

The Political Economy of the Great Lakes Region in Africa: the pitfalls of enforced democracy and globalization edited by STEFAAN MARYSSE and FILIP REYNTJENS

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This collection comprises an introduction and eight individual essays, the first four taking Rwanda as their main focus, and the latter concentrating on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC.) The authors stress the importance of complexity in characterising, and engaging with, the region's conflicts, political power struggles (Vandeginste & Huyse), and relations with the international system and global economy. Lemarchand, Reyntjens and Kennes provide much-needed contributions to current debates on DRC and Rwanda, emphasising the need to escape the language of 'exceptionalism' which often takes the place of rigorous political analysis regarding this region. The collection can in this light be seen as a call to apply analytical tools such as those of political economy, when considering how the global project of democratisation and 'good governance' has created crises and opportunities for actors in the region (Herdt & Tshimanga on Kinshasa). In doing so, a clearer picture emerges of the linkages between the Rwandan genocide, its domestic and regional consequences (Reyntjens), conflicts within DRC (Mararo), internationally driven democratisation programmes, and the political economy of the region's conflicts (Marysse). The collection highlights the need for all parties engaged in encouraging democracy, good governance and economic development in the Great Lakes to adopt an explicitly regional and holistic approach, whether regarding pro-poor development strategies which may rely on rebuilding frayed Rwanda–DRC relations (Marysse & Ansom), or in resolving conflicts within DRC that are intricately linked to relations between neighbouring states (Mararo).

To take one essay in particular, Reyntjens' study of the political path of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) 'from genocide to dictatorship' may strike some readers as an extremely negative appraisal of the RPF, particularly as Rwanda has been internationally praised for rapid development progress and relative peace and security. This critical view is due to Reyntjens' contention that accounts of the considerable achievements of the RPF abound, and therefore only an account 'mainly concerned with the shortcomings of the present regime' can provide a suitable counter-point. In many ways this characterises the approach of the collection as a whole – keen to explore new directions and engender new debates. Some suggestions are controversial, particularly Vandeginste & Huyse's call for consideration of alternative forms of political organisation, such as consociational democracy in Rwanda, challenging orthodoxies of global liberal governance. Others are concerned with challenging accounts of the Great Lakes which have sustained a sense of international impotence regarding events in the region. The legacy of genocide in the Great Lakes has precluded much critical analysis of Rwanda's role at 'The Eye of the Storm', whilst the complexity of conflicts in the DRC has made timely analysis a difficult task. The most valuable contribution of this collection is therefore in tackling what Marysse terms 'demobilising myths' through focusing on contentious and little-explored aspects of events in the region. In doing so, the authors enhance our

understanding of both the nature of politics and political economy in the Great Lakes, and of the responses of people, states and elites to external pressures for democratisation.

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African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the rise of a Zimbabwean transnational religious movement by DAVID MAXWELL

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Do not be misled by the title. This is no narrow micro-history, but a wide-ranging study of Pentecostalism on a global scale. David Maxwell deploys his formidable erudition, gained over twenty years of studying religion in Africa, to correct many misconceptions about modern Pentecostal churches. He traces the origins of Pentecostalism to late nineteenth-century North American and European religious movements, and charts its explosive expansion following the 1906 Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles. Within a year it had generated a missionary movement, and by 1908 had begun to pitch its tents in South Africa.

This single fact supplies the leitmotif of the volume, which is that Pentecostalism in Southern Africa should not be treated as a North American transplant. It grew up alongside other branches of the movement, and over the subsequent century sank its roots deep into African society. Maxwell is fascinated by the way that Pentecostalism has always transgressed racial boundaries. In its first American manifestation, it brought poor whites, blacks and Mexicans together in a single church. In South Africa, its first adherents were poor white Afrikaners, but it found fertile soil among urban Africans and migrant workers. Why this should be, Maxwell is unable to say. Perhaps movements focused on the 'End Times' preceding Christ's return to Earth made racial boundaries seem less important. On the other hand, race consciousness was never absent from African Pentecostals, who treated their subjugation by whites as one more facet of their physical and spiritual impoverishment.

The case study featured here – the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA) – confounds every conventional expectation bar one: it was born of poverty, dispossession and uprooting. Its founding prophetic voice was Ezekiel Guti, a shy, unlettered carpenter whose life and personality were transformed by the 'gifts of the spirit' – direct illumination through the divine presence – that distinguish Pentecostalism from other varieties of Born Again Christianity. Guti's subsequent trajectory eerily parallels the transformation of Ian Smith's Rhodesia into Robert Mugabe's beleaguered Zimbabwe. In the beginning, he and his fellow worshippers truly ranked among the poor in spirit as well as in material goods. During the death throes of white supremacy, they eked out a precarious subsistence on the margins of the urban centres. In the first heady days of independence, they struggled against revolutionary distrust of religiosity. Later Guti initiated a purge of possible rivals, some of whom had been his closest supporters. Family members and sycophants were promoted. Gradually Guti's own displays of material wealth and ecclesiastical power were accompanied by a shift in the Pentecostal message. Gifts of the spirit would in time manifest themselves in