This volume contributes significantly to scholarship on citizenship and belonging in Africa, although some crucial issues have been left out. For example, with the passing of laws that criminalize same-sex relationships across Africa, from Uganda to Nigeria to Egypt to Lesotho, gender and sexuality have strong implications in regard to the principles of citizenship and belonging. How does a person's gender or sexual orientation in contemporary Africa affect his or her engagement with the state, and how do contemporary African societies conceptualize gender and sexuality in relation to citizenship? Likewise, the volume does not examine how religion and religious affiliation have shaped citizenship and belonging in Africa. Nonetheless, this is an impressive and extremely valuable book.

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Martin Plaut. *Understanding Eritrea: Inside Africa's Most Repressive State*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. x + 253 pp. Map. Photographs. Appendixes. Bibliography. Index. $21.95. Paper. ISBN: 978-0190669591.

Martin Plaut's *Understanding Eritrea* is a highly readable handbook on the causes and consequences of despotism in Eritrea—a pocket reference on where it came from, how it works, and how it got that way.

Its brevity is both a strength and an obvious limitation. It will reward anyone getting acquainted with Eritrea for the first time or looking for a coherent narrative to understand the current reality there within a historical context (without which little makes sense), However, it will frustrate experienced scholars for its fast-paced treatment of intensely complex issues and its lack of sourcing or references to existing literature. It also will infuriate supporters of the regime in Asmara, for whom Plaut, a former BBC reporter, is already a pariah. But the author makes no pretense of producing an academic study. Instead, he has written what might be better termed an extended essay on what has gone awry in Eritrea and how the country might be set on a different course.

Written with the voice and sweep of a journalist, the book offers short but trenchant summaries of Eritrea's regional relations, its internal political and economic structure, the plight of its many thousands of refugees, the continuing role of its extensive and engaged diaspora, the failure of its chronically ineffective external opposition to provide a viable alternative, and a tentative way forward. The first half focuses mainly on Eritrea's history and its relations with its neighbors, most of which have been confrontational; the second concentrates on internal issues, going back to the experience of Eritrea's authoritarian president, Isaias Afwerki, as a student activist in the 1960s and continuing through his founding role

in the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the secret vanguard party—the Eritrean People's Revolutionary Party—that was embedded within the front, and ending with an assessment of present-day politics in Eritrea, which are as opaque today as they were during the independence struggle.

Plaut provides valuable insight into the rocky relations between the two liberation movements—EPLF and TPLF (the Tigray People's Liberation Front, based in northern Ethiopia adjacent to Eritrea)—whose alliance was instrumental in first defeating the military regime of Haile Mariam (now living in exile in Zimbabwe) and then enabling a smooth transition to Eritrea's de facto independence in 1991. His insights into how the alliance unraveled in the mid-to-late 1990s, setting the two states on a collision course that exploded into full-scale war over their as yet undemarcated boundary in 1998, are especially useful. His intimate familiarity with the situation is evident in his account of the way personal relationships within and between these two movements both undercut the establishment of stable institutions in Eritrea and undermined interstate relations.

It is the failure to resolve the issues that triggered the Border War—notably, but not only, fought over the border's final demarcation—that has defined Eritrea ever since, as it settled into what its leaders characterize as a state of "no peace, no war" that has served as a rationale for keeping the country on a permanent war footing and justified a continuing state of emergency. Plaut's account of the breakdown of the peace process in a section subtitled "Aftermath of the War" is particularly illuminating, if frustratingly truncated. The TPLF veteran Addis Alem Balema (who is now the vice president of the Tigray Regional State) presents a fuller analysis of this important issue in *Democracy and Economic Development in Ethiopia* by (Red Sea Press, 2014). Balema recounts the process from its inception in 1998 through its collapse after 2002 when the international Boundary Commission set up to adjudicate the dispute rendered its verdict, though, not surprisingly, he interprets the matter entirely from Ethiopia's viewpoint. Both parties had agreed the decision would be "final and binding," but when they awarded Eritrea the highly symbolic village of Badme where the conflict had broken out, Ethiopia objected and called for further talks. Eritrea said there was nothing more to discuss, and the situation has remained at a precarious impasse ever since.

What both authors show, intentionally or not, is that in the course of numerous attempts to end the fighting in 1998–2000 and through the final round of postwar peace-making, the members of each party accepted mediation results when it suited them and demanded changes when it didn't, accusing the other side and the mediators of bad faith. Had there been a modicum of trust between them, the details might have been worked out. But there wasn't, and the peoples of both countries, especially those in Eritrea, have paid the price, which Plaut recounts in considerable detail, both in the economic and political realms.

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But Plaut continues to hold out hope that brighter days may lie ahead, once the interminable conflict with Ethiopia is resolved, and he quite rightly suggests that both sides should approach an agreement within the context of the broader framework of the Algiers Peace Agreement of December 2000, in which border demarcation is one of several commitments and which was designed to facilitate reconciliation and normalization. His inclusion of the agreement in the appendixes, along with maps, historical photographs, and a chart of Eritrea's leadership (as of 2016), adds value.

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ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

Joseph M. Hodge, Gerald Hödl, and Martina Kopf, eds. *Developing Africa: Concepts and Practices In Twentieth-Century Colonialism*. Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2014. xviii + 414 pp. Bibliography. Index. $30.95. Paper. ISBN: 9781526106766.

Developing Africa, the result of a workshop on development discourses in African colonialism held in Vienna in 2011, brings together fourteen essays focused on development concepts and practices across sub-Saharan Africa. Several offer rich discussions of the multiple and evolving meanings of development: *développement* in French Africa (Françoise Dufour), dual mandate and development (Juhani Koponen) and *maendaleo* (Emma Hunter) in Tanganyika, and *fomento* and *desenvolvimento* (Cláudia Castelo) and luso-tropicalism (Caio Simões de Araújo and Iolanda Vasile) in Portuguese Africa. Other essays explore changing facets of approaches to rural and agricultural development (E. Kushinga Makombe on Zimbabwe, Sven Spek on Zambia, Céline Pessis on French Africa, Billy Frank on private banks), health (Walter Bruckhausen on Tanganyika), education (Walter Schicho and Uyilawa Usuanlele), and gender (Barbara Bush). The final essay, Martina Kopf's "Developing Africa in the Colonial Imagination: European and African Narrative Writing of the Interwar Period," a critical literary analysis of the representation of African development in four narrative texts of the interwar period, offers an unconventional angle on development discourses.

Development is an expansive and slippery concept. As Joseph Hodge and Gerald Hödl note in their introduction, "it encompasses more aims than just achieving modernity and it refers not only to an intransitive, self-evolving process of change, but also, increasingly, to intentional practices and actions initiated most often by state agencies" (3). Moreover, as the thematic range of the essays in this collection indicates, the lens of development can potentially embrace vast aspects of colonial African history.