As indicated on Map 3; original reference uncited. Presumably in error for *south* of Wadi Halfa. If so, again, the same original uncited reference; if not, check out the other Marks publications in the bibliography.

referencing mark Midant-Reynes' volume as unsuitable for the specialist, student or non-specialist academic who presumably would make up the majority of potential readers. Perhaps a second, better presented, edition could be proposed? It is worth consideration.

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HISTORY AND MEMORY

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Histoire d'Afrique: Les enjeux de mémoire. Sous la direction de JEAN-PIERRE CHRÉTIEN et JEAN-LOUIS TRIAUD. Paris: Karthala, 1999. Pp. 503. FF190, paperback (ISBN 2-86537-904-3).

KEY WORDS: General, historiography.

Ce livre regroupe vingt-six essais sur les usages de la mémoire en Afrique. Le point de départ est simple: identifier et analyser les lieux de mémoire en Afrique. Cependant on ne peut se contenter de transposer au continent africain la problématique des lieux de mémoire élaborée par Pierre Nora. Comme le rappelle Henri Moniot, la place de l'histoire n'est pas la même dans une nation qui s'est construite en utilisant son histoire comme miroir et sur un continent qu'on a trop longtemps défini de l'extérieur comme a-historique. Si le jeu mémoire/histoire apparaît comme un aboutissement dans le cas de la France, il pourrait bien, dans le cas de l'Afrique, renouveler l'ostracisme en substituant maladroitement la première à la seconde. D'où la nécessité de confronter les usages de la mémoire et l'analyse historique en Afrique.

Aucune partie du continent n'est oubliée par ce premier inventaire des jeux de mémoire en Afrique. Mais cette vision panoramique s'inscrit dans le cadre actuel des Etats-Nations qu'elle définit donc a priori comme les dépositaires 'naturels' de la mémoire. Quelques papiers descendent à une échelle plus fine, ainsi Bernard Salvaing étudie le Fouta-Djallon (Guinée) et Claire Médard l'ouest du Kenya. Trop peu par contre osent traverser les frontières pour évoquer des dynamiques transnationales. Pourtant l'analyse de l'essor contemporain des commémorations coloniales en Afrique de l'ouest proposée par Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch et l'étude de Sophie Dullucq sur la récurrence du contraste ville/campagne dans les films africains soulignent l'intérêt de ce changement d'échelle.

Qui sont les acteurs de la mémoire en Afrique? La première partie du livre met en scène des groupes traditionnels soudés par une logique politique ou religieuse. Ils racontent leurs versions de certains événements comme la bataille de Bunxoy (Jean Boulègue), ils justifient la domination 'historique' d'une ethnie (Justin Willis), ils célèbrent des rites comme celui du Mboose au Sénégal (Lilian Kesteloot et Anja Verjman), ou ils entretiennent un patrimoine, par exemple les bois sacrés de la Côte des esclaves (Dominique Juhé-Beaulaton). Il faut attendre la quatrième et dernière partie de l'ouvrage pour qu'entrent en scène des acteurs plus actuels: les résistants à la colonisation au Cameroun (Andreas Eckert), les églises en Uganda (Henri Médard) et les intellectuels au Zimbabwe (Philippe Renel). L'économie interne de l'ouvrage suggère donc qu'il existe deux types de mémoire en Afrique, une mémoire 'traditionnelle' à forte connotation ethnique et une mémoire 'moderne' renvoyant à une occidentalisation ambiguë.

Certains papiers abordent de front l'opposition classique entre tradition et modernité, par exemple celui de Joseph Gahama à propos du Burundi, celui de Gérard Prunier sur la restauration controversée de la royauté au Buganda ou celui de Jean-Pierre Chrétien à propos du Rwanda. Néanmoins l'ouvrage fonctionne

globalement sur un découpage discutable: du côté de la tradition, la mémoire, ses usages autochtones et ses enjeux, du côté de la modernité et de la 'science', l'histoire et les historiens. Autrement dit, d'un côté les objets, de l'autre les chercheurs. Ainsi l'historiographie n'est pas un objet, exception faite du cas de l'Afrique du sud, brillamment présenté par Nathalie Héraud, où l'histoire a été trop liée à l'apartheid pour être au-dessus de tout soupçon. Cette distance artificiellement introduite entre mémoire (objet) et histoire (science) condamne la plupart des papiers à la simple description des pratiques qu'ils inventorient. Et surtout elle révèle une certaine fragilité méthodologique de l'historiographie africaniste.

L'histoire orale est l'une des victimes de cette césure forcée. Bien que les sources orales soient souvent et à juste titre sollicitées, on ne trouve dans le volume aucune discussion sur la médiation très particulière que l'enquête orale établit entre la mémoire et l'histoire. Ainsi l'étude de Kumasi proposée par Claude-Hélène Perrot, spécialiste d'histoire orale, repose sur des sources écrites et européennes. Le travail de Marie-Laure Derat sur l'hagiographie d'un saint éthiopien donne la clé de ce paradoxe en expliquant comment les spécialistes occidentaux se sont emparés des manuscrits originaux et de leur interprétation savante, ne laissant aux Ethiopiens que des bribes folkloriques. Il existe donc un partage très inégal entre d'un côté une authenticité africaine définie par le savoir occidental et de l'autre les usages 'bricolés' par les sociétés africaines. Dès lors les sources écrites, fussent-elles exogènes et passablement lacunaires, écrasent inmanquablement les sources orales.

Ce partage inégal est le produit de l'aliénation imposée par la domination coloniale et l'un des grands mérites de l'ouvrage est de proposer une analyse critique de cet encombrant héritage. Cinq papiers au moins sont consacrés à la mémoire de la colonisation. La politique archéologique de Galliéni à Madagascar (Didier Nativel et Françoise Raison-Jourde) ou l'architecture du palais du gouverneur à Conakry (Odile Goerg) montrent que la conquête symbolique du passé indigène a toujours été un enjeu important pour les colonisateurs. Mais les populations dominées ont opposées à ces manipulations coloniales des résistances obstinées et inventives en s'appropriant le fameux palmier en zinc de Djibouti (Colette Dubois) ou en réinvestissant continuellement le Rova de Tananarive (Jean Frémigacci). Jean-Louis Triaud propose enfin une synthèse stimulante en analysant les usages successifs ou concurrents du nom de Ghana. Il fait apparaître le faisceau des liens reliant la découverte scientifique des vestiges de Kumbi-Saleh (capitale de l'empire du Ghana) et le choix politique de Ghana comme nom du premier Etat africain libéré de la tutelle coloniale et il remonte les réseaux entrecroisés des milieux académiques occidentaux et des leaders politiques africains.

Ces dynamiques, du passé au présent, des pratiques sociales aux pratiques savantes, sont l'enjeu même du rapport histoire/mémoire et l'ouvrage que nous proposent Jean-Pierre Chrétien et Jean-Louis Triaud montre amplement que ce rapport est un objet passionnant pour les historiens en Afrique comme ailleurs. Chemin faisant, il ouvre des pistes thématiques et méthodologiques importantes et il faut espérer que l'inventaire sera poursuivi.

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ETHIOPIA

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The Ethiopians. By RICHARD PANKHURST. (Peoples of Africa series). Oxford: Blackwell, 1998. Pp. xx + 299. £45/\$59.95 (ISBN 0-631-18468-6).

KEY WORDS: Ethiopia, general.

The *People of Africa* series, in which this volume is located, has been ‘designed’, according to its editor, ‘to provide reliable and up-to-date accounts of what is known about the development and antecedents of the diverse populations in the continent, and about their relations with others near and far’. Richard Pankhurst’s uneven and idiosyncratic volume on Ethiopia does not fulfil these aims because the author relies on outdated source materials and his own vast but, in this case, selective knowledge of Ethiopian studies. He overemphasizes those subjects that currently interest him, such as art and architectural history, but schematizes the country’s rich political and religious histories. By so doing, he is able to avoid confronting currently sensitive questions about, for example, the nature of Menilek’s expansionism in the late nineteenth century; the applicability of the Marxist-inspired, student analysis of Ethiopia that led to the end of Haile Sellassie’s reign in 1974; and the worth of a political system based on ethnicity by language.

Unfortunately, the book lacks an introduction or preface that would explain the author’s approach to his subject and the themes and subjects he has chosen to emphasize. These omissions are made more critical by Pankhurst’s over-reliance on printed, original sources. By avoiding the research of others, he does not confront compelling issues or differing opinions; and leaves his readers ignorant of historiography and current scholarly trends.

He does exploit a variety of outdated sources such as A. B. Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia* (London, 1901) and E. Work, *Ethiopia. A Pawn in European Diplomacy* (New York, 1936), when more and better data may be found in more recent studies based on open primary sources. His methodology provides a license to avoid taking positions on such knotty scholarly issues as the possible Ethiopian origins of the Semitic languages or even on easy ones such as the neurotic character and the unrealizable policies of Tewodros II (r. 1855–68). About the latter, we are instead told that his suicide in 1868, has given him ‘a permanent, and highly honoured, place in Ethiopian history and mythology’. Modern historians must seek to explain or analyze events and people or themselves become myth-makers.

About Solomon/Sheba, for example, Pankhurst merely rehearses the tale as found in the Kebra Negast but adds nothing from contemporary analysis about the Ethiopian claim to replace Israel as the nation favoured by God, or about Menilek I taking over the crown of astute kingship from his father. Nor does he fully comment on the authorship of the document or the timing of its appearance as a popular saga coordinate with the accession to power of the ‘restored’ Solomonic dynasty. Pankhurst misses such points because he ignores the findings, the learned speculations and the theoretical constructs of scholarship by Steve Kaplan, Donald Levin, G. W. B. Huntingford, and others.

Yet, when Pankhurst is in full command of the literature and fully involved in what he is writing, he can satisfy the severest critic. For example, the sections on the disastrous Muslim invasion of Ethiopia led by Ahmed Gran from 1527 to his battlefield death in 1543, and the Italian occupation, 1936–1941, are excellent, based on current scholarship, factual and replete with the type of generalizations necessary for a good tertiary study. Even with many of the same ingredients, however, he does not do so well in Chapter 12, ‘Restoration and revolution’, which

seeks to compare Haile Sellassie's imperial regime with that of its Marxist successor. Pankhurst's failure to offer a scholarly assessment might mislead his readers to consider that the two governments were equally bad. In fact, after his restoration in 1941, the emperor presided over a time of growth, development and optimism for the most part, whereas the revolution of 1974 ushered in a period of non-development, cynicism, civil mayhem, internal warfare and pessimism. In a surprising bit of sophistry, Pankhurst acknowledges, then belittles, the role of Ethiopia's nationalities in bringing down the Marxist regime: 'Mangestu's pro-Soviet position, like Lej Iyasu's pro-German stance three generations earlier, was ... doomed on account of factors entirely external to the country, in this case the world-wide fall of communism' (p. 273).

The substantive inadequacies of *The Ethiopians* are exacerbated by proof-reading faults, such as *demize* (p. 201) for *demise* and *compromise* (p. 252) for *compromise*. Orde Wingate was not a major general, the rank he was to attain in Burma, but a breveted lieutenant colonel when he led Gideon Force into Ethiopia in 1941 (p. 262). Pankhurst, who is deeply involved in efforts to force Italy to return a stolen obelisk to Axum, has made a serious gaffe by claiming that the column, at the writing of this review still in Rome, arrived in Ethiopia in 1998, 'after much agitation'. All in all, Richard Pankhurst has not been able to transmogrify his vast knowledge of Ethiopian studies into the 'reliable and up-to-date account' that the *People of Africa* series claims to feature.

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NIGERIA – A HISTORY

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The History of Nigeria. By TOYIN FALOLA. (The Greenwood Histories of the Modern Nations Series). London and Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999. Pp. xviii + 269. £27.95 (ISBN 0-313-30682-6).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria.

The History of Nigeria is the sixth volume in the Greenwood Histories of the Modern Nations Series which seeks to provide students and the general reader with 'up-to-date, concise and analytical' histories of the nations of the world. In this book, the first on an African nation, the prolific historian and distinguished Africanist, Toyin Falola, has indeed provided a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of modern Nigeria from the precolonial period to 1998.

Following the standard format of the series, *The History of Nigeria* opens with a timeline of historical events between 12,000 B.C. and 1998 A.D., and in fourteen chapters deals with precolonial history, European penetration, British conquest and colonial rule, nationalism and independence, and post-independence developments (1960–98). The terminal date coincides with the demise of the military dictator, Sani Abacha, a real watershed in Nigerian history. In addition to the major chapters, the book contains an epilogue, which reflects on unresolved problems and future scenario (pp. 223–30); short biographical sketches of notable personalities in Nigerian history (pp. 231–46); and a selected bibliography (pp. 247–55) of additional readings to complement the few references in the text. A comprehensive index gives the reader easy access to the wealth of data in the book. Given the complexity of his subject, Falola has adopted a mix of thematic and chronological approaches, and organized his material around the twin principles of economy and politics.

This is a readable and concise account of Nigerian history, though it does not

offer any radical interpretation of events. Falola is generally balanced in his commentary on post-independence Nigeria, but he could not disguise his disgust, anguish and pessimism over the sad events of this period. Nigeria, he concludes, is a failed state, a point that is buttressed by an impressive array of documentary evidence.

The History of Nigeria, however, has its fair share of shortcomings, some of which were clearly avoidable. Not a few historians would quibble at the use of the article 'the' in the title and the choice of the organizing principles of economy and politics. The former suggests that the book is a definitive work based on fresh evidence capable of advancing radical (re)interpretations, and this is not the advertised aim of the publishers. The latter appears restrictive and implies that the author considers other factors, such as culture, relatively unimportant. That apart, the book contains a number of errors of fact and dating. The most glaring are the wrong dates assigned to events like coups d'état (e.g. 16 January 1966 [p. 10] and 1991 [p. 13]; the terminal date of Babangida's rule (1992 [p. 179]); the beginning of military rule (1965 [p. 226]); and the birth of Herbert Macaulay (1884 [p. 241]). The Isoko and Urhobo are not in eastern Nigeria (p. 23). Murtala Muhammed was never a Lieutenant-General (pp. 149 and 151) and Abacha was a full General, not a Major General, at his death (p. 231). It was the SDP and not the NRC that was the party 'a little to the left' (p. 189). The bomb blasts of the Abacha era were state-sponsored rather than carried out by the opposition (p. 203), as later revealed by their perpetrators. The use of the naira in analyzing the economic developments of the 1950s and 1960s (pp. 110–11) is anachronistic (since the sterling was legal tender till the early 1970s) and misleading given the wildly fluctuating exchange rates. Several Nigerian names are misspelt: Olagunji (p. 164); Ambrose Ali, Brade (p. 234–5); Oluwei (p. 245); Onah, Osinbajajo and Nwakwo (pp. 254–5), for Olagunju, Alli, Braide, Okwei, Onoh, Osibajo and Nwankwo, respectively.

The book has demonstrated the potentials and pitfalls of writing contemporary history. The author's projections have in certain cases proved prescient and in others been negated by rapidly changing circumstances. Thus, certain events have justified his assertions that 'the conditions for secession and civil war still remain' (p. 226) and that 'the country will (continue to) be prone to violence' (p. 229). But other developments (since 1998–9) have negated the claim that 'the army has refused to disengage' (p. 226) and foreclosed the possibility that 'the army will continue to tyrannize civil society' (p. 229). *The History of Nigeria* has proved that sound, clear-headed history is superior to what Nigerians call 'faction' (a blend of facts and fiction), no matter the literary appeal of the latter. This reviewer considers the book a balanced academic text and rates Falola's treatment of Nigeria's First Republic (Chapter 7), the most detached and perceptive that he has read. The book is a credit to the author's versatility and considerable ability to synthesize a huge and diverse body of material and to write a concise and authoritative text on a diverse and challenging subject. All in all, it not only meets the requirements of the target audience but those of serious scholars who need to update their knowledge of Nigerian history.

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CHRISTIANITY IN AFRICA

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A History of the Church in Africa. By BENGT SUNDKLER and CHRISTOPHER STEED.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Pp. xix + 1232. £85 (ISBN
0-521-58342-x).

KEY WORDS: Christianity.

When I began teaching a postgraduate course on the history of Christianity in 1986, the only general survey of the subject was so old that it was unusable – Groves's four-volume *Planting of Christianity in Africa* (1948–58). Subsequently, it occurred to me that I might well fill the gap myself. I wrote to Cambridge University Press and its Oxford counterpart, only to be told that they had, respectively, books in the pipeline from Bengt Sundkler and Adrian Hastings. (I had indeed, been the recipient of various inquiries from Bengt, over the years and I was touched to find my name among his many acknowledgements). I dropped the idea of writing a book on the subject. The years went by, and I asked both Cambridge and Oxford when these books were likely to appear, so that I could use them in my class, only to learn in each case that publication was apparently a long way off. At this point SPCK asked me to write a book on the global spread of Christianity. I replied, proposing that we confine the field to Africa. In 1995, my own book came out almost simultaneously with that of Adrian Hastings. Bengt died that same year, leaving a vast corpus of material to be edited by Christopher Steed.

The result is indeed a vast corpus of material – 1,232 pages, longer than any single volume of the *Cambridge History of Africa*. Probably no one will ever read the book right through, apart from those who rashly agree to review it. Its size means that its price is beyond the reach of the private buyer – in the West, as well as in Africa. Clearly, it needed much more rigorous editing. One could have begun by removing the extended discussions of Islam, which belong in a different book. Had it been written by almost anyone but Bengt Sundkler, it would never have been published, and its appearance now is subsidized by various funding bodies.

Bengt Sundkler worked in Africa for many years and his *Bantu Prophets* was a book of seminal significance. The present study has great strengths – it is both immensely learned and highly readable; it is, as one would expect, scrupulously fair to all variants of Christian belief. It devotes considerable space to the role of women, not only the African prophets in independent churches but also members of mainstream churches and expatriates, such as Mother Kevin. A young African woman is chosen to exemplify *ars moriendi* and the book ends with the words of an old woman in Sundkler's Tanzanian diocese. Asked to choose her favourite hymn, she responded: 'In the house of our king/There is still room/He welcomes them all ...'

But the book is essentially less a unified study than a huge collection of vignettes. Its chapters are arranged geographically by region and then by country, and the result is inevitably fragmented. The volume contains much that is moving and significant, but its size and cost mean that only a small minority of highly motivated readers will discover this.

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KANO POLITICS OVER THE LONG TERM

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Government in Kano, 1350–1950. By M. G. SMITH. Boulder: Westview Press, 1997.

Pp. xxiii + 594. \$85 (ISBN 0-8133-3270-2).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, political.

For specialists on Hausaland, the Sokoto caliphate and northern Nigeria, M. G. Smith's *Government in Kano* is already an indispensable piece of scholarship. It examines the history of Kano, from its founding, through the *jihad* of Usman dan Fodio, until the last decade of formal colonialism in Nigeria. Smith couples this broad chronological coverage with a micro-historical look at politics and government in Kano. The book (like this review) has been a long time in coming. It is based on oral and archival research conducted in the 1950s, while the majority of the manuscript was written in the 1960s. As such, *Government in Kano* complements Smith's previously published work on two other Hausa states, *The Affairs of Daura* (1978) and *Government in Zazzau* (1960), and in the main follows the pattern of these previous works.

Smith concentrates on the evolution of Hausa political systems and government from 1350 to 1950. He seeks to understand the nature of political competition in Kano, by focusing on the creation and transmission of official political titles. He charts in meticulous detail the ways in which individuals, as members of broader family and kinship groups, conceptualized, obtained and exercised political power. In so doing, he uncovers a wealth of detail about the political history of Kano, especially in the pre-colonial period. Indeed, at a time when many Africanists have turned to the colonial period, it is a real pleasure to witness just how much we still have to learn about the history of Africa before the advent of colonial rule.

The book is organized in a broadly chronological manner, with the 'analysis' coming in a separate chapter at the end. However, rich, innovative and important insights are present on nearly every page. The first three chapters explore the period up to the *jihad*, starting first with the reign of Alwali (1781–1807). Smith sets the stage with his material on Alwali by exploring a variety of topics, including Hausa-Fulani relations, ethnic categories, the caravan trade, and the nature and forms of Hausa government (offices, courts, chiefship, taxation, military organization). After outlining the structure of politics and government, he moves to the long period between the foundation of Kano City (traditionally dated at c. 999 A.D.) and the final conquest of Kano by the jihadist forces at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He does an excellent job of showing how Kano government developed over time, and examines this period in its own right, not simply as a prelude to the nineteenth century. In these pages, Smith explores the ways in which kingship became an important institution in Kano, and accounts for the development of a series of political titles, and the ways in which they changed over time. In Kano, the government was composed of a king – or *sarki* – and a large number of titled officials, who formed an aristocracy that could both threaten and support the power of the *sarki*.

What clearly emerges from Smith's discussion is that the political centre in Kano was often beset by instability and conflict. Indeed, Smith argues this was one reason that some kings turned to the use of elite slaves and eunuchs, who were used to strengthen kingly power at the expense of the aristocracy. But this really does not do justice to the complexity and creativity of Smith's discussion. He bases much of this discussion on the *Kano Chronicle*, oral interviews and other indigenous sources (such as the material written by Malam Adamu na Ma'aji and Alhaji Abubakar, *Dokajin Kano*). He argues that the *Kano Chronicle* records the

history of important moments – innovative periods and events – that when put into more general context can offer insights into political and economic change, as Smith himself notes, ‘against such a background, that which first seemed bizarre often becomes meaningful as an index or moment of innovation and change in the structure, content or context of the traditional regime’ (p. 11). He teases a tremendous amount of detail out of this material and meticulously constructs a narrative that traces how political offices changed in scope and responsibility, the meaning behind the appointment of particular people to positions of power and the ways in which the structure and practice of administration changed over the centuries.

Despite the obvious value of this fine material, the real heart of the book consists of Smith’s analysis of Kano in the nineteenth century; many of Smith’s informants must have been most comfortable and capable of discussing this period. The author’s focus remains largely the same: the history of government and administration as expressed in an administrative history of political offices and officials. Smith charts the composition and behaviour of the various Fulani clans that participated in the *jihad* and argues that the jihadist regime in Kano was initially unstable and under threat from a variety of quarters. Although government was initially conducted through a ‘ruling college’ (p. 203), it was soon fractured by the ambition of a number of Fulani clan leaders. Despite the high ideals of the entire jihadist movement, Smith argues that Kano simply could not be ruled without borrowing and adapting the pre-jihadist political structures of the former Hausa kings. Thus, the thrust of Smith’s argument aims to explore the ways in which Hausa forms of political authority and organization persisted in the nineteenth century, although in many cases in a very different, revised or syncretic form.

According to Smith, the success of the jihadist regime was largely the result of Ibrahim Dabo (1819–46), who, with the aid of Dan Mama, a member of the former Hausa aristocracy, successfully manoeuvred through the political minefield of competing interests in the early nineteenth century to re-establish the power of kingship, and thus ‘Fulani’ rule in Kano. Smith calls the military campaigns that Dabo conducted in the early part of his reign the ‘reconquest’ of Kano (p. 233). Dabo later solidified this ‘reconquest’ through marriage alliances, the creation of political titles, and the revival of Hausa titles, which were distributed to clients, relatives and other Fulani families.

The remaining chapters on the nineteenth century are essentially a history of the implications of this accomplishment, namely, the competition between various royal lines or houses to dominate the emirship. Smith illustrates this most effectively in his important discussion of the reign of Abdullahi Maje-Karofi, emir between 1855 and 1882, and traces the way in which Maje-Karofi’s sons eventually managed to achieve control over the throne in their hands, effectively shutting out from power the lines and progeny of other emirs, including those of Usman (1846–55) and Mohammad Bello (1882–93). Smith’s account culminates in his discussion of the civil war, which resulted in what he calls the ‘Sultanism’ (p. 339) of Aliyu Babba (1895–1903). Aliyu’s victory effectively confirmed and concentrated political power within the lineage of Abdullahi Maje-Karofi in particular.

Smith’s focus means he ignores a lot of material, however. Most especially, the economic history of Kano is only briefly explored and the role of Islam as a potent and meaningful ideology remains muted in Smith’s discussion. Because he completed his research in the 1950s, Smith had access to informants for whom the pre-colonial period was still in their living memory. Part of the richness of the text lies in Smith’s ability to compare differing oral and written traditions. Unfortunately, much of the oral material he draws upon is left anonymous and undocumented. Likewise, Smith’s coverage of the colonial period is much less compelling and less detailed than the rest of the material.

Overall, then, Smith's book is a comprehensive, detailed and meticulous political history of Kano. While it might initially seem arcane and impossibly complex, it is invaluable for the narrative it provides and for the insights it offers. It will no doubt be an enduring and significant addition to scholarship on the history of Kano and northern Nigeria in general.

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SEAN STILWELL

THE SLAVE-FREE PARADOX

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The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas. By DAVID ELTIS. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Pp. xvii + 353. £37.50 (ISBN 0-521-65231-6); £13.95, paperback (ISBN 0-521-65548-X).

KEY WORDS: Slave trade, slavery.

This book surveys the expansion of the slave trade and plantation slavery in the period from 1650 to 1800, focusing on the English Atlantic. The real chronological focus of the book is the period between 1680 and 1720, when the Atlantic slave trade expanded rapidly and England became the dominant slave-trading and slave-using power. Most of the evidence comes from this period rather than from the eighteenth century as a whole.

The central argument of the book deals with what Eltis calls the 'slave-free paradox' (p. 3). He argues that 'systems of slavery and free labor... had the same roots' (p. 22) in the 'peculiar' conceptions of individual rights that developed in northern Europe. While individual rights to property and labour led to the emergence of a free labour system in northern Europe, the same cultural factors led English slave-owners, exercising their rights as property owners, to create 'the most thoroughgoing chattel slaves in human history' (*ibid.*). European countries where individual rights were strongest developed the harshest slave systems. Northern European exceptionalism is Eltis' main explanation for the 'slave-free paradox' and the dominant role of the English in the Atlantic world.

Readers of Eltis' previous publications will not be surprised that much of the evidence is quantitative, drawing on computerized data sets of slave voyages, slave-ship revolts and European migration to the Americas. On the other hand, Eltis frequently argues that economics alone cannot explain crucial developments. Chapter 3 asks why Africa became the dominant source of slaves in the Atlantic world. In Eltis' view there is no simple economic answer to this question. He examines the trade in indentured servants and explores a 'counterfactual' trade in European slaves as a possible solution to labour demands in plantation American. He argues that there was no economic reason why a trade in European prisoners of war, debtors and criminals could not have supplied the sugar colonies with labour if Europeans had been willing to consider this choice. In the end, cultural factors determined which groups were enslaveable, not economics. Africans were outsiders, subject to the conditions of chattel slavery, but Europeans were not. In Chapter 4 this cultural argument is used to explain why African women became field workers subject to the same work discipline as African males, despite a gender division of labour that treated European women differently. Eltis argues that Africans selling slaves determined the gender ratios of the slave trade and that Europeans overcame their initial reluctance to use women as field labourers. The outsider status of African women outweighed their gender identity.

Readers of this journal will be most interested in Eltis' treatment of Africa's role in the slave trade. Chapters 6, 7 and 9 deal most explicitly with this question,

arguing that Africans shaped the slave trade from a position of strength, rather than weakness. Eltis relies heavily on arguments made by John Thornton in *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, 1992). He argues with Thornton that Africans and Europeans dealt with each other as equal trading partners. In addition he argues that Africans defended their political sovereignty and prevented the establishment of European-controlled plantation or mining complexes on African soil. Finally, he views the assortment of goods traded for slaves as substitutes for African products or as fineries that appealed to elite tastes, but not as necessities that reshaped local economies. Arguments for English exceptionalism and economic productivity seem at odds with political arguments for African equality in the marketplace, but Eltis shows no interest in exploring economic inequalities between Europe and Africa.

The argument for African strength is based on different regional responses to the slave trade. Senegambia, which sold the fewest slaves, was also the region with the highest incidence of ship- and shore-based slave revolts. Eltis argues that resistance was fuelled by strong local demand for slaves, the cultural unity created by Islam and the relative lack of interest in European trade goods. For the Gold Coast, Eltis argues that the expansion of slave exports at the end of the seventeenth century reflected the decline of gold production and the strength of local demand for imported textiles. 'Slaves were an alternative way of obtaining the same broad type of goods that were traded for gold' (p. 178). For the Slave Coast, Eltis posits a very strong demand for currency (cowries) and textiles. He cites the history of Whydah as an unexplained mystery, suggesting that 'the slave trade was not the central event shaping African economic and political developments' (p. 184). There is no discussion of Dahomey, because the chronological focus of Chapter 7 is the period from 1680 to 1720. For West Central Africa, Eltis argues that the trade was so small that if there had been no contact at all the effect would have been much the same. However, he admits that enslaved Africans 'would no doubt have disagreed with this assessment' (p. 191). Most African historians will probably feel the same way. Quantitative analysis of this kind, with arbitrary chronological limits and no real discussion of the value and use of imported commodities in African economies, does little to clarify African participation in the slave trade.

Eltis strongly disagrees with those who have argued for the importance of slavery and the slave trade for European economic development. Instead he believes that the English case demonstrates that slave-based systems were too small decisively to affect the course of development. In the end, the most important impact of race-based slavery 'may not have been economic at all, but rather ideological' (p. 272). Slavery gave birth to abolition, which resolved the slave-free paradox by universalizing rights previously enjoyed only by Europeans.

This book is an important contribution to the history of slavery and the slave trade. It is difficult to do justice to the scope and originality of the book in a short review. Many of its shortcomings reflect the current state of research. Eltis' contribution should provoke debate and discussion and stimulate new work.

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JAMES SEARING

SUDAN

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White Nile, Black Blood: War, Leadership and Ethnicity from Khartoum to Kampala. Edited by JAY SPAULDING and STEPHANIE BESWICK (eds.).
Lawrenceville, NJ, and Asmara: Red Sea Press, 2000. Pp. xxviii + 336. £14.99,
paperback (ISBN 1-56902-099-X).

KEY WORDS: Sudan, general.

You can't judge a book by its cover. This one is misleading both in its subtitle (it focuses firmly on Sudan and has little to say about Kampala or any other part of Uganda) and in the jacket blurb, which claims that the book 'introduces and defines a new realm of scholarly investigation', a boast immediately vitiated inside by the dedication to 'Robert O. Collins, pioneer historian of the Southern Sudan'. Indeed, as the introduction itself suggests, many chapters cover themes arising from Collins's four decades of work on the history of southern Sudan.

Like all edited collections, this one is something of a curate's egg, covering as it seeks to do a period from '1700–1994' (to take the title dates of Stephanie Beswick's wide ranging chapter on 'Women, War and Leadership in South Sudan', though Else Johansen Kleppe's piece, on the contested archaeological evidence for the origins of the Funj kingdom, goes much further back), and a geographical range from the northern to the southern borders of Sudan. The sixteen contributors too are a varied group, including journalists, assistance practitioners and politicians as well as academic historians; it is to be regretted that no list of contributors or account of their affiliations is included.

Unlike most edited collections, this one maintains a fairly consistent theme running through the various contributions. The editors stress the economic causes of the long history of conflict in the region: from nineteenth-century slave raids to contemporary concerns over oil deposits. They reject the popular journalist wisdom that the continuing civil war is basically religious and ethnic in origin: the Muslim Arab north of the country versus the African Christian south. Instead, they argue that, 'over the centuries the violent and forced transference of southern wealth into the north has given rise to Africa's longest war and altered Sudan ethnically and socially' (p. xxvi). The intellectual problem with this approach is that it lumps together such a wide range of social practices and historical contexts under an unexamined, culturally relative and ideologically loaded category of 'the economic'. However, it has its uses in providing a reasonably coherent narrative framework for the collection.

Accordingly, the book is structured into three sections, moving from the base of 'Economy', through a transmission belt of 'Violence', to the superstructure of 'Identity'. Within each section, some chapters provide detailed historical studies of particular events or individuals while others take a polemical approach to very broad themes. The key first section on the 'Economy', for example, begins with a fascinating chapter by Endre Stiansen on the Romanian merchant Franz Binder, described in the title as 'A European Arab in the Sudan, 1852–1863'. The next piece, by Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, approaches the familiar theme of the consequences of nineteenth-century southern Sudanese military slavery from the unusual perspective of southern migration to north Sudan. Damazo Dut Majak contributes a polemic on the environmental destruction of areas of the south under successive northern-based administrations and the efforts of the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) to protect the southern environment. John Prendergast then takes an assistance agency perspective, covering the well-trodden ground of the relationship in recent southern Sudanese history between food aid, mortality and the so-called 'dependency syndrome'. The section ends with Gabriel R. Warburg on the favourite Collinsian theme of the politics of the Nile waters, this time in relation to post-independence relations between Egypt and Sudan.

The other two parts of the collection offer similarly mixed bags of material; readers will have their own likes and dislikes. In my own field, I was disappointed by Thomas P. Ofcansky's accurate but rather thin account of the violent and complex recent history of the Sudan–Uganda borderlands (while recognizing from experience the difficulties of the task), and unconvinced but intrigued by Kjell Hødnebo's historical–linguistic reconstruction of early Acholi subsistence patterns, based on an analysis of material from the great missionary linguist, Father

Crazzolaro. Outside my area, I found Francis Madeng Deng's well-informed account of the changing relationship between the Ngok Dinka and their Baggara Arab neighbours particularly illuminating. For my taste, I would have preferred more intellectually rigorous, detailed, historical studies, and fewer broad-brush polemics. Nevertheless, the book contains much of value and provides a wide-angle snapshot of (fairly) recent Southern Sudanese studies. It is also good to see so many contributions from scholars originating from or based in the region.

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MARK LEOPOLD

CHRISTIANITY AS 'ANTI-STRUCTURE'

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Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of Modern West Africa. By LAMIN SANNEH. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2000. Pp. xv + 291. £18.50 (ISBN 0-674-00060-9).

KEY WORDS: Western Africa, Christianity.

We are being reminded nowadays – by Paul Gifford in his *African Christianity* (1998), by Kwame Bediako in the centenary (April 2000) issue of *African Affairs* – that the political scientists who have been regularly publishing their views on Africa over the past forty years have failed to examine seriously one crucial determinant, the Christian religion. The late Bengt Sundkler, in the introduction to his monumental *A History of the Church in Africa 2000*, quotes Lamin Sanneh, that even those who have studied Christianity in Africa have been 'interested in everything but the Christian religion' (p. 4). Now in his *African Abolitionists* Sanneh studies with serious interest a Christian contribution to the making of modern West Africa.

Professor of World Christianity at Yale, Lamin Sanneh has brought rare insights into his studies of Islam and Christianity – having himself moved unobtrusively from one to the other without the rancour and *odium theologicum* that customarily beset converts. A definitive study of his own Muslim Jahanke people (1979) was followed by the path-breaking *Translating the Message* (1989), which dispelled so many customary myths about missionary influence in Africa, contrasting Islam, diffused in its unvarying Arabic, with Christianity, where the message was inevitably reinterpreted afresh with each new translation. Now he leaves Islam to examine how the Christian message was 'translated' by those who brought it to West Africa in the wake of the North American New Light revival of the 1790s and of the campaigns against the slave trade and slavery.

The 'new dispensation' these movements brought what he calls an 'anti-structure' (a term adapted from Victor Turner's '*communitas*') in which those excluded from an established structure join in an alternative community. It is exemplified here by the community of self-liberated black American Christian loyalists who brought their own churches from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone in 1792. Their dynamic faith, fired by anti-slavery, was evangelical, awakened by the 'impulse of slave self-understanding' (p. 17). It challenged the hierarchical 'Old Christendom' of the established churches of Europe with their top-down structures. It also brought the challenge of anti-slavery to a country where the 'courtyard chiefs' had for centuries connived with slave-traders to sell their own people.

Sanneh first outlines the development of his 'anti-structure' within the religious and anti-slavery movements in North America and Britain, stressing Olaudah Equiano's call for African agency to translate the new message to Africa. He goes on to describe the 'plantation of religion' (a phrase originally used by the New

England Puritans) in Sierra Leone, and the subsequent conversion of the recaptives, showing how the 'anti-structure' churches resisted the 'Old Christendom' of the colonial government and missionaries. Then follows the story of the recaptives' own missions, the Krio/Saro message translated to the Yoruba and then up the Niger, Equiano's African agency personified in Bishop Crowther. Then comes Liberia where he presents a North American evangelical population, not self-liberated like the Nova Scotia settlers, but liberated by their owners. Here the impulse was not anti-slavery but colonization, an alternative to slavery. Yet the United States government whose problems it had been created to solve, denied this impoverished 'castaway colony' any support, thus rendering its people powerless to follow the Sierra Leone example.

It has to be admitted that the book looks rather old-fashioned today. It seems to belong to the far-off era of triumphalist 1960s scholarship which saw 'modern West Africa' as an emerging, non-problematic entity. Sanneh presents the Krio/Saro people in the loving, not too critical, manner of my own *A History of Sierra Leone*, first published in 1962 (which I cannot but be delighted to find he quotes so often and so appositely). But nearly four decades of scholarship have elapsed since then. We hear nothing of Ayandele denouncing them as 'deluded hybrids', nor yet of Akintola Wyse stalwartly defending them against this devastating charge. In the concluding chapter Sanneh does indeed ask, 'As slaves made bad slave-masters, according to Crowther, did colonized Africans make bad patriots?' (p. 248). But he gives no answer.

In the final paragraph he looks briefly and interestingly ahead to the present. 'Were the new political and military elites of postcolonial Africa who connived at despoiling the continent and traumatizing its peoples a reversion to the era of the "courtyard chiefs" who colluded with the captains of the slave trade?' (p. 248). An important question – but the reply demands another book. So too does his final suggestion that today in the spontaneous proliferation of charismatic and Pentecostal groups within and outside the churches we may see at work 'the politics of anti-structure' creating an 'insurgent Christianity in modern Africa... a world-order experience with precedent in antislavery' (p. 249). I hope he is now busy considering these questions for an important study he is superbly qualified to write.

London

CHRISTOPHER FYFE

ARABIC CHRONICLE OF THE SENEGAL VALLEY

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Florilège au jardin de l'histoire des Noirs: Zuhūr al-basātīn. Par SHAYKH MUUSA KAMARA. Tome I. Volume I: *L'aristocratie peule et la révolution des clercs musulmans (vallée du Sénégal)*. Sous la direction et avec une introduction de Jean Schmitz, avec la collaboration de Charles Becker, Abdoulaye Bara Diop, Constant Hamès, Oumar Kane, Olivier Kyburz, Olivier Leservoisier, David Robinson, Ibrahima Sall et Jean-Louis Triaud. Traduction de Saïd Bousbina. Paris: CNRS Editions, 1998. Pp. 460. FF390, paperback (ISBN 2-271-05519-9).

KEY WORDS: Senegal, Islam.

Scholars had at their disposal for almost the whole of the twentieth century the three major Arabic chronicles of the Middle Niger region, edited and translated by Octave Houdas and Maurice Delafosse; and now finally, after several earlier aborted attempts, they can consult a major chronicle and ethnography of the Senegal river valley. The massive *Zuhūr al-basātīn* (1, 700 ff.) of Muusa Kamara

was written in the 1920s and various French scholars, including Delafosse, worked on it, but their labours were never published.

Muusa Kamara himself was a multi-talented scholar, originating from the eastern zone of Futa Toro, born about 1864 and dying in 1945. He was the author of some 31 works, all in Arabic, dealing with fields as diverse as theology, jurisprudence, Arabic grammar, early Arabic poetry and traditional medicine. He also wrote a treatise attacking those who advocated jihad, and another on the spiritual affinity of Islam and Christianity. Nor was the *Zuhūr al-basātīn* his only ethno-historical work, though it is by far the most comprehensive.

The author's manuscript of *Zuhūr al-basātīn* is preserved in the archives of IFAN at the Université Cheik Anta Diop in Dakar in two tomes. The book under review is the first of four proposed volumes containing annotated translations of folios 167–416. Folios 1–166 are not part of the project, since some parts of this have already been published in the *Bulletin de l'IFAN*, while others were translated by Delafosse and his pupil Gros, and by Gaudefroy-Demombynes, though the whereabouts of their work is uncertain. A further reason for omitting these folios from the project was the principle of confining the four proposed volumes to a single geographical area – the Senegal river valley – as the early sections of the work deal with such states and areas as the Sokoto caliphate, the empire of Mali, the Masina 'caliphate', Wagadu, Kaarta and Mande. Volume I focuses on Futa Toro, and deals with the origins and dynastic rule of the Deniankobe, the histories of numerous Fulbe clans of the region, the Toorobbe of Soninke origin, and finally the origins of the Toorobbe 'almamiate' of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The volume is prefaced by a fascinating account by the project director, the anthropologist Jean Schmitz, of the author Muusa Kamara and his pedagogical milieu, as well as the French administrative-academic milieu with which he interacted (including a comparison of teacher-teacher and teacher-pupil relationships in the two cultures). He ponders the question as to why Kamara wrote the work, and wrote it in high classical Arabic. He suggests that Kamara indeed wanted his work to be translated into French, and that one possible reason for this was to combat the notion of an *Islam noir* which was somehow different from, and less strictly observant than, the Islam of the Arab world. This echoes a statement, apparently by Kamara himself, that he had tried to 'dégager une critique constructive aux fins de prouver les aptitudes des Noirs – surtout sénégalais – à la littérature arabe' (quoted in Amar Samb, *Essai sur la contribution du Sénégal à la littérature d'expression arabe*, Dakar, 1972, p. 112).

Altogether, this is a splendid volume, combining the talents of anthropologists, historians and experts in African languages, abundantly annotated and enhanced by numerous maps and tables. The Arabic manuscript text comes on attached microfiches. In this sense it constitutes a model for how to tackle African Arabic chronicles and make them accessible to the wider world of historians.

Northwestern University

JOHN O. HUNWICK

PALM OIL COMMERCE

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Commerce and Economic Change in West Africa: The Palm Oil Trade in the Nineteenth Century. By MARTIN LYNN. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Pp. xvi + 270. £40/\$64.95 (ISBN 0-521-59074-4).

KEY WORDS: Western, economic.

Martin Lynn examines the palm oil trade between West Africa and Britain, the biggest producer and biggest importer respectively, during a period of momentous change. He mines extensive secondary sources, 66 published contemporary accounts and eight other categories of primary sources. Having produced numerous articles on the subject since the early 1980s, Lynn reckons with every significant strand of the debate. The result is a powerful, richly textured and ambitious monograph. The title understates the scope of the book, which gives equal attention to African and British actors and markets. Indeed, the book is of interest to historians of both Africa and Europe. It lacks an explicit Atlantic perspective, but the consideration of the role of the USA and Brazil as buyers of the product and/or producers of competing oils, and the context of transition from slave to non-slave commerce, address broader Atlantic history.

Although Europeans discovered palm oil only in the fifteenth century, West Africans had used it since antiquity. Following the British abolition of the slave trade in 1807, prices surged with volume, peaking at £48 per ton in 1854, when British imports had increased 300 times. Increased British demand catered for the manufacture of soaps, candles, industrial lubricants and tinplate. Equally important, Lynn insists, was the response of African producers, who adeptly utilized improving terms of trade against a Britain experiencing low prices on its manufactured goods. But at what cost did Africans cope with a rapidly expanding demand? Increased production may not have occurred at the expense of other goods and services in many regions thanks to the use of hitherto underutilized factors of production, as the vent-for-surplus theory has it. However, it slashed leisure, intensified slave and child labour, and widened the gender gap as men asserted control over palm oil proceeds and thus over female labour. In some regions increased production also impinged upon food production. African productivity was also subject to environmental factors. The Bight of Biafran hinterland, where palm trees thrived best and which had a good network of navigable waterways, quickly emerged as the centre of supply. Evidence for profitability is impressionistic, but Lynn is able to conclude that profits were substantial, especially for British traders.

Lynn argues that the transition from slave to palm oil trade did not generate a 'crisis of adaptation' in West Africa, whereby a new West African commercial elite challenged the old ruling class, nor alter the corporate structure of commerce in West Africa and Britain before 1850. Crisis occurred only during the second half of the century resulting from depression associated with the steamship. The palm oil trade 'grew organically out of the slave trade'. The traders, middlemen and ports that had dominated the slave trade in both West Africa and Britain, bulwarked the new trade. Continuity also marked transport technology and trade-related institutions and transactions. West African ruling classes maintained power via coercion and the control of capital. British traders were either ex-slavers or had understudied slavers. They possessed contacts, expertise and experience, and, through their control of capital, actively regulated entry into the African trade. As in the slave trade, shippers were at the same time traders. Continuity accounts for the easy growth of the trade after, and cushioned the effect of, British abolition of the slave trade.

After the 1850s technological developments overtook the trade. The steamship was drastically faster than the sailing ship, and provided cheaper services, opening the trade to small operators. The separation of shipping from trading thus killed the oligopoly of handsomely capitalized and politically connected British firms. Prices and the value of the trade fell drastically. The steamship easily provided British markets with competing oils from around the world and the discovery of petroleum in Pennsylvania in 1859 virtually sounded its death knell. The response of African producers, to increase output, was ultimately ineffective due to decline

in the terms of trade with Britain. Nor did a new market in kernels, driven by new manufacturing techniques for margarine and soaps, offset the depression in the trade. The impact differed from region to region, with those relying more heavily on palm oil suffering more than predominantly kernel producers. British traders suffered from the stranglehold that the Germans quickly established on kernels. Some of the traders simply vanished; others sought, with an uneven degree of success, to restructure and modernize their operations around the cost efficiencies of the steamship.

This restructuring altered relations between West Africa and Britain. Since traders no longer had to be their own shippers, they needed to store merchandise in West Africa pending shipment. Hulks of now outdated sailing vessels served this purpose. Still, on-shore factories soon replaced the hulk, completing the movement of transactions 'from ship to shore'. The presence of European traders on land and in the hinterland via the major rivers made the role of the broker redundant. By 1895, a new oligopoly of steam shippers, with the support of British consular authorities, ousted African exporters who had capitalized on the opening up of the trade. This development prevented West African operators from serving as effective agents of capitalist development. Colonial conquest and infrastructure did not favour African operators.

Lynn recognizes African agency, yet realizes the overarching influence of external agency, in this case, the steamship. By demonstrating the smooth transition from the slave to palm oil trade, he undermines a major paradigm, the 'crisis of adaptation', which assumes that colonial conquest could not happen without such a crisis, ascribing peculiar causation to a West African act in a global drama.

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G. UGO NWOKEJI

RITUAL AND CHIEFTAINCY AMONG THE NYAKYUSA

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Ritual und Identität : Vorkoloniale Geschichte in Unyakyusa von ca. 1600 bis 1897.

By PETER WEBER. (Studien zur Afrikanischen Geschichte 21). Hamburg: Lit Verlag, 1997. Pp. x + 280. DM44.80, paperback (ISBN 3-8258-3437-9).

KEY WORDS: Tanzania, chieftaincy, religion.

This book aims to examine the emergence of local political identities in Unyakyusa from the 1600s until the late 1800s by reconstructing pre-colonial history in the area north of Lake Nyasa, Tanzania. It is based on documentary sources and oral histories collected during two years of fieldwork and on archival and missionary sources. The core chapters concentrate on the history of the most important chiefly lines as well as on the most significant ritual centres. The author offers interesting oral histories of the establishment of chiefdoms associated with three mythical ancestors, and ritual centres associated with those chiefdoms. He also discusses the significance of such centres in the context of migrations that resulted in the formation of several new chiefdoms. During the migrations two ritual practices were introduced: the *ubusooka* ceremony that took place when a new chiefdom was established, and the use of the sacred medicine 'spear of the chiefdom'.

The author suggests that in pre-colonial times political reorganization took place through rituals performed in sacred groves. Division is made between two different kinds of ritual centres: those contributing to the formation of political identities,

and those assisting the general well being of the population and the fertility of the land. The author concludes that the performance of specific rituals at particular shrines served as a process of identification. However, the various centres are described in a way that leaves the reader fascinated but full of curiosity about the actual rituals performed in them.

The author recognizes the limitation of the sources concerning descriptions of pre-colonial ritual practices. Several such practices are brought up, however. There are numerous references to the seminal work of Godfrey and Monica Wilson concerning the *ubusooka*. At some centres sacrifices were performed in order to acquire 'spear of the chief' medicine for the renewal of the chieftom boundaries and of the fertility of the country. Some other centres were significant because they were the burial places of former chiefs. Rain-making rituals are also mentioned. However, despite the title of the book, the author offers little description and analysis of how exactly the *ubusooka*, the 'spear of the chieftom', and the burial of the chiefs in particular locations contributed to the formation of local political identities. The precise connection between cosmology, mythical narratives and ritual practice deserves more attention.

The task of the reader would have been eased by reconstruction of genealogical charters of the numerous chiefly lines, although reference is made to the genealogies collected by the Wilsons. The book is very rich in indigenous notions and concepts the understanding of which would have benefited from a glossary. The author has included a very useful English summary of the chapters at the end of the book.

University of Helsinki

PÄIVI HASU

A 'POPULAR' HISTORY OF UGANDA

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Eating Uganda: from Christianity to Conquest. By CEDRIC PULFORD. Banbury: Ituri, 1999. Pp. 216. £9.99, paperback (ISBN 0-9536430-0-X).

KEY WORDS: Uganda, imperialism.

The problem with 'popular' historical narratives – i.e. those set free from the deadweight of footnotes, academic jargon and historiography – lies precisely with this freedom. Africans are irrelevant and there is scarcely even passing reference to the more serious scholarship of the past forty years. Cedric Pulford's 'fast-paced and colourful account' is concerned with Ugandan history in the era of missionaries, explorers and early colonial administrators. To this end we have three Hollywood-style protagonists, Alexander Mackay, Henry Morton Stanley and Frederick Lugard. These are indeed important figures; yet when will 'popular' African history start including Africans? The latter are bit-part players in Pulford's cinematic survey, the supporting cast to Stanley, Mackay and Lugard. As a result, they are one-dimensional characters whose attitudes toward the encroaching European world are hardly explained and sometimes never even mentioned. There is no serious attempt to explain why Europe should concern itself with the region of 'Uganda'. The early interest was clearly in Buganda, which would form the nucleus of the protectorate, but this is unexplained. King Mutesa of Buganda is, for example, one-dimensional, like every other African in the book: we are told that he was violently omnipotent, as you might expect from a Dark Continent despot, but the 'analysis' becomes no more sophisticated than this.

Similarly unjustified remarks abound concerning the region's low technological

base, economic backwardness and lack of urbanization; Pulford effectively declares Buganda's readiness for the colonial mission. Other wholly avoidable errors creep into the book. There was no single god in Buganda called 'Lubale'. There were ten, and not five, administrative divisions in the late nineteenth-century kingdom. It is surely not supportable, moreover, to assert that in 1889 the European takeover of Buganda was 'inevitable'. Little attention is paid to internal dynamics, or to relations between particular African societies. The shallowness with which Bunyoro is treated is matched by the superficiality of the discussion of relations between it and Buganda, relations which would play a critical role in the formation of the colony. At the same time, in a book about the making of Uganda, Islam is largely omitted.

Pulford faithfully reproduces the stereotypes of the nineteenth century, and seems to be a believer in the Livingstonian dream. Throughout the book there are almost embarrassed asides concerning the red herring of anti-colonialism: the overall idea is something to the effect of 'Well, chaps, colonialism wasn't *all* bad, was it, eh?' Colonialism, indeed, was a pretty good thing because it introduced Africans to Christianity: Uganda is simply used as a case study to illustrate how this might be so. Thus the author climbs inside the skins of his Victorian heroes rather too tightly for comfort. By contrast, his attempts to imply that the Maasai were misunderstood by racist nineteenth-century observers appear half-hearted: he never tries to refute them, and one comes away with the impression that he believes the Maasai really were a savage lot after all. The recurrence of words and phrases such as 'primeval', 'isolated', 'deepest recesses', 'deep interior', all seem to indicate the author's own decidedly Victorian perception of Africa. 'Tribes' at various stages of 'social advancement' flit across the pages, waiting to be picked up by the proverbial caravan of European Christian civilization passing through their areas.

Nonetheless, the European story of Uganda's creation is competently told in places; in particular, the account of the Emin Pasha relief expedition is well-told, graphic and very readable. A fine description of Lugard's year in the region is offered, although one cannot help but groan inwardly on being told that Africa's history 'abounds' in such 'climactic encounters' as that between Lugard and the remnants of Emin's Equatoria garrison on the shore of Lake Albert. The author's deep admiration for the early Christian pioneers is clear; but the assertion that there was no racism among missionaries is open to serious debate. If Mackay did not regard Africans as inferior, then why was he there? Africans were inferior by definition: such arrogant proselytization can hardly take place among equals. The author's attempts to remove from the history of Christianity in this region some of its more unpleasant aspects may well serve his overall purpose, but as an exercise in damage limitation it is fairly transparent. Nonetheless, in the book's closing stages, the author expends great energy extolling the virtues of, and progress achieved by, the Christian church in Uganda. Spiritual fulfillment among Ugandans is not something with which this reviewer can take issue. It is worth noting, however, that by this point in Pulford's narrative, references to Africa's deepest recesses and dark interior have all but disappeared.

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RICHARD REID

CAPE VERDE

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Cape Verde: Crioulo Colony to Independent Nation. By RICHARD A. LOBBAN, JR.
Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1998. Pp. xiii + 186. £13.95, paperback
(ISBN 0-8133-3562-0).

KEY WORDS: Cape Verde, general.

It is indeed unfortunate that Cape Verde is so little known outside of Africa and a few isolated enclaves in Europe and the eastern seaboard of the United States, for the archipelago offers a laboratory in which many of the world's pressing concerns are played out in miniature. Claimed and settled by Portugal early in the process of European discovery, Cape Verde was perhaps the oldest colonial society at its independence in 1975. The country experienced the worst of slavery and colonial domination, fought its liberation war in the forests of Guinea Bissau, experimented with socialist models of government and was a regional leader in the transformation to a stable democracy. It has been a nation of emigrants fleeing persecution, of poverty and drought, but now faces the direst of challenges with a population that far outstrips both the natural resource endowment of the environment and the employment-generating capacity of the economy. There are few issues of global currency that could not draw some insights from the Cape Verdean reality.

With this book Richard Lobban succeeds in sharing this fascinating country with a wider scholarly and popular audience; for this reason alone, it deserves and will attract an avid readership. Although a respected anthropologist, Lobban feels most comfortable in historical robes, and he demonstrates a scholar's meticulous commitment to locating current social, cultural and economic patterns in their historical space. The detailed account of the colonial Cape Verdean role in slaving activities along the Guinea coast and its impact on the formation of colonial society is both excellent and accurate.

A second strength that recommends this book highly is its record of political events that led from colonial struggle to nationhood. Professor Lobban, of course, lived this watershed period of extraordinary change and knows personally many of the key actors in the revolutionary drama that created an independent Cape Verde. The reader who knows something of Cape Verde cannot but marvel at this insider narrative of the concatenation of political decisions, the intent and personalities of the leaders, the tense negotiations and the widespread rapture that welcomed independence.

At the same time, the book displays weaknesses that require some attention. Professor Lobban is much less effective in describing and analyzing contemporary Cape Verdean society and economy. The sections on agriculture and the rural economy are incomplete and misinformed. He disguises the fact that Cape Verde is still a very poor country. Its *per capita* income figures are artificial and reflect influxes of foreign aid and remittances, not sustainable economic growth. Its agriculture and its environmental patrimony are in crisis; and, except for a few vegetable crops, local farmers provide but a single digit portion of national consumption needs. Cape Verde still requires major donations of subsistence staples and its population would starve without this aid.

With regard to Crioulo culture, there are inexplicable inaccuracies that lead to confused or inaccurate conclusions. For example, the term *saudade* does not mean 'soul', either in Portuguese or Crioulo, as any careful listening to Cape Verdean *mornas* would demonstrate. Equally confusing is the use of the term *badiu* to suggest a marginalized segment of rural society. Perhaps extended fieldwork on São Tiago would have clarified that, although the term is indeed derived from the

runaway slave population that occupied the isolated heights and peaks of the island, the term is now used to describe anyone born on São Tiago who speaks Crioulo with the distinguishing accent of that island (in contrast to a *sampadjudu* from one of the Barlavento islands). Today, the term has nothing to do with class, colour or rural residence.

More seriously, Professor Lobban displays unmitigated sympathy toward the leadership of PAICG (later PAICV). Compared with the unwavering venom he reserves for the colonial masters, the apologetic tone he adopts towards the abuses of the single party state during the 1980s, including the assassination of Renato Cardoso, looks far from neutral. Moreover, the conclusion that the current MpD party is Euro-centred (like *capitães* in his analogy) while the PAICV is Afro-centred (like *lançados*) is stretched too thin and does injustice to genuine efforts to find development solutions for a very precarious national economy.

These flaws notwithstanding, this book is an important contribution to the literature on Cape Verde. The reader will benefit from the richness of historical depth and the breadth of social coverage that Professor Lobban provides. He offers an appropriate dose of the distinctive flavor of Cape Verdean culture, and I find myself feeling those insatiable *sodades* for these islands so bereft of natural resources but so rich in humanity. Of course, if it were written today, Cesária Évora would certainly share equal billing with Cachass, the King of Funaná.

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TIMOTHY J. FINAN

GANDHI

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Gandhi Arrives in South Africa. By BURNETT BRITTON. Canton, ME: Greenleaf Books, 1999. Pp. lx + 652. \$30 (ISBN 0-934676-96-8).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, biography, law, politics.

Inspired by his longstanding fascination for Mohandas K. Gandhi, Burnett Britton provides a detailed description of the first four years of the Indian's stay in South Africa from 1893 to January 1897. The new material is primarily about the law cases Gandhi handled from the time he was admitted to the Natal Bar in September 1896 to the middle of 1897 when he left for India. Britton goes beyond Gandhi's legal work, however, to explore public endeavours related specifically to the Natal Indian Congress (NIC), a body that he helped to found in 1894.

We see Gandhi mature as a lawyer. He was thorough in preparing for the cases he handled but he was not a person given to dramatic courtroom flourishes. Gandhi was to grow from these hesitant beginnings, although he delegated Supreme Court cases to more experienced counsels. Britton provides lengthy transcripts of the court proceedings but is less exhaustive in his analyses about them. Three cases are discussed in detail. In the first, *Meter v. Meter* (the Case of the Missing Promissory Notes), 1895, Gandhi won in the Verulam local court. The decision was overturned in the circuit court, however. When it went to the Supreme Court in Pietermaritzburg, the circuit court's decision was reversed on a point of law Gandhi had presented, although the justices were clearly more sympathetic to the plaintiff. The second case, *Regina v. Rangasamy Padiachy* (the Intimidation Case), 11 September 1895, was heard in the Durban criminal court. The charge of intimidation was against Rangasamy Padiachy, a merchant in Durban. Alfred Millar QC appeared for the accused, with Gandhi at his side. Gandhi's help was important since he knew the community well. The defendant was found guilty, but the decision was overturned in the Supreme Court. The

Resident Magistrate in the lower court had committed procedural errors in the false belief that the NIC was guilty of witness tampering. In the third case, *John Matthew Adam v. Dada Abdoolla & Company (the Shipping Case)*, 1 April 1896, John M. Adam, ex-captain of the Courland owned by Dada Abdoolla & Co., sued the owner for over £404 as payment due to him. Gandhi appeared for Dada Abdoolla. He prepared his case well, and the final judgment vindicated him because the court awarded Adam an amount fairly close to his original settlement offer.

Gandhi expended enormous energies in NIC-related political work. Britton's detailed discussion of Gandhi's initiatives suggests that he was more than a hired hand of the merchant class, an argument that is made by Maureen Swan in her important work, *Gandhi: The South African Experience* (1985). Gandhi's guru-like 'calm intensity' (p. 437) drew people to him. He reached out to the indentured and ex-indentured Indians to promote the NIC although he was still heavily dependant on Indian merchants for its funding. When he led a party of NIC members on a tour of northern Natal in 1895, he sought out the Indian labourers on the agricultural estates for their support. The white employers were suspicious if not hostile to the tour. One of them wrote, 'He [Gandhi] will cause some trouble I have no doubt, but he is not the man to lead a big movement. He has a weak face. He will certainly tamper with any funds he has a handling of. Such at any rate is my impression of the man – judging by his face'. (p. 437)

White traders saw large Indian merchants as a threat to their businesses. Gandhi's association with the Indian traders did not win him too many friends among the white colonists. When therefore he published while in India *The Indian Franchise: An Appeal to Every Briton* (1896), Natal's whites were angry for the alleged misrepresentations against them. The pamphlet created a swell of anti-Gandhi feelings by the time he and his family returned on the Courland in December 1896. The Courland and the Naderi carried passengers from Bombay where a few cases of the bubonic plague had been reported. The authorities imposed a quarantine on the two ships in a move motivated by Asian exclusion politics. White colonists fanned anti-Indian agitation event to the point of encouraging Natal's Zulus to join them. Said one agitator, 'We all know – Kaffirs and Europeans – that the Indian is not wanted in South Africa. The coolie is too contemptible to be roughly handled or killed by Europeans. The natives are proper persons to deal with them'. (p. 647) By allowing the anti-Indian agitation to fester, from 18 December 1896 to 13 January 1897, the authorities created a spirit of mob rule. A group of whites attacked Gandhi late on the afternoon of 13 January 1897, soon after he landed at an embankment in Durban. It was only the brave intervention of Mrs Jane Alexander, the wife of the police superintendent, that saved him from serious injury and even death.

This book's focus on the first four years of Gandhi's stay in South Africa is significant for the understanding it brings to the later South African Gandhi. Gandhi sought to unite Natal's Indians under an imperial strategy. It is a strategy that he would effectively combine with direct action a decade later. Gandhi learned from his mistakes, and Britton points to his extraordinary capacity for growth. Britton's use of archival sources is impressive. The value of the book lies primarily in the knowledgeable discussion of the law cases handled by Gandhi, thanks to Britton's own legal background. This is the first book to do so.

There are weaknesses that suggest the author's unfamiliarity with standard academic practices. For example, a suitable introduction and conclusion are essential in a book of this length to help the reader better understand the Gandhi being presented. It is especially important to place Gandhi in the historiographical contexts of South Africa's politics of race and of the many other works on the Indian. An issue of concern in recent studies has been the relationship between the

Indians – especially Gandhi – and the Africans. Natal's whites were beginning to institutionalize domination, and in their determination to exclude the Indians some were willing to foment the racial antagonism that was beginning to show between the two subordinate groups. The book has missed an opportunity to locate Gandhian politics in the white-Indian struggle in which the presence of the Africans was significant.

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COMPARING SOUTH AFRICA AND THE UNITED STATES

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The Comparative Imagination: On the History of Racism, Nationalism and Social Movements. By GEORGE M. FREDERICKSON. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997. Pp. 259. \$27.50 (ISBN 0-520-20996-6).

KEY WORDS: South Africa, race.

'Over the past 15 years', James Campbell has recently noted, 'the literature of comparative history has been swelled by a stream of books and articles comparing and contrasting South Africa and the United States. Slavery, segregation, sharecropping, racial ideology, black politics, the relationship of state and capital, the frontier experience, even the historical profession itself have all come under comparative scrutiny. Whereas in 1980 George Frederickson deplored the relative paucity and fragmented nature of cross-national comparisons (p. 24), by the end of the century, as Campbell remarks, it was 'a virtual sub-field'.¹

If there is one name associated with this sub-field, it is that of the eminent American historian, George M. Frederickson, who, over the past twenty years, has published two seminal comparative studies of South Africa and the United States, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History* (New York, 1981) and *Black Liberation: A Comparative History of Black Ideologies in the United States and South Africa* (1996), and several major articles on the subject. These articles provide the basis for the essays assembled in *The Comparative Imagination*.

Divided into three sections, the book brings together Frederickson's writing over almost twenty years on comparative historiography, on race and racism and finally on liberation struggles in the USA and South Africa. The essays are not confined to the USA and South Africa, however, for there is also a hitherto unpublished and fascinating piece on de Tocqueville's mid-nineteenth century observations on race and democracy in the USA and on the French colonization of Algeria, and a fine historiographical review of Peter Kolchin's *Unfree Labor* and Shearer David Bowman's *Masters and Lords*. By extending the comparison of southern slavery to Russia and Prussia with their not dissimilar forms of unfree labour, Frederickson argues these very different works pose the question of 'what difference, if any, arose from the fact that southern slavery was based on distinctions of "race"... whereas the European patterns of agrarian dominance and dependency were not ...' (p. 67).

For the most part, however, these essays are concerned with the USA–South African comparison, and they all reflect the author's 'life long commitment' to the study of race and racism, driven, as he says, 'by the strong emotions aroused' in

¹ James Campbell, 'Models and metaphors: industrial education in the United States and South Africa', in Ran Greenstein (ed.), *Comparative Perspectives on South Africa* (Basingstoke, 1998), 90.

him 'by the civil rights movement of the 1960s and its disappointing aftermath', and his desire 'to probe the intellectual and ideological foundations of the American dilemma' (p. 3). An intellectual historian of nineteenth-century America, Frederickson's preoccupation with what he sees as 'the most glaring and lamentable contradiction to what were supposed to be [America's] most fundamental values' (p. 3) led him to turn to comparative history and above all – perhaps inevitably – to the comparison with that archetypal racialized society, South Africa.

Inevitably, in a collection of this nature there is not much that is new for those of us who have read Frederickson's output over the years, although the introduction and the juxtaposition of older and more recent essays provide a handy introduction for newcomers to his work and help chart his own, as well as the more general, changing historiographical trajectory for initiates. This is an American historian who believes that 'historical comparison is not merely a method or procedure but also an antidote to parochialism' (p. 7). The first section of the volume reveals Frederickson's changing view of the nature of the comparative endeavour, while sections two and three show the changing nature of his practice as he has moved from examining white supremacy from above to looking at black freedom struggles from below.

As a South Africanist, I cannot but feel that his understanding of the American experience is still more sure-footed than his handling of the South African comparison, both historically and in more recent times. Nevertheless, in the final essays in this collection the resonances between the black American and the black South African struggle for civil rights in the second half of the twentieth century are both illuminating and sobering, despite the very profound structural differences between them – differences summed up succinctly by the Revd. Allen Boesak when he pointed out that for black Americans to gain civil rights was reform; for Africans in South Africa it is revolutionary (p. 149).

Frederickson identifies his own practice as cross-national comparison. Yet, as he frankly acknowledges, there are problems in cross-national comparisons which take as their framework the nation state (introduction and chapter 3, 'From exceptionalism to variability'). Not only does it mean coming to terms with two national histories in all their narrative detail; it also often precludes the study of primary sources for more than one of the countries being compared (a methodology he explicitly defends [p. 11]). At least as seriously, his decision to write in a 'manner... compatible with... traditional historical method' – unlike the sociologist or political scientist who begins with 'a well-defined model or hypothesis' – tends to render the comparisons blunter and less illuminating. With topics so vast in scope as white supremacy and black liberation there are so many variables to be considered that there is always a danger of not seeing the wood for the trees.

Cross-national comparison is not the only comparative strategy one can adopt, as Frederickson himself recognizes. James Campbell has shown, for example, in his extraordinary *Songs of Zion*, a study of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in South Africa and the United States, the ways in which 'the borders that define contemporary scholarship often do not conform to the borders of lived experience for the historical actors about whom we write'. Indeed, Frederickson's own *Black Liberation* shows precisely this need for a transnational comparative history, which establishes connection as well as comparison.

Nor, as readers of this journal will be well aware, is the United States comparison the only one of relevance to South African historians, despite the proliferation of such studies: Ran Greenstein's *Genealogies of Conflict: Class, Identity and State in Palestine/Israel and South Africa* (London, 1995), which compares Israel and South Africa, and Gay Seidman's work on working class

movements in South Africa and Brazil, are but two examples of the wider geographical range of comparisons that can be drawn.² At least as important are the recent attempts by John Lonsdale, Ran Greenstein and Mahmood Mamdani to relocate South Africa in its African context, important steps towards recognizing the limitations not only of American exceptionalism but also of South African exceptionalism – a misconception about their past which truly unites much South African and American historiography.³

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SCHOOLS IN NIGER

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Bilan d'un siècle de politiques éducatives au Niger. Par OLIVIER MEUNIER. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000. Pp. 314. FF 150.00, paperback (ISBN 2-7384-9036-0).

KEY WORDS: Niger, education.

Les ouvrages associant l'histoire éducative à l'étude des pouvoirs politiques et religieux, des structures sociales et de la question du genre se multiplient, et on ne peut que s'en féliciter. Avec ce livre Meunier apporte une pierre importante à l'édification de cette vaste recherche. Trois aspects ont retenu son attention: les mobiles et la dynamique d'implantation de l'école française dans la colonie du Niger; les politiques scolaires sous les différents régimes politiques de la période post-coloniale; les limites des politiques de scolarisation dans un contexte de démocratisation scolaire et de crise économique.

La documentation sur laquelle repose ce travail est d'une grande richesse puisque l'auteur exploite alternativement les sources écrites et les témoignages émanant de personnes diverses issues de toutes les catégories socio-professionnelles.

Dans la première partie de son ouvrage (1900–60), Meunier fait très bien ressortir les antagonismes politiques et religieux qui ont opposé l'école française et la société nigérienne durant toute la période coloniale et qui ont abouti à la victoire de la première sur la seconde puisque la fonction publique en tant qu'institution et premier employeur de l'état tend à remplacer la chefferie. Si en effet, la conquête morale et intellectuelle des élites traditionnelles a justifié dans un premier temps l'ouverture d'écoles dans lesquelles les futurs auxiliaires de l'administration coloniale ont pu être formés aux nécessités de la présence française et à l'utilisation de la langue française, ces écoles ont, incontestablement, évolué à l'écart des aspirations de la masse qui les regarde comme néfastes et opposées de ce fait à l'éducation traditionnelle de leurs enfants.

Les politiques éducatives présentées par O. Meunier dans la deuxième partie de son étude confirment une certaine continuation de celles autrefois imposées par le régime colonial et ce indistinctement du pouvoir en place durant la période post-

² Seidman, *Manufacturing Militance: Workers' Movements in Brazil and South Africa, 1970–1985* (Berkeley, 1994).

³ See Greenstein, 'Identity, race, history: South Africa and the Pan-African context', in Greenstein (ed.), *Comparative Perspectives on South Africa*. Ironically, even in this collection six of the essays draw their comparisons with the United States; two concern Brazil and only two – Greenstein's own, and John Lonsdale's conclusion, 'South Africa in African history' – related to South Africa as part of Africa. Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject. Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Cape Town, 1996) is not explicitly comparative but addresses directly the issue of South African exceptionalism and of a South Africa in and of Africa.

coloniale (1960–99). Que ce soit aux niveaux primaire, secondaire ou universitaire, c'est toujours sous l'impulsion des effectifs que les responsables politiques tentent de s'adapter à la situation du moment sans aucune prospection sur le moyen ou long terme. Cette politique de la fuite en avant et la crise nationale née de la remise en question du fonctionnariat du fait de sa saturation ont contribué à l'adoption des réformes indispensables dans l'optique d'adapter l'école nigérienne héritée de la colonisation aux réalités nationales.

Meunier fait le constat amer que cette tentative de 'relier l'école à la vie' à la nigérienne s'est soldée par une 'sous-scolarisation', une 'sur-scolarisation', une 'déscolarisation' et une 'mal-scolarisation' avec l'émergence d'un facteur aggravant qu'est la crise économique et l'adoption par le Niger du Programme d'Ajustement Structurel (PAS).

En abordant les limites des politiques de scolarisation dans la troisième partie, Meunier décrit par ailleurs la déstructuration de la société nigérienne du fait notamment de l'application des directives des institutions de Breton Woods. Le système éducatif ne sera pas épargné non plus, bien au contraire. En effet, loin d'être la sésame des pays en difficulté économique, le Programme d'Ajustement Structurel engendre aussi des clivages sociaux et accentue les disparités. Pourtant, conclut Meunier, une meilleure concertation entre les différents partenaires impliqués dans la formation, la production et la dissémination du savoir adoucirait certainement les effets engendrés par la mutation d'une société 'traditionnelle' pour peu qu'une telle initiative rencontre l'assentiment des principaux concernés.

L'auteur nous livre ici un travail remarquable, fondé sur un dépouillement minutieux des sources et notamment orales. Ses conclusions permettent désormais de repenser sereinement la nouvelle politique éducative du Niger.

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SCHOOLING THE NORTHERN NIGERIAN ELITE

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Education Under Colonial Rule: A History of Katsina College, 1921–1942. By JAMES P. HUBBARD. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000. Pp. 306. \$47.50 (ISBN 0-7618-1589-9).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, education.

This is an impressive book on one of Nigeria's oldest secondary schools and certainly the most important in northern Nigeria in the first half of the twentieth century. It is also a book about power, but of an indirect variety. The graduates of Katsina College eventually formed the very core of the power elite in colonial northern Nigeria, and were arguably the most respected members of the educated elite in the region. Ordinarily, the study of a secondary school may not command much attention in academic circles. This is certainly not the case here because of the unique role of Katsina College in the development of modern western education in an Islamic region, and the preeminent contributions of the graduates of the school to the civil service and politics in Nigeria at a time when the very foundations of modernizing agencies were being laid.

Although the author is silent with regard to the literature on education, it is perhaps worth mentioning that books on education in Nigeria fall into two major categories, both reflecting the weakness of this sub-specialization. On the one hand are those that generalize about the development of education in colonial Africa. They tend to stress the inadequacies of opportunities and the ideological lapses of missionary education. These generalizations tend to obscure the monumental

achievements of individuals and communities in creating new opportunities and empowering themselves. On the other hand are works that celebrate individual schools or educationists. Although specific enough, they tend more towards eulogies and are disconnected from social and political realities.

One of the brilliant accomplishments of Hubbard in this dense narrative is to combine these two approaches, although without making this methodology explicit. There is substantial analysis of the context of education in colonial Nigeria, covering such issues as the culture of the people, the introduction of formal education among Muslims, and the initially lukewarm reaction to modern, non-Arabic schools.

As is to be expected, the specific takes considerable space in three chapters. Created in 1921, Katsina rapidly became a major school in the region. The author narrates the history of its creation, its management, and the role of the college in the northern society. Some notable issues emanate from this case study. Unlike the missionary schools in southern Nigeria and other parts of Africa, Katsina College did not provide anti-colonial radicals. Its syllabus actually stressed the building of character, sometimes far more than the development of intellect. Katsina was successful in producing the first set of Nigerian teachers who made it possible to staff the expanding school system in the north. Nevertheless, the progress of the expansion was slow for most of the period, as western education was still not very much valued. Unlike the secondary schools in the south, Katsina was largely unknown among the majority of the population. Southerners were usually denied access to the school, thus making it less competitive. Unlike their southern counterparts, the graduates of Katsina did not regard themselves as people chosen by God to lead the country by virtue of western education. However, many of them were later to enjoy considerable power and influence, although this was not the original intention. Indeed, the school was not created for the princes, nor as an elite institution such as Eton or Harrow in England. Its graduates were at first content to be junior partners to British officers, but they ultimately inherited power in the 1950s and became the leading civil servants in the region. Also unlike their southern counterparts, the majority of the graduates did not aspire to travel abroad to receive higher education, nor did they advocate the creation of a local university. Most did not even travel outside of the north, and hardly described themselves as 'Nigerians' by the early 1940s.

Although the author is again silent on the broad significance of his book in Nigerian historiography, I can identify two major contributions for those who may want to profit further from the original, well-presented data. Hubbard deserves praise for enriching our knowledge on the emergence and management of secondary schools in colonial Africa. While the archival data is rich on the pioneer schools, this is not the case with oral testimonies. His book provides an opportunity for comparative studies on elite colonial secondary schools in Anglophone Africa.

More importantly, he has provided data to revisit the analysis of social and political classes in Northern Nigeria. The role of Islam and tradition have been privileged in the understanding of these classes, but not western education. The overriding assumption in such works by John Paden, Toyin Falola, Hassan Mathew Kukah, Paul Lubeck and C. S. Whitaker is that the legacies of the Sokoto caliphate of the nineteenth century and of Islam are the most crucial in the understanding of this elite. We need to add the dimension of western education, as it produced a new class with a broadened vision. By the 1950s, the intelligentsia of the north feared the domination of its southern counterparts because of the power of their education and control of modern institutions. Very quickly, the northern intelligentsia began to build and expand schools. By the mid 1960s, a class of professionals and politicians in the North began to see education as a way to modernize, even if aspects of tradition and Islam would be compromised.

The ideas of the educated northerners have not been fully analyzed, but Hubbard has written a book that may move us in the direction of revisiting some studies and assumptions about power, tradition and education in Nigeria.

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BREAKING WITH 'TRADITION'

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Nkrumah and the Chiefs: The Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana, 1951–60. By RICHARD RATHBONE. Oxford: James Currey; Accra: F. Reimer; Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000. Pp. xi + 176. £40 (ISBN 0-85255-771-X); £14.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-770-1).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, political.

This study addresses an important, but somewhat neglected, aspect of Ghanaian politics in the formative years of the 1950s. Over the course of a single decade, the Convention People's Party (CPP) gained partial access to the portals of colonial power in 1951, secured outright independence in 1957 and wasted little time in establishing a *de facto* one-party state. The rise of the CPP was mirrored by the equally dramatic fall from grace of the chiefs who forfeited all of the quite considerable powers which they had commanded at the end of the 1940s. This book confirms that these processes were not coincidental in their timing, but were in fact closely bound up with one another. From its inception, the CPP – the self-professed party of the commoners – looked on the chiefs as its natural enemy, an assessment which was further reinforced by the alignment of the most influential chiefs with opposition parties during the mid-1950s. The author reveals the single-mindedness with which the CPP set out to break the bastions of 'traditional' rule, in part by progressively diluting their powers and in part also by replacing intractable incumbents with CPP sympathisers. The bulk of the text deals with the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti, although there is also some passing reference to the Northern Territories and British Togoland.

The text opens with an overview of colonial chieftaincy which is as lucid and concise an exposition of a notoriously knotty subject as one is likely to encounter. The next series of chapters deals with the period between the victory of the CPP in the 1951 elections and independence in 1957. Much of the analysis is concerned with the hesitant reform of local administration, in the guise of partially elected local government bodies, and points to some early pragmatism on the part of the CPP. Other chapters revisit the struggle for supremacy between the CPP and the National Liberation Movement (NLM). What this study adds to the existing literature is a sustained treatment of the involvement of chiefs in party politics. Understandably, much of the attention is directed towards Ashanti, where the NLM was founded. However, the author also provides a service in widening the focus to include the colony – especially Akyem Abuakwa, where he has carried out much of his previous research.

For this reviewer, the most fascinating chapters are those dealing with the conduct of the Nkrumah regime in the aftermath of independence. The growing intolerance and authoritarianism of the CPP regime is a staple of much of the earlier literature – especially the polemical works written in the wake of the 1966 coup. Although Rathbone is broadly sympathetic to Nkrumah, and blames the chiefs for bringing many of the woes upon themselves, his careful analysis of Cabinet papers yields an indictment of the CPP regime which is, if anything, even more damning. As he freely admits, a lot of this material does not make pleasant

reading. Moreover, while there have been a number of doctoral theses dealing with local politics, this is one of the few published accounts of the ways in which the Nkrumah regime set about systematically to crush rural opposition. In this, it becomes clear, the CPP was not lacking in local collaborators. The manner in which longstanding chieftaincy disputes were translated into the idiom of party politics is a theme which recurs throughout the text, as in some of its predecessors. The inherently factional nature of chieftaincy affairs usually meant that there was a ready pool of local malcontents who were prepared to trade party support in return for government recognition. The analysis would suggest that the thorough *civification* of chieftaincy saved the institution from outright abolition, even if a good many individual chiefs were removed. Some of the most poignant sections of the text deal with the humiliation of once-mighty rulers in Ashanti and in Akyem Abuakwa. In the latter case, the Okyenhene was dethroned and replaced with a pro-CPP candidate. And although the Asantehene was spared this fate – and that of the Kabaka in Buganda – he was forced to engage in a humiliating submission to the Nkrumah regime.

If chiefly institutions barely survived, it was at the expense of heightened local tension. The book concludes with a brief overview of the events following the overthrow of the Nkrumah regime, when the military sought to reverse the cynical interventions of the CPP in chieftaincy affairs. However, Rathbone shrewdly observes that the new government and its successors were reluctant to entirely restore chiefly powers to what they had been before. He might also have noted the irony that the legitimacy of chieftaincy today owes much to the fact that it has become distanced from government decision-making.

Nobody who has a more than a passing acquaintance with Ghana would doubt that this book deals with a crucial period in the political history of that country, and with an issue which continues to resonate down to the present day. It is a story of power politics told with remarkable economy and considerable elegance.

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PAUL NUGENT

DECOLONISATION

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Decolonisation and the British Empire, 1775–1997. By D. GEORGE BOYCE. London and New York: Macmillan Press; and St. Martin's Press, 1999. Pp. ix + 317. £15.99, paperback (ISBN 0-312-22325-0).

The West and the Third World: Trade, Colonialism, Dependence, and Development. By D. K. FIELDHOUSE. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999. Pp. xii + 378. £55/\$59.95 (ISBN 0-631-19438-X); £15.99/\$29.95, paperback (ISBN 0-631-19439-8).

KEY WORDS: General, decolonisation.

The scramble for Africa and the 'new imperialism' used to be premier topics in international history. They produced the most exciting theoretical literature (Hobson, Lenin, and Robinson and Gallagher) and seemed to offer crucial insights into the history of Europe's relationship with the third world. Although the controversies that surround European expansionism in the late nineteenth century continue to rail the scholarly community, a new group of topics preoccupy international historians at present. Scholars now want to know why Europeans left their colonial possessions after the Second World War and what impact the colonial years had on colonized peoples. Did incorporation into a European and North American-centred world, often achieved under colonial auspices, benefit or harm Asians, Africans and Latin Americans? This is the issue that D. K.

Fieldhouse explores in *The West and the Third World*. An equally important and eagerly debated question is why did the European powers dismantle their empires after the Second World War. Did they do so because they could no longer suppress the forces of anti-colonial sentiment welling up in their colonial territories? Or did they leave because a rational calculation of profits and losses persuaded them that they would gain more by abandoning the imperial project for other interests? The opening up of government archives in the last few years and the publication of many of these records, primarily by the British in their voluminous series, *British Documents on the End of Empire*, has provided ample grist for the mills of scholars. D. George Boyce in his *Decolonisation and the British Empire, 1775–1997*, makes considerable use of these materials as he surveys the long historical record of British efforts to wind down empire in the face of colonial challenges and changing international affairs.

Both books have their high moments and offer highly original interpretations of critical questions. They are, however, much too long, and they leave the reader the daunting task of separating the wheat from the chaff. Overall, D. K. Fieldhouse does a better job of pausing to remind the reader of the ground already covered and the main generalizations already arrived at. These enjoyable moments allow the reader to engage with the author and to agree or disagree with the arguments as they unfold. They also relieve the monotony of several chapters that are so encumbered with statistics and bibliography that they appear to have been written for graduate students preparing for their general exams.

D. George Boyce refuses to make such concessions. Only rarely does he interrupt his relentless narrative on the long and complicated processes that have influenced British thinking on decolonization. Moreover, he draws his story from the metropolitan part of the empire and bases his interpretation, largely and often uncritically, on the rhetoric and mind set of the British officialdom. The organization of the chapters leaves much to be desired. Why, for instance, is Chapter 5, 'The changing world of empire', covering the years 1939 to 1959 followed by Chapter 6, 'The concept of empire from Attlee to Churchill', which covers some of the same years as the previous chapter (1945–55)? Boyce also creates suspicion about his expertise. He asserts that France and England agreed to administer Egypt as a condominium in 1899 (p. 151). This would no doubt have appealed to Egyptian nationalists, certainly much more than the Anglo-Egyptian condominium of the Sudan that the author is apparently referring to. Not much better is the statement that a military coup led by General Neguib overthrew King Farouk of Egypt in July 1953 (p. 166). Surely, an historian of British imperialism ought to know that Colonel Nasser led the coup d'état that ousted Farouk, and that the coup occurred in July 1952.

On the positive side, Boyce's *longue durée* on British decolonization warns against treating earlier decolonizing efforts, like the American War of Independence and the Durham Report for Canada, as binding precedents. These developments took place in their own historical framework and provided only limited guidance to later British thinking about when and how to end British colonial rule. Boyce is quite persuasive in arguing that Ireland provided crucial guidelines to the rulers in London about the techniques for governing colonized peoples and ending empire. Indeed, as Boyce shows repeatedly, Irish political history impinged on British imperial thinking at many critical moments.

Boyce's perspective is that of the centre. His sources are the speeches, writings and official deliberations of Britain's cabinet officials and its leading imperialist ideologues. No doubt from the centre it appeared, as Boyce contends, that Britain's decolonization was accomplished with grace and with relatively little strain on British institutions. From the periphery, say from Palestine, Egypt, India, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, the process was hardly so orderly or graceful. If

instead of looking outward from London, an observer viewed events in the third world itself and looked beyond the immediate transfer of power, the consequences for the peoples of these countries were often quite nasty.

Fieldhouse's overarching conclusion that incorporation into the world economy proved economically beneficial to all parts of the world is not likely to be surprising to those who are familiar with his earlier studies on imperialism, Lever Brothers and the United Africa Company. But no one can ignore the fact that the last forty years in the third world have not been economically progressive. A few countries, notably the Asian tigers (whom Fieldhouse identifies as Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and Korea) have prospered. Most of the rest, especially the African states, have not. If anything, life has become more nasty, brutish and short since empire ended. The dismal post-colonial record of India and the African states raises for Fieldhouse the issue whether there may have been something in the colonial experience itself that raised insurmountable barriers to economic progress.

Fieldhouse's answer to this critical question leads him to undertake detailed investigations into the political and economic histories of the Gold Coast/Ghana, India, Australia, Argentina, Korea and Taiwan. It also enables him to set forth a number of noteworthy prescriptions for achieving economic progress. All countries, in his view, prospered through incorporation into the world economy as exporters of raw materials. This economic progress set the stage for important substitution industrialization, upon which nearly all of the raw material exporting countries embarked. Those countries that stayed at this import industrialization substitution stage stagnated economically. Those that moved beyond and entered an export industrialization, as did Korea and Taiwan, enjoyed remarkable economic successes, achieving high growth rates and rising material prosperity. For Fieldhouse the key to success was wise and stable political leadership, much in evidence among the Asian tigers, sadly lacking on the African continent. The final lessons of the Fieldhouse book are valuable though it will take much perseverance on the part of the reader to wade through the welter of detail to arrive at them.

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WAR AND RELIGION

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Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirits: War in Northern Uganda 1986–87. By HEIKE BEHREND. Oxford: James Currey; Kampala: Fountain Publishers; Nairobi: EAEP; Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1999. Pp. xiv + 210. £40 (ISBN 0-85255-248-3); £12.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-247-5).

KEY WORDS: Uganda, religion, resistance.

This is a very welcome translation of a book originally written in German: *Alice und die Geister*, published in 1993. There are some revisions, but Behrend has not attempted a substantial updating. She does not explore in any detail the unfinished war in northern Uganda. If she were writing in 2000 she would probably also have utilized the significant comparative anthropological material on religion and war in West Africa in the 1990s provided, for example, by Stephen Ellis's account of Liberia. The book remains the account of one moment in the history of the Acholi people of Uganda: the eruption of the Lakwena movement in 1986–7. It was a most significant moment, and certainly deserves the detailed and illuminating treatment that Behrend gives it. In 1985, Museveni's guerrilla forces brought down the Obote regime; six months later, they defeated the interim government of the two

Okellos, both Acholi generals. This was a disaster for the Acholi people, whose men had provided the bulk of the army of these regimes. In the aftermath, an Acholi woman, Alice Auma, was possessed by the spirit of Lakwena, who called on Acholi to rescue their nation from defeat and humiliation. Lakwena can be understood as a particular *jok* (the Acholi word for spirit) or as the ‘messenger’, the holy spirit. Alice galvanized the defeated soldiers and rallied new recruits. Equipped with spiritual forces rather than weapons, they inflicted surprising defeats on Museveni’s National Resistance Army (not least because of its deserved reputation for military and ideological discipline). Bolstered by these successes, Alice and her troops moved out of their Acholi homeland, gathered people from Lango, Teso and Tororo, and determined to march on Kampala and beyond (the movement had developed a rhetoric for the total liberation of Africa). But by the end of 1987 Alice’s troops were a defeated force, unable to sustain the campaign once the army had left its northern support base. Alice escaped to Kenya, leaving others to continue the struggle in Acholi.

Behrend’s account is important as a contribution to the history and study of religion in northern Uganda and of Uganda under Museveni, and to anthropological studies of religion and war in post-colonial Africa. She has an interesting aside about Renamo in Mozambique. Reading the works of Lan and of Ranger, Renamo learnt the importance of traditional spirit mediums for the liberation war in Zimbabwe, and determined similarly to employ mediums for their struggle (p. 38). No such deliberate artifice obtained in Acholi, but one is impressed by the self-conscious appropriation of both ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ elements in Alice’s movement. ‘Traditional’ and ‘modern’ did not present themselves as polarities: indeed Behrend’s work serves further to problematize these terms as explanatory tools in academic discourse about Africa. Africa continues ‘to invent its own modernity’ (p. 38). Behrend finely traces the rise of ‘free’ (as opposed to clan) *jogi* in Acholi as a process which has been going on since the first encounter with global forces in the 1850s, cults which acknowledge and utilize foreign power: for example *Jok Munno*, the spirit of Europeaness. Alice invoked a similar gallery of ‘foreign’ spirits, as well as an important local spirit, Nyaker: a female divinity who combined both iconic female qualities of the daughter of a chief and a modern nurse. The bizarre ‘wrong element’ was a trickster spirit, familiar in many traditional African cosmologies. But Alice understood her movement to be deeply Christian, aiming to purify a nation contaminated by moral pollution, to rid the land of witches, to bring a message of salvation, to restore order.

Utilizing Werbner’s term ‘internal strangers’, Behrend sees the renegade soldiers as people desperate to reintegrate themselves into their own society, and to defend that society from a disintegration for which they were, at least in part, to blame. One significant feature which emerges from Behrend’s account, is the extent in which the Lakwena movement ‘inscribed’ its own story, particularly remarkable in so evanescent a movement. Behrend was able to track down a surprising amount of documentation: of administrative practice, of religious and moral teaching, of biographical accounts in diaries, which the movement itself created as it went along, and which provided for its participants a rationale and justification for a cause which was precarious in the extreme. The movement also produced its own ‘myth of origin’ (concerned with Alice’s commissioning as a prophet in a defining experience at Paraa on the River Nile). Alice’s father, Severino Lukoya, has disseminated this foundation story and one of Behrend’s chief informants, Mike Ocan, recounted it to her. Behrend is fully aware of the potential role of the academic researcher not only for skewing the interpretation of the phenomena under investigation, but for actually creating many of the elements of the story, which then feed back into the common consciousness of the local

people. In this case one gets the sense of a movement which, quite apart from its being the object of academic scrutiny, was remarkably concerned with providing a coherent self-understanding, first of all for an Acholi historical consciousness.

Lakwena's movement collapsed, eventually to be replaced by Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army. Kony claimed kinship with Alice, and at first his movement seemed to be a continuation of her aims, but appealing to more limited, local resources in the face of the collapse of the more grandiose schemes of Lakwena. This may have been true of Kony's movement in its initial stages, though it too has developed a more global propaganda, which may have to modify Behrend's account. Kony's movement has certainly had a longer life, making the crisis one of chronic instability (though, as Behrend hints, the Museveni government has also a lot to answer for, in apparently maintaining, even fostering, a situation that eludes peaceful resolution). It is my impression, from fieldwork undertaken at the end of the 1990s, that many of the concerns of the Lakwena movement as recounted by Behrend, have been incorporated into the self-understanding and mission of the Catholic and Anglican churches, for whom themes of purification and restoration of the land and of Acholi national identity have become central to their search for peace.

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KEVIN WARD

SLOW DEATH FOR SLAVERY IN MAURITANIA

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Ending Slavery. Hierarchy, Dependency and Gender in Central Mauritania. By URS PETER RUF. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 1999. Pp. 436. DM 78 (ISBN 3-933127-49-1).

KEY WORDS: Mauritania, slavery.

'In 1980, slavery was abolished in Mauritania for the third time in the twentieth century. The issue is, however, of such longevity that it continues to attract the attention of abolitionist and human rights groups, but also of international donors and journalists up to the present day.' (p. 9) Nearly a century after the abolition of the slave *trade* in the early colonial period, Mauritania is one of few countries in the world where slavery as a *social relationship* continues to constitute a manifest reality.

In a conceptually convincing and extraordinarily detailed work (a PhD from the University of Bielefeld, Germany), social anthropologist Urs Peter Ruf studies the history of slavery in Mauritania's *bizan* society, as well as the contemporary situation of former slaves and their emancipation strategies. He combines biographical interviews and empirical surveys (for example, of land ownership) with a thorough socio-economic historical study and develops a fascinating overall picture of a society in transition from slavery.

Ruf begins his study with a series of biographical case studies that provide a vivid picture of the life situation and strategies of former slaves and their masters. These case studies also address some of the methodological difficulties encountered during research. Ruf points at a core paradox of any formal act of slave emancipation which, while legally freeing an individual, always goes along with a formal recognition of the fact that the person had been a slave before. The social stigmatization resulting from this fact is noticeable in many societies of Sub-Saharan Africa today, even decades after abolition. Its possible relief lies in a negation of history – or in its rewriting. In practice, both slaves and manumitted slaves continue to be second-class citizens within Mauritanian society. Some of

their strategies of emancipation, which Ruf analyzes with much sensibility, are directed at creating themselves as an (imagined) ethnic group, but more important seems to be the attempt to establish equality of status of their (former) masters.

Ruf devotes much space to the analysis of gender differential in Mauritanian slavery. Typical *bizan* patterns of labour division by gender were only partially valid for slaves, a fact that constituted an important symbol of differentiation between masters and slaves. Female slaves often found themselves in an ambivalent position: being close to the master's household (often by low-status forms of marriage or concubinage), their conditions of life were often better than that of male slaves, but this very fact also made liberation and disengagement more difficult for them. In a chapter on the historical demography of slavery in the region, Ruf confirms the widely held, but insufficiently proven hypothesis about a gender differential in the Atlantic slave trade up to the nineteenth century. He shows that there indeed was a majority of female (as against male) slaves in the internal African trade.

Three further chapters are devoted to the transformation processes of slavery on the background of the region's economic history, and their social and political effects. Up to the end of the nineteenth century, Mauritania's *bizan* society was characterized by pastoralism and long-distance trade (gum arabic). The emergence of wage labour during the colonial period created emancipatory potentials for slaves in the urban environment. The long-term Sahel drought since the 1970s also forced free-born persons to take to wage labour and rendered them sedentary. In the countryside, distinctions between (former) slaves and their masters are perpetuated in the form of differences as regards access to arable land that has been made available by dam-building projects. Urban discourses about slave emancipation hardly apply in the rural context; thus, (former) slaves in the rural areas prefer accommodative strategies to confrontational ones.

Ruf succeeds in analyzing the problem of slavery in Mauritania in a comprehensive and differentiated way. In addition to the rich historical analysis it contains, the particular value of this book lies in the fact that it looks beyond general debates about freedom and human rights and opens a differentiated view on rural power relationships. Despite its length, the book remains quite readable because the author places numerous details and debates into the endnotes that comprise about one quarter of the entire volume of the book.

Ruf's book is an extraordinarily careful study of slavery – and of what may be called 'post-slavery' social relationships – viewed from the inside of society. Some readers may miss ready recipes for abolitionist action by international lobby groups and donor organizations, or a critical analysis of their activities. In fact, the avoidance of a catch-phrase language in his statements about slavery in Mauritania at times leaves the reader at a loss to know whether, and to what extent, slavery actually still exists in Mauritania. But this fact may be part of the very problem: that slavery – as a form of marginalization that has economic, social, cultural and psychological effects, but is difficult to pin down by straightforward attempts at definition – continues to be relevant in many fields of life for a long time after its abolition.

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SEEKING POLITICAL SOLUTIONS FOR NIGERIA

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Inter-Ethnic and Religious Conflict Resolution in Nigeria. Edited by ERNEST E. UWAZIE, ISAAC O. ALBERT and GODFREY N. UZOIGWE. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1999. Pp. ix + 172. \$40 (ISBN 0-7391-0033-5).

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, politics, ethnicity, religion.

The laudable aim of this book is to analyze the past with the aim of finding answers to the contemporary problems of communal and ethnic tensions in Nigeria. Many of the authors of the dozen chapters conclude by making policy recommendations based on their respective studies. As they try to find solutions to ethnic problems, some authors lock themselves into a cyclical argument: ethnicity is embedded in the country's life and history and only positive ethnic relations can correct the problems. One or two even write as advocates of an ethnic group (most notably Chapter 2 by Godfrey Uzoigwe), while at the same time hoping for conflict resolution through leadership supplied by politicians who represent their ethnic constituencies.

It is clear that all the authors recognize the dangers of communal rivalries and tension, but they tend to have underestimated the changing nature of ethnicity, most especially the reality that it is malleable and responsive to political exigencies. The multiple layers of identity are understood, but the delineation of religious and ethnic conflicts is not always clarified.

My remaining words cannot but be positive for a project that deliberately seeks to find the means to attain an enduring peace in a troubled country. The project is multidisciplinary, as scholars of history, religious studies, politics and law look at similar subjects from their own perspectives. The ethnic and communal problems are attributed to differences in history, communication problems and a plural religious landscape.

The authors are very much aware of the magnitude of the problem, although apparent frustrations with the failure of military rule and inadequate government policies lead them to make some rather superficial suggestions such as training Nigerian students in the skills of conflict resolution and awarding prizes to peace-oriented Nigerians. I would have thought that proposals for a better economic arrangement and democratization at all tiers of government should have received greater prominence.

To move to the specific chapters, two experts on religion, Iheanyi M. Enwerem and Joseph Kenny, write on the religious crises of the last two decades of the twentieth century. Enwerem examines how the government has handled cases of religious riots, a four-step management approach: confront the conflict, understand the positions of those involved in the conflict, define the problem with clarity, and evaluate alternative solutions.

According to Enwerem, the government tends to see conspiracy in most of the riots, thereby assuming that the people can be easily manipulated by ethnic and religious leaders. It is hard to fault Enwerem's conclusion that the overcentralization of power in the federal government constitutes an obstacle to the effective management of conflicts at the local level. Joseph Kenny agrees with Enwerem that incidents of violence are too many. He argues that the school curricula should be changed to include courses on conflict management and to promote inter-ethnic relations. It remains rather unclear what role the school teachers can play in preventing violence.

There is a cluster of chapters that focus on what may be regarded as agencies in the promotion and solution of ethnic problems. Isaac O. Albert examines the role of communication in Chapter 3. He accuses the media of publicizing the

confrontational language of ethnic and religious leaders. Parties in disputes, Albert concludes, should talk as if they want peace.

The chapter by Antonia Simbine examines the role of women, specifically of women's associations. In a prescriptive tone, Simbine wants the various organizations to champion the cause of peace. Keeping with the sermonizing tone of this project, Muhammed Tawfiq Ladan writes on youth and violence and calls for the means to empower them so that they can be actively engaged in more productive activities.

Let me close by saying that this is not a typical history book. Rather, it combines the analysis of ethnic and religious conflicts with a search for concrete solutions. The aim should be commended, even if the solutions are hard to implement.

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TOYIN FALOLA

CONTINUITY IN RHODESIA ZIMBABWE

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The Moral Economy of the State: Conservation, Community Development, and State Making in Zimbabwe. By WILLIAM A. MUNRO. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1998. Pp. xxxix + 461. (ISBN 0-299-14614-6); £28.50, paperback (ISBN 0-289680-202-7).

KEY WORDS: Zimbabwe, state, land.

William Munro's book serves well as an extensive preface to the contemporary crises of land and politics in Zimbabwe. It is also a contribution to the ongoing (and occasionally tiresome) debates over the nature of the state in colonial and independent Africa. A political scientist, Munro nonetheless offers considerable historical sweep, tracing the encounters between the central Rhodesian/Zimbabwean state and rural communities over the century from 1890 to 1990, with some brief references as well to the deteriorating state of the 1990s. Before we get to the Zimbabwean survey, however, Munro reveals his extensive grounding in the literature of statehood, and his perhaps excessive penchant for theorization: the introduction and an even more theoretical first chapter together comprise some 68 pages. Especially in these sections, and occasionally in others, Munro's language, steeped in a sophisticated academic lexicon, can be dauntingly dense, albeit not impenetrable.

Munro wants to convey to his readers an appreciation of the many-sided complexity which has marked the interface between state and peasantries in Zimbabwe. His key words include negotiation, tension, paradox, contradiction and irony. Successive regimes here, as elsewhere, have both coerced the subjects/citizens and sought their consent – the Gramscian sense of 'hegemony' is another key concept. State hegemony has been partial and elusive: policies may be announced but hardly imposed; they may produce resistance when intended to induce consent (paradox, contradiction). The predominance of the state is by no means a given, yet 'the state cannot be wished away' (pp. 37, 295). The peasantry, like the state, 'is able to flex some muscle. The rural development history of Zimbabwe presented in this study is one largely of the flexing and counterflexing of muscle' (p. 40). Thus, rather than the well-known summations of state/rural relations like 'uncaptured peasantry' or 'decentralized despotism' (which greatly oversimplify the brilliant works of Goren Hyden and Mahmood Mamdani), Munro prefers Sara Berry's equally catchy 'inconclusive encounters'.

The terms featured in the book's subtitle – conservation and community development – refer respectively to the agrarian and non-agrarian (i.e. social/political) rural arenas in which Zimbabwe's various governments have attempted

to establish their presence, moral authority and hegemony. Towering above everything, however, is the colonial expropriation of vast amounts of the country's best land for white settlers. The takeover was symbolized by the 1930 Land Apportionment Act. 'Its legacy', observes Munro, 'still dominates the political landscape' (p. 52), a fact which has surely become even clearer since Munro finished the book. The shadow of white domination of land possession has repeatedly undermined state efforts to get peasant communities to embrace conservation measures. Such measures – destocking, village consolidation and tree and water preservation – were most ambitiously framed in the 'progress through compulsion' vision of the 1951 Land Husbandry Act; but the tenets of the LHA have echoes at many other points in Zimbabwe's history, both pre- and post-independence. Peasant responses to these efforts have ranged from coolness to outright resistance and subversion. Essentially, their point is summed up in the old rejoinder: it is not that there are too many cattle, it is that there is too little land.

Community development; at one point Munro quotes a visiting 'expert' on the subject, who complains upon finding 'people's ideas about community development "woolly" and unclear' (p. 170). Understandably so. The term is one of those warmly persuasive ones which can mean just about anything; the diametrically opposed regimes of Ian Smith and Mugabe both invoked it to signify their policies of rural uplift. I suppose it could be taken to mean 'a better life for all'. The successes of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe's governments in bringing a better life have been few and limited. For Munro, one of the conundrums of state construction has been that its capacity to deliver the goods depends on its political viability, but its (undermined) viability depends on its (poor) capacity to deliver the goods.

Thus it is little wonder that a beleaguered state regime like that headed by Robert Mugabe – amidst growing accusations of mismanagement, corruption, autocracy – turns with increasing desperation to promises of land, to salvage itself. In his conclusion Munro notes the reality by 1996 of 'massive voter indifference, as well as ZANU's efforts to mollify disaffected peasants through offers of expropriated land' (p. 337). The trend was magnified with the year 2000's electoral uprising against the ruling party, and the dramatic, sometimes violent and technically illegal occupation of hundreds of white farms countenanced by Mugabe.

Zimbabwe's history would seem to offer some sharp disjunctures, marked by wars and ideological change. To the contrary, Munro argues for continuity: at many points in the penultimate chapter, for instance, he uses terms like 'remarkably reminiscent', 'remarkable congruity', or even 'exact replica' to compare independence era policies to the colonial (pp. 338, 323, 299). Perhaps because of this emphasis, the book can seem repetitive at times; I can imagine a volume one hundred pages shorter with equal power. But the power is there, and will repay a reading.

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TWENTIETH-CENTURY SWAZILAND

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When the Sleeping Grass Awakens: Land and Power in Swaziland. By RICHARD LEVIN. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand Press, 1997. Pp. 290. SA Rand 98.94 (ISBN 1-86814-301-5).

KEY WORDS: Swaziland, political, land.

The SADC occupation of Lesotho in 1998 prompted the uncharitable thought

that Swaziland ought to be next. Since the suspension of the constitution in 1973 and the abrogation of all meaningful powers by the Swazi aristocracy under Sobhuza II there has been little significant modern democratic participation in the political life of the nation. If South Africa and its SADC confreres are not willing, as they were in Lesotho, to invade the country to 'restore democracy', and the international power brokers continue to find the regime palatable, then it is hard to see how this situation will change. Certainly, as sociologist Richard Levin points out in this interesting study, the forces of reaction and entrenched interest make it difficult to envisage an early exit for Swaziland's royalist power brokers.

The book attempts to explain the perpetuation of royalist power in modern Swaziland. It is really two books, one considerably more persuasive and enlightening than the other. The first half ambitiously attempts to rewrite Swaziland's twentieth-century colonial history from a structural Marxist optic. There is clear value in deconstructing the triumphalist and unitary narratives of the Swazi past exemplified by royal hagiographers such as the Swazi historian J. S. M. Matsebula. This has been the major achievement of Swaziland historiography since the mid-1980s and Levin's work fits comfortably within that tradition.

Levin's structuralist reworking of the past is not as liberating analytically as he hopes, however. In a not untypical passage, we read that 'land became central to the process of class struggle itself, and this entailed a struggle over the formation of classes as well as between them. Control over land placed the aristocracy at the forefront of bourgeois class formation, and "traditional" ideology provided the legitimation for extra-economic forms of coercion which were vital to the transformation of the aristocracy from a pre-capitalist ruling class into a capitalist ruling class' (p. 7). The narrative would be considerably more compelling stripped of such arcane language.

The book's substantive historical argument is that the maintenance of royal power in Swaziland depended largely on the 'active creation of tradition' by Sobhuza. The assertion is sound but not particularly novel. The problem is that the resolute structural Marxist does not always have the analytical toolbag to push the argument theoretically or elucidate it historically. In particular, the shifting cultural strategies of Sobhuza are not systematically explored. The location of the onset of the 'invention of tradition' in the 1930s is also too late. Sobhuza's grandmother, the Queen Regent Labotsibeni, was highly skilled in the deployment of inventive strategies during Sobhuza's minority and needs to be credited for her formative influence. The book is also much too silent at precisely the point where it could have been most useful: in detailing the clan and regional politics that partially drove these strategies and the responses and attitudes of overlords and underlings to the royalist invention of tradition.

There are certainly moments of substance in the historical parts of the text. One particularly provocative argument concerns the reinterpretation of the landmark 1914 land partition which stripped the Swazi of nearly 70 per cent of the land surface for white settlement (which did not eventuate). For this reason, recent historiography has tended to downgrade the immediate social and economic significance of the partition. Levin reinstates it as an epochal event, arguing that it marks a major shift from aristocratic rule by cattle to aristocratic rule by land. The thesis is provocative, though there is not much evidence to support it.

In the second 'book', Chapters 6 through 8, Levin switches gear, theory and narrative style. The author spent the late 1980s and early 1990s as Swaziland correspondent for *Africa Contemporary Record* and the *Economist Intelligence Unit*. These monitoring operations clearly provide much of the raw material for a more journalistic account of the dynastic struggles of the royal household and the emergence of new oppositional forces in the 1980s. Levin skilfully unveils something of the byzantine world of Swazi politics in the years after Sobhuza's

death in 1983 and the public emergence of a new political movement, the People's United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO). He shows that the stormy decade that followed Sobhuza's death provided unprecedented space for a new oppositional politics to emerge in Swaziland. The demise of the 'cult of personality' that Sobhuza and his acolytes had deployed with such effectiveness was an important factor. Democratic forces within Swaziland also drew inspiration from the momentous changes in neighbouring South Africa. But the key elements were internecine strife within the ruling elite and a politically immature successor as king.

This is the first coherent account of this fraught period in Swazi politics. While rich in descriptive detail, however, this reviewer wished that the author had used his excellent language skills and contacts within Swazi society to do more sleuthing outside the public domain. The result is an account that is actually very dependent on public sources. This limits the book's ability to get behind the palace gates and explain the rationale for many of the events and conflicts so meticulously documented. A good starting point, for example, might have been greater exploration of the historical and contemporary claim to the Swazi throne of the renegade Prince Mfanasibili, a key figure in the story and the book.

Were the post-Sobhuza royal conflicts historically inevitably? Levin thinks so. It had been a long-time since Swaziland selected a new monarch (1899 to be precise). Yet, Levin invokes nineteenth-century disputes as precedent on this point. Whenever a monarch dies in Swaziland, there has been political turmoil. Why should the 1980s have been any different? This makes the idea of 'tradition' a little too elastic, particularly as Levin elsewhere debunks the validity of the concept and emphasizes its 'invented' character. The key point is that all nineteenth-century disputes were essentially succession struggles. Levin does not establish this for Swaziland in the 1980s.

Levin's underlying pessimism about the new democratic project in Swaziland is puzzling. On the one hand, the formidable traditional forces arrayed against it are explained and derided. On the other, the movement is itself castigated for its adherence to 'bourgeois democratic principles'. What else they could adhere to at present is very unclear. Their major failing, it seems, is an inability to awaken an inert peasantry. But how this inertia might be overcome is not addressed, except perhaps metaphorically in the title of the book. The problem is that this kind of analysis does not push much past the convention of the hidebound Swazi peasant that skilful anthropological observation, such as that by Laurel Rose in her *Politics of Harmony*, has finally begun to deconstruct.

In sum, this is a worthwhile contribution to the all-too-limited literature on Swaziland, but better on the recent than the distant past. Whether those who would draw inspiration from its message can successfully contest those who would be threatened by it remains very much in doubt. Its publication locally and in paperback will ensure accessibility to readers in Swaziland which can only be a good thing.

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Rossia i Africa. Dokumenty i materialy. XVIII v. – 1960. T. II. 1917–1960. (Russia and Africa. Documents and Materials. XVIII – 1960. Vol. II. 1917–1960). Edited by APOLLON B. DAVIDSON and SERGE V. MAZOV. Moscow: Institute of General History, Russian Academy of Sciences, 1999. Pp. 397. No price given (ISBN 5-201-00526-8).

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The publication of this collection of documents and materials is testimony to the fact that not everything is doom and gloom in Russian academia, even in the humanities. Africa may no longer be in the forefront of Russia's foreign policy interests, but these two volumes on the history of ties between Russia and Africa present both a thoroughly researched and a highly readable account – an unflinching combination for a really good historical study. The publication covers the history of relations between Russia and Africa south of the Sahara from the eighteenth century to 1960.

To a westerner the topic may seem exotic: Russia never had colonies in Africa and thus had no chance of influencing events on the African continent on a scale comparable to that of Britain, France, Germany or Italy. A similar publication on relations between Britain and Africa or France and Africa would hardly be possible because of the sheer volume of materials involved. Yet the documents selected for these volumes prove beyond doubt that Russia and Africa were connected closely enough to merit the attention of specialists in African, Russian and European history far beyond Russia's borders.

The nature of Russia's African connection evolved with time and varied in intensity, but from the eighteenth century, Africa was always an element in Russia's political thinking. The first incentive for this interest was Russia's need, until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, for a sea route around the Cape, perhaps more than any other world power at the time. This sea route was the only one to connect Russia's European and Far Eastern territories in autumn and spring (when the major Siberian rivers became impassable) and the only possible way to deliver heavy cargoes in both directions at any time. From the late nineteenth century, Russia's interest in Africa was further strengthened by its rivalry with Britain and its Anglophobia.

After 1917, Russia and then the Soviet Union saw Africa as a potential ally in the struggle against world imperialism, and in the 1950s the emerging African states received ever-increasing attention from their distant ally. The Soviet Union took a keen interest in the socio-political and economic experiments of Africa and their attempts to achieve 'non-capitalist development' as proof of the world's advance to socialism in the context of the Cold War.

The volumes under review contain 333 documents, with commentaries, gathered from all the relevant Russian archives, as well as from several major western and some African archives and private archival collections. With few exceptions, all the documents are published for the first time, many in translation from English, French or German as well as from African languages.

Some ten years ago it would have been impossible to publish this collection, not

only because several of the Russian archives were closed, but also because many of the documents were considered sensitive. Even today the political climate in Russia may not have prepared readers for what they will find in these documents, the contents of which will challenge many set views on Russian–African relations during the last two centuries.

For example, one discovers that despite Russia's strong pro-Boer sentiment during the Anglo-Boer War, its government knew from the start that it was not going to intervene on the Boer side or even support their cause decisively. A memorandum by the Russian foreign minister, Count Lamsdorf, written at the very beginning of the war gives an amazingly exact forecast of the future development of events. South African historians may be aware of the fact that Boer nationalists originally supported the 1917 Russian revolution, but it comes as a complete surprise to discover that as late as 1925, only five years before he authored the first anti-communist law in Africa, Oswald Pirow undertook a secret mission to the Soviet Union in order to establish closer co-operation against Britain. The reader will be equally startled by the discovery that at the end of the Second World War the Soviet government attempted to 'adopt' one of the former Italian colonies; only when this attempt failed did it become an ardent supporter of Africa's struggle for independence.

Many of the documents provide arresting and amusing reading, such as the letter from Peter the Great to the 'King of Madagascar', and the correspondence of Soviet embassies in the first independent African countries. Some read like detective stories, such as the reports of Russian reconnaissance ships from southern Africa, diplomatic correspondence from late nineteenth-century Ethiopia, a diary written by an African traveller in early twentieth-century Russia, and various documents about the secret activities of the Communist International in South Africa.

Even where the detective element is absent, historians will find much new and exciting material in this collection. These include descriptions of South Africa and of Ethiopia; materials on the Anglo-Boer and Italo-Ethiopian wars, and on the work of the Russian Red Cross in Africa; documents on Soviet diplomatic relations with Ethiopia and South Africa during the Second World War and on relations between the first African independent states and the Soviet Union; sources on the principles and practice of Russian and Soviet policy in Africa; and new data on African students in Russia and in the Soviet Union.

Unfortunately, the majority of Africanists and, indeed, general readers will have no access to this publication. An English translation would constitute an invaluable contribution to African studies.

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