

But for a reflection on violence, this book is weak on warfare. Among the many anonymous informants is an alleged African Second World War veteran whose preposterous claim to have entered Berlin in 1945 as part of a South African unit is taken for granted (p. 70). This raises concerns about the veracity of other oral accounts. Also, beyond the use of PVs, counterinsurgency in the valley is not well explained. The major engagement there in November 1976, which resulted in the Rhodesian military's largest number of insurgent kills up to that point, is described inaccurately and not put in context, and there is only a brief mention of the Selous Scouts 'brainwashing' of former insurgents (p. 175). Finally, the life history approach appears unbalanced. The author interviewed and quotes former insurgents, but while the recruitment of valley men into the security forces is alluded to, their wartime experiences are ignored. Rhodesian African Rifles and Guard Force personnel are treated as anonymous figures. These flaws, as well as the overly complex language used to explain fairly simple concepts about identity and geography, may limit the readership of this book.

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doi:10.1017/S0001972014000278

KINGS M. PHIRI, JOHN McCracken, WAPULUMUKA O. MULWAFU, editors,
Malawi in Crisis: the 1959/60 Nyasaland State of Emergency and its legacy.
Zomba: Kachere Books (pb £24.95 – 978 9 990887 77 8). 2012, xiv + 412 pp.

This important volume brings together both scholarly analyses and eyewitness accounts of a key event in Malawian history, the 1959–60 State of Emergency and its aftermath. The Emergency triggered the end of the Central African Federation, the rise of nationalism and the emergence of Dr Hastings Banda as the undisputed nationalist leader. In this anthology, by using the Emergency as a 'prism', the chapters explore events, practices, debates and representations surrounding it within local, national, regional and imperial frameworks.

The volume is divided into four distinct themes: local studies, colonial violence and African responses, Central African interconnections, and memories and memorials. The contributors include leading Malawianists, younger scholars and distinguished veterans of the Emergency, who together provide a diverse and rich array of perspectives and approaches to the Emergency, its repercussions, legacies and interpretations. Overall, the selected themes and chapters work well together: many fruitful connections are formed between chapters and, although there is some overlap, each contribution brings its own insights. John McCracken provides an excellent introduction to the anthology, in which he summarizes its key themes and charts potential ways forward.

The book opens with a series of local studies, all of which draw on oral testimony and tease out a richness of detail that both complements and complicates the more general picture of events and interpretations. Owen Kalinga and Kings Phiri present district-level analyses of the Emergency (of Karonga and Zomba districts respectively), while Hendrina Kachapila-Mazizwa moves the study to a village level (concentrating on Chiwaliwali village). Wapulumuka Mulwafu explores the agrarian origins of the Emergency through a study of peasant resistance to *malimidwe* or soil conservation measures in three districts in 1953. The role of Malawian women as active, previously often forgotten, agents in the Emergency is foregrounded by Annie Chiponda. Finally, Jack Thompson unpicks events and identities at the Livingstonia Mission.

The Emergency was triggered by the ‘massacre plot’; this followed intelligence reports, based on dubious informants, claiming that there was a massive nationalistic conspiracy to murder Europeans from the governor down. The plot was allegedly discussed in the ‘bush meeting’ of the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC) in January, and when the Emergency was launched on 3 March with a massive security operation, the murder plot was the main justification for the violent colonial action. In the second section of the book, from very different perspectives, Philip Murphy (working on the recently released Colonial Office intelligence documents) and Joey Power (who interviewed former nationalists about the ‘bush meeting’) confirm that there was no ‘murder plot’, although there certainly was violent rhetoric in the nationalist camp. For her part, Megan Vaughan studies the speeches and trial of Masauko Chipembere, a firebrand NAC figure. Vaughan highlights the difficult legacy left by the colonial laws of sedition, through which legitimate political expression could be criminalized and violently suppressed. McCracken explores colonial violence in the detention camps, and emphasizes the influence of the earlier Kenyan emergency.

Nationalistic connections and influences between Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe are studied in chapters by Zoe Groves (on collaboration in Malawi and Zimbabwe) and Ackson Kanduza (on relations between Zambian and Malawian nationalisms). Colonial regional connections, in turn, are discussed by Tim Stapleton in his chapter on the role of African security forces from Southern Rhodesia.

The final section of the book is an intriguing combination of recollections and scholarship. Rose Chibambo and Vera Chirwa, two remarkable women who were at the heart of the nationalist movement and who were imprisoned during the Emergency, provide important insights and eyewitness accounts of events and the experiences of detainees. The third eyewitness account comes from Terence Ranger, whose recollections, together with references from the journal *Dissent*, further highlight the connections between Malawi and Zimbabwe. The two final chapters approach the memorializing of the Emergency: John Lwanda provides a fascinating study of music, memory and the Martyr’s Day (established by Dr Banda and the Malawi Congress party on 3 March 1960), while Bryson Nkhoma explores commemorations of the Emergency from 1960 to 2009. As Lwanda points out, Banda’s regime invented, politicized and enforced a ritual of Martyr’s Day, in which a narrowly selected group of heroes (notably John Chilembwe from 1915) were put on a pedestal and others (including many early nationalist leaders) were omitted.

This collection will be invaluable for scholars and students of Malawi, South-Central Africa and the British Empire with an interest in nationalism, decolonization, violence and memory. As McCracken notes, many important questions remain, but this volume clearly succeeds in its own aim of revisiting the significance of the Emergency through its sometimes forgotten complexities.

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doi:10.1017/S000197201400028X

GRANT HAMILTON, editor, *Reading Marechera*. Woodbridge: James Currey (pb £19.99 – 978 1 84701 062 9). 2013, 196 pp.

Grant Hamilton’s collection of critical essays, *Reading Marechera*, demonstrates that Dambudzo Marechera’s maverick work continues to inspire literary scholars