

militia service, or placed them as the wards of Christian missionaries, while free and manumitted black Americans used the presence of this group to distinguish themselves and establish their assimilation. At the same time, Fett contends, recaptives consolidated their own bonds around the category of Liberian Congoes as a strategy for survival in a new and unfamiliar land. Fett relates an American Colonization Society (ACS) report of the wedding between shipmates Kandah and Kabendah. Married four months after their arrival in Monrovia in a ceremony attended by their shipmates, the U.S. agent for recaptured Africans and the Methodist clergy who officiated the ceremony introduced the couple by their newly acquired English names, which symbolized the promise of Liberia's civilizing mission. This chapter also illuminates how apprenticeship operated as a strategy for shifting relations between former slave owners and slaves in European colonial towns of nineteenth-century Africa. Fett's focus on Liberian Congo, moreover, shifts attention away from the elite subjects of Africa's Atlantic towns such as the *métis* of Senegal or the Krios of Freetown and shines needed light on the subaltern populations who played key roles in establishing West Africa's colonial towns at the moment when the Atlantic slave trade came to an end and as western imperialism expanded.

In sum, this work delves into critical issues for students and scholars of comparative slavery, the transatlantic slave trade, emancipation in the Atlantic World, and the slave trade in U.S. History. Although key chapters focus on the African experience in captivity and in U.S. detention, most of the study is dedicated to the position of U.S. policy makers and debates between slave trade revisionists and abolitionists in the U.S. Readers of this journal may wish for more in-depth analysis of the Liberian context. Nevertheless, Fett makes the most of available sources to offer new ways of thinking about shipmate relations, the experience of receptivity for enslaved Africans, the making of new African identities through the recaptive experience, and how the recaptive condition influenced the making of colonial Liberian society. For these reasons, *Recaptured Africans* stands out as a major contribution to knowledge about Africa and the U.S. in the nineteenth century.

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## SOURCES ON THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF AFRICAN INDEPENDENCE

*The Political Thought of African Independence: An Anthology of Sources.*

Edited by Gregory Smulewicz-Zucker and Chelsea Schields.

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**Key Words:** political, ideology, decolonization, sources.

Political thinkers of African independence were different from most prominent European theorists. That is, most of those individuals in Africa who engaged in political thought about independence did not separate philosophy from political activity. Indeed, as this

new anthology *The Political Thought of African Independence* emphasizes, several of the men and women who theorized independence often found themselves in positions of government. This point may seem rather banal, that is, until we consider the wealth of scholarly work that seeks to break the dichotomy, long visible in the canon of Western political thought, which tended to separate (and narrowly privilege in its definition) philosophy from politics. African political thinkers thus provide a rich source for scholars seeking not only to prise open the interpretive meaning of political concepts in different contexts, but also to explore how thinkers merged philosophical concerns with political ones.

What we glean from this type of complex political operation at the level of both theory and practice, as Tony Bogues' work on Julius Nyerere emphasizes, is a responsive political discourse that was 'being continuously reshaped'.<sup>1</sup> African thinkers responded to a broad set of concerns about the productivity of their economies and the material requirements of their societies, the organisation of labour, the ecological impact of new modes of production, and a set of changing religious, linguistic, and gender dynamics. While these concerns could be dealt with separately, the fact of European colonial rule across most of the African continent in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries often meant that these issues infused how people discussed and envisioned the meaning and reality of 'independence'. How 'independence' was contested, therefore, was not an isolated political debate. Nor was it static. Students and scholars of African history will therefore appreciate the opportunity to see how these issues were framed in the rubric of independence, but also how they changed over more than a century.

*The Political Thought of African Independence* is organised into four distinct parts: early visions of independence, paths to independence, fighting for independence, and consolidating independence. There is an introduction to each of the four parts, as well as a preface to each document, making it very useful for selective classroom teaching. The Introduction to Part Two provides an impressively clear, succinct summary of the independence period which challenges homogeneous interpretations of a succinct 'decolonization' era. Ghana, for example, proved to be an 'outlier' in the period, and for African colonies under British control, 1960 was 'certainly not the "Year of Africa"' (30). While the majority of the selections are taken from the 1950s and 1960s, the decision to include works from the nineteenth century helps to set the stage for the debates that make up the majority of the collection, particularly with regard to discussions about independence and its relationship to pan-Africanism and African unity. The book also, thankfully, does not constrain itself solely to those who held power. Rather, the range of selections helps to fill out the variety of contested perspectives on the meaning of independence. What we gain from this collection is very much the sense of reshaping that Bogues emphasizes, of the dynamic of contested ideas about the meaning and making of independence for African peoples.

The prefaces to each document provide varying levels of detail, but what works well is that they serve as stand-alone introductions that, where relevant, connect the documents to other relevant items in the anthology. Since documents authored by Jomo Kenyatta, Kwame Nkrumah, and Julius Nyerere appear in multiple sections, and issues like the

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1 A. Bogues, *Black Heretics, Black Prophets: Radical Political Intellectuals* (London, 2016), 95–123.

Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Nigerian civil war, the long struggle against Portuguese rule, South African apartheid, and various African National Congress (ANC) strategies pepper the volume, readers can follow particular threads of their interest quite easily. Strains of humanist ideals, like Ndabaningi Sithole's 'triumph of the African personality', or Félix Houphouët-Boigny's humanist brotherhood with France, allow readers to analyse how ideological variation existed within the specific discourses of African leaders. Readers are also able to contend with Jomo Kenyatta's complex and multi-layered rationale for a single-party state in 1964, alongside detailed personal accounts of detention by J.B. Danquah in Ghana in 1964, or Vera Chirwa's description of the impact of Hastings Banda's policies on Malawian women.

I would have welcomed, particularly in texts that were excerpted, a bit more information about what was around the selected text rather than a summary of what we are able to read ourselves. Such descriptions would help the reader dig deeper into particular issues or follow up more readily on these excerpts. Translations (and those who carried them out) are also not always rendered visible in the description or the reference. And finally, a richer offering of Muslim thinkers would in particular have been welcome. These small quibbles do not detract from the fact this is a very welcome set of sources that can be used readily in a range of courses on African history, political theory, and international relations. Scholars will also appreciate how the parts also form a whole that helps us to see African political thought from a range of angles.

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