politics. For example, the developments of a major dockyard at Blackwall in London and an EIC colony at Dundaniel in Ireland are both overlooked, even though each episode reveals an engagement with state-like activity on behalf of the company that seems highly relevant. Similarly, even though the book opens with an analysis of a manuscript detailing the company's ability to benefit the state, little time is spent trying to understand quite how the company fits within the wider commercial and imperial history of early modern England. More could be done to understand how the EIC contributed to activities as diverse as collaborative efforts to stop pirates, the establishment of plantations in America and the Caribbean, the militarization of fishing in the North Atlantic, and the way business was conducted with non-Europeans. Without these sorts of links, comparisons, and assessments (many of which had a strong political component), we are left with a fairly shallow understanding of the EIC as a business, how it related to the wider English economy, and what we can apply from this research to develop a deeper understanding of early modern trade and empire.

Overall, then, in *A Business of State* we find a vibrant, engaging book that describes the EIC's early political history in great detail by drawing on some really interesting archival material. We are also left with many questions, hoping for further insight into some fascinating fields that Mishra's work touches upon but never fully engages with.

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Rogue Empires: Contracts and Conmen in Europe's Scramble for Africa. *By Steven Press*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2017. iv + 371 pp. Maps, notes, index. Cloth, $39.95. ISBN: 978-0-674-97185-1.
doi:10.1017/S0007680519000199

Reviewed by Gareth Austin

This is a history of private-enterprise empires, intended and achieved, during the nineteenth century. Ultimately, the book is about European imperialism in Africa, with the origins of King Leopold's Independent State of the Congo as its focus. But the argument starts in Southeast Asia, because Steven Press argues that Borneo furnished a legal and political model that inspired many imitators from European adventurers

interested in sub-Saharan Africa. In particular, he highlights the success of James Brooke, a British commercial-political entrepreneur, not only in obtaining sovereign rights over the province of Sarawak from the Sultan of Brunei in 1841, but in going on to win recognition for his regime from Western governments, as an independent state—a status that was to last over a century. Press shows that this example was much noticed and quoted by the many other individual Europeans who sought to establish their own states in Southeast Asia and, especially, in Africa during the decades that followed. The recognition of Leopold's state by the Berlin conference of 1884–1885 was the apogee of the movement, within which Press also counts the last round of chartered companies, including Goldie's Roger Niger Company and Rhodes's British South Africa Company (though the book does not examine the latter in any detail).

The appeal of private empires to European politicians, elites, and electors in general was that they offered colonialism without (in principle) cost to metropolitan taxpayers and that most of them claimed to be based not on conquest but on negotiation, with the private states being established supposedly by indigenous rulers voluntarily transferring sovereignty to the incoming foreign merchants. At each stage in the story, what happened next usually turned on the relationship between the actual or would-be private ruler and the Western government(s) whose acquiescence and active support he sought. The rise of private empires was halted within a few years of the Berlin conference, not because of the often-transparent dishonesty of the claims of the adventurers to have secured informed consent from the indigenous authorities, but because most of them proved unable to maintain the revenue inflows required to maintain themselves even on the low-cost scale that became characteristic of European colonies in Africa. This failure obliged the European state concerned either to take over the territory, or risk losing it to a rival, amid accusations of betrayal from pressure groups and politicians back home.

Rogue Empires tells this story in considerable detail. The study is primarily based on an immense range of archival and contemporary printed sources, mainly in English, German, and French. Press prefers to go straight to the primary sources; the downside is a rather minimal engagement with the secondary literature and its debates. In the end, what difference did the phenomenon of private colonies make to the renewed expansion of overseas empires during the nineteenth century? Press considers this briefly (mainly on pages 246–49). The nakedness of the bloody extraction of natural resources under Leopold's rule provoked an international scandal, not least within the imperialist "community," but, as Press notes, the comparable scandal—in terms of

scale of violence—in German Southwest Africa (Namibia), over the genocidal Herero war, happened several years after chartered-company rule had given way to German-government rule. Press points to specific legacies, such as the legal continuity in ownership of Namibia's diamonds from the "state" founded by the German adventurer Adolf Lüderitz to the present proprietorship of De Beers. This is an evocative case, but is it so different in substance from the many other cases of long-term mining in colonial and postcolonial Africa? Would the share of the mineral revenues benefiting ordinary Namibians have been much different had colonial rule been introduced a few years later, and by a European state rather than a private enterprise? On the process of European colonization of Africa, Press suggests briefly that without the model of Brooke in Sarawak, the partition would not have accelerated dramatically in 1884–1885, as it did with the Berlin conference (p. 248). What is perhaps most likely is that without this apparent option of colonialization on the (very) cheap, German participation in the Scramble for Africa would have been delayed—possibly until it was over, given the contrast between Bismarck's enthusiasm for German private companies (well documented by Press) and his reluctance to countenance the establishment of official German colonies.

The writing is lucid and the references dense. Unfortunately, the latter are consigned to endnotes. In the print version, the pain of endnotes is offset by the pleasure of handling a very well-bound and nicely printed book, which is also unusually free from typographic errors. The maps are all contemporary, which enables the author to make useful observations about the limits of the imperialists' knowledge and control on the ground; however, at times I regretted the lack of a map of the Congo showing clearly where places mentioned in the text actually were.

Rogue Empires is essentially about European imperial history; Africans themselves barely feature, except as rulers giving their rights away or being portrayed as doing so by dishonest foreigners. The book is interesting for business historians for three main reasons. First, it is, after all, about a form of business: profit-seeking companies that sought the freedom to govern. Second, the deals between the "rogues" and indigenous rulers are well worth discussion in any class on the problems of contracting under asymmetric information. Third, for the history of capitalism: How far, and in what historical circumstances, can personal or company empires be viewed as intended or actual solutions to the problem of establishing the political conditions required for capital to move into poor economies? The latter question is raised more than answered in this energetically researched and stimulating account. The very phenomenon of private colonies seems odd today—but perhaps

no odder than privately run prisons did in Western countries not so long ago.

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Muslim Fula Business Elites and Politics in Sierra Leone. *By Alusine Jalloh*. Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2018. xvi + 320 pp. Photographs, maps, bibliography, notes, index. Cloth, $120.00. ISBN: 978-1-58046-917-3.
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Reviewed by Joseph J. Bangura

Immigration, politics, and business often intersected in colonial and postcolonial Sierra Leone. In fact, since the immediate postindependence period, immigration proved to be a quagmire that bedeviled the administrations of the two dominant political parties in Sierra Leone: the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) and All Peoples Congress (APC). Given this, Alusine Jalloh's book *Muslim Fula Business Elites and Politics in Sierra Leone* is a significant addition to the scholarship on African business history. Using a variety of data sources, Jalloh analyzes the socioeconomic activities of those he describes as "Fula" and their role in shaping Sierra Leone's immigration and economic policies. The book reveals that the administrations of both the SLPP under the leadership of Sir Milton Margai and his successor and brother Sir Albert Margai and the APC led by Siaka Stevens and Joseph Momoh did not have a consistent immigration policy in spite of their rhetorical proclamations. The author highlights the pertinacious efforts of Fula immigrants and their allies in undermining strict enforcement of the ad hoc immigration policies adopted by the SLPP and APC administrations.

The book is divided into two parts and four chapters. The first part examines the relationship between the administration of Sirs Milton and Albert Margai and the Fula community, while the second part highlights the alliance between Fula business elites and the governments of Stevens and Momoh. During the colonial and postcolonial periods, large numbers of immigrants from the Gambia, Senegal, Mali, and particularly Guinea flocked to Sierra Leone in search of economic