

Kevin Grant is less generous in the chapter he devotes to the Cadbury case in the recently published *A Civilised Savagery: Britain and the New Slaver-ies in Africa, 1884–1926* (2005). In Grant's opinion, "an immediate boycott" of São Tomé's cocoa "would have had a detrimental effect on the [Cadbury] works at Bournville, prompting the company to lay off several hundred employees on a temporary basis" (133). William Cadbury's cautious protests were thus all about preserving the flow of cocoa. It is Grant who comes closest to accusing the firm—which ultimately chose to boycott São Toméan cocoa in favor of cocoa grown by African farmers in the Gold Coast—of hypocrisy. Satre cleaves to the older interpretation of Cadbury Brothers' actions, observing: "George Cadbury, patriarch of the family and the firm, remained convinced that the company took the correct path in pressing the Portuguese to transform their labor practices. He was inordinately proud of the leadership displayed by his nephew William Cadbury in this effort" (212).

Satre's focus is the British experience of the scandal. The Portuguese response is muted in his study, in part because of the limited number of contemporary sources available to him in English. Africans similarly play only a small role in his narrative (largely as slaves), and Satre does not explore in any depth the debate over the definition of free and unfree labor in the colonial context that defines Grant's book. Oddly, Satre also uses the archaic and pejorative words *natives* and *tribes* throughout the text, despite the wide range of modern scholarship on Africa that his bibliography indicates he consulted. A short disclaimer appears on the frontispiece defending the use of these terms, noting that this was the language used in the early 1900s.

The muted Portuguese and absent African voices open the way for a broader analysis of the case, for which this reviewer, who is in the process of writing such a study, is grateful. If Satre's use of *natives* and *tribes* is a weakness, it is also indicative of the great strength of the book. Satre's research took him deep inside the perspective of the British participants in the case and has given us a revealing picture of what "slavery, politics and the ethics of business" meant in Britain in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Catherine Higgs
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, Tennessee

Michael Morris. *Every Step of the Way: The Journey to Freedom in South Africa*. Cape Town: Ministry of Education and Human Sciences Research Council, 2004. x + 333 pps. Figures. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. \$19.95. Paper.

This book was commissioned by the Ministry of Education in South Africa. According to the foreword written by Kader Asmal, then minister of edu-

cation, it seeks to explain for the benefit of South Africans themselves—ten years after the end of apartheid—“how South Africa has at last become a single democratic country.” As Asmal points out, while seeking to avoid oversimplification, the story is told with the “emphasis on the triumph of humanity, rising out of our troubled history.” The clear message of this “approved” version of the new nation’s history is unambiguously stated: South Africans should face the challenges of the future with hope.

In a country in which historical writing has been an important battleground for generations in the struggle for and against white domination, the enlistment of history in the cause of building a new nonracial nation comes as no surprise. But should it be welcomed? If the uses and abuses of history in South African historiography show nothing else, they demonstrate clearly that history has always had an important social role. However, as John Tosh warns, “an urgent and overriding political commitment *may* produce a mythical version of history, and myths can be dangerous. . . . Myth-making about the past, however desirable the end it may serve, is incompatible with *learning* about the past” (*The Pursuit of History*, 1984:20–21).

Having said this, I wish to emphasize that *Every Step of the Way* has been meticulously researched and draws on much of the best historical writing of the last twenty years in an effort to present a picture of the South African past that is as inclusive as possible. It also makes good use of contemporary literary and pictorial sources to break up the text and provide an exciting variety of images and perspectives on the issues discussed. An authoritative note is added by frequent citation of key historians and a good supporting list of readings for each chapter.

One of the most intriguing features of the book is the choice of a seasoned journalist, rather than a historian, to write it. Presumably this was done to avoid the unpalatable (and most likely, unreadable) alternative of a textbook written by a committee. Michael Morris’s personality and long experience as a feature writer for the *Cape Argus* shine through in his fluent and spirited prose, his use of human interest stories to personalize and dramatize key passages, and in the visual layout of this book. Although he demonstrates a lack of interest in the conventions of mainstream historical writing, he was assisted in the research and in maintaining a generally high standard of accuracy in presenting historical details by Bill Nasson, who is credited as “historical advisor.” I noted only two small factual errors in the course of this wide-ranging text. Perhaps the spirit in which the book was conceived and written explains why it is the name of the Ministry of Education that appears above the title on the cover, while Morris is credited as the writer of the text only in the publication details within. This seems to do scant justice to his contribution.

Inevitably, a book written with the present and recent past so clearly in mind suffers from some unevenness of coverage. The last four of fifteen chapters are devoted to the period of the 1990s, while the 1920s and 1930s

are covered in two pages. Somewhat surprisingly, the precolonial and early colonial period up to the mid-nineteenth century take up the first five chapters—almost a hundred pages or nearly a third of the book. The journalistic style, while lending immediacy and accessibility to some of the more obscure passages of South African history, feels somewhat labored at times. Academic historians may also find musings such as “Do people, individuals, make history, or does history make individuals?” (88) an irritation. On occasion too, the shades of Pollyanna can be discerned in comments that seek to tie the threads of past and present together rather too cozily, as in this passage relating to the imagined first meeting of Africans and European seafarers as “strangers on the shore”: “In these things, it would seem, were the seeds of the contests and conflicts of the hundreds of years to follow—but also, ultimately, the steadily growing idea that they depended on each other. And from that, after centuries, came the political settlement of the past decade, and the efforts at reconciliation, of establishing a single sense of nationhood” (31).

In his foreword, Asmal presents *Every Step of the Way* as “part of a wider effort by the Ministry of Education to revitalize the study of history” in South Africa. Yet this book was written to fulfill the needs of a particular historical moment and a particular political purpose, and it has all the strengths and weaknesses you would expect of such an enterprise. If nothing else, this book shows that a much wider renaissance in the discipline of history in South Africa over the next few years is necessary to ensure that the old mythologies of the South African past are not simply replaced by new ones.

Alan Gregor Coble
The University of the West Indies
Cave Hill Campus, Barbados

Edmund Abaka. *Kola Is God's Gift: Agricultural Production, Export Initiatives and the Kola Industry in Asante and the Gold Coast c. 1820–1950*. Athens: Ohio University Press/Oxford: James Currey/Accra: Woeli Publishing, 2005. xv + 173 pp. Maps. Appendixes. Bibliography. Index. \$44.95. Cloth. \$24.95. Paper.

The kola nut has been a major commodity in West African markets for many centuries, beginning long before its distinct taste provided inspiration for several soft drinks. The nuts are considered a mild stimulant, an important reason the common folk chewed it at naming ceremonies, weddings, funerals, and other social occasions. For the wealthy, kola constituted a luxury and served as a sign of their hospitality and affluence. In the nineteenth century, a vast interlocking grid of commercial networks in the forest and savanna regions facilitated the exchange of large amounts of kola. States that emerged in the forest regions derived revenue from kola-related activities, while individuals earned their income from engaging in