

TOYIN FALOLA (ed.), *Africa (volume 4): the end of colonial rule, nationalism and decolonization*. Durham NC: Carolina Academic Press (paperback US\$45.00, £26.92, ISBN 0 89089 202 4). 2002, 541 pp.

African history is still widely studied in the United States, so there is a need for general teaching texts of the kind now provided by Carolina Academic Press in a five-volume series edited by Professor Toyin Falola of the University of Texas at Austin (of which this is Volume 4). It is specifically organised for teaching. Each chapter ends with well-chosen review questions and up-to-date additional reading, as well as maps and illustrations.

Forty years ago the sponsors of the *UNESCO General History of Africa* dreamed of an African history written by Africans. Their then unrealised dream is more or less realised in this volume where all but three of the twenty-three contributors are African. But they are not Africans in Africa. All are in the African diaspora, teaching in universities in the United States. Once again Africa is victim. American students gain from their diasporised teachers. African students suffer from their loss.

This volume covers the period of the end of colonial rule and decolonisation. It begins with four chapters on the 'phases of decolonization'. Ehiedu Iweriebor recalls the triumphalist days of African nationalism with its inspiring vision of 'mass nationalism' and 'nationalist struggles', which, he rightly points out, we should not allow subsequent disillusion to disregard. J. I. Dibua traces the development of Pan-Africanism from a transatlantic dream to the foundation of the OAU, 'a rather deformed child from birth' (p. 46). Kwabena Akurang-Parry demonstrates the decisive influence of the Second World War, and Adebayo Oyeade with 'Radical nationalism and wars of liberation' reminds us that the latter were confined to white-settler territories.

Two chapters on women follow. Bessie House Soremekun shows devastatingly clearly how 'colonialism severely impacted women in virtually every aspect of life' (p. 107), while Gloria Chuku celebrates the formidable—but customarily forgotten—force they constituted within the national movements. Then come ten chapters on aspects of the period at a continental level including, among others, a good general economic survey by Ugo Nwokeji, and a piece on African business by Alusine Jalloh, but disappointingly scrappy and poorly organised contributions on education, social and religious change, and health. They end with a good historical survey of trends in African literature by Adeleke Adeeko.

Composite volumes of this kind need strict disciplinary editorial supervision. It is painfully lacking in the six 'Case studies' (surveys of the period taken regionally) that follow. They cover differing time spans: 'North Africa' stops at 1956 while the rest go on until the respective Independence dates, except for 'South Africa'—a comprehensive survey by Funso Afolayan which stretches from Malan's electoral victory in 1948 to Mbeki's in 1999. The fifteen pages (two of them filled by tables) on 'East, Central and Equatorial Africa' omit Belgian decolonisation.

The next part, 'Reflexions on colonialism' is also disappointing. 'The psychology of colonialism' is an uncritical survey of the writers of the period without reference to subsequent criticism. 'Neocolonialism' begins with a reminder of Nkrumah's superb definition, 'Power without responsibility, exploitation without redress' (which today has a global resonance), without going on to note how well Nkrumah's own activities complemented the neocolonial pattern. The volume ends with a well-presented contribution by Ebere Nwaubani bringing together the main themes.

For many years now there has been talk of a transatlantic (perhaps transworld) 'Yoruba diaspora' project. Should it ever be realised, this volume will make a useful piece of research material, since no fewer than nine of the sixteen Nigerian contributors are children of Oduduwa.

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JAN-GEORG DEUTSCH, PETER PROBST and HEIKE SCHMIDT, *African Modernities: entangled meanings in current debate*. Oxford: James Currey (paperback £14.95, ISBN 0 85255 792 2; hard covers £40.00, ISBN 0 85255 793 0); Portsmouth NH: Heinemann (paperback US\$25.00, ISBN 0 325 07121 7; hard covers US\$64.00, ISBN 0 325 07120 9). 2002, 184 pp.

The title of this collection adopts a device which has become a rather standard means of guarding prose against intellectual assault: don't let your nouns go out in singular form, for only plurals are safe on the treacherous streets of modern academe. But what is nice about some of the essays here is that at certain points they move beyond that sort of cautious assertion of multiplicity and alterity, and—while making the entirely valid point that not everyone is 'modern' in the same way—use the singular notion of modernity to good effect. The introduction, by Deutsch, Probst, and Schmidt, determinedly tracks the idea of an African engagement with modernity as an organising trope of Africanist intellectual endeavour, and ultimately asserts that the notion of modernity may yet retain some analytical force, and should not be too casually surrendered. The most interesting of the essays which follow pursue precisely this agenda. Lonsdale's contribution offers a crisp definition of modernity—essentially, as the effect of the expansion in markets and the power of the state in the last two centuries—and goes on from this to extend further his careful exploration of central Kenyan society in the twentieth century, in an essay focusing on Kenyatta's concern with the making of a modern morality. This effectively rebuts both Prunier's vision of Kenya's first president as a 'wily, suspicious, grasping peasant' and the mission view of Kenyatta as a backslider from modernity. In similar vein—if perhaps with a little less force of argument—is Gunner's article on Isaiah Shembe, and his creation of a theatrically religious Zulu modernity. A rather different kind of theatre is described in Behrend's piece on the photographers who work around the Likoni ferry in Mombasa, whose painted backdrops define their clients' imaginings of modernity. And Gikandi's contribution moves from historical example to confront directly the current philosophical dispute between modernists and post-modernists, and their understanding of what it now seems usual to call 'the African crisis'. In doing so, Gikandi rather neatly argues the fundamental weakness of Mbembe's analysis—saying, in effect, that this 'others' a distinctively non-rational African mentality in precisely the same way as did the most Eurocentric of modernists. In opposition to this, Gikandi makes a powerful and engaging argument for an African rationality as a means to confront the 'crisis'.

John Comaroff's contribution is also concerned with the state, but with the colonial rather than the post-colonial. It insists on the need for plurals, reminds us of the actually very varied nature of this political phenomenon, and restates a question which has already been asked, and which might most simply be phrased as 'why were colonial states so crap?' That is, why did they so persistently and consistently throw themselves into tasks of categorisation and ordering which were unsustainable, and which undermined themselves? In