value for many African history classrooms. All in all, this second edition is a valuable resource. It underscores the relevance of pre-1800s African history and urges us all to think critically about how we narrate the long history of the continent.

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Baruch Hirson. *Year of Fire, Year of Ash: The Soweto School Children's Revolt That Shook Apartheid*. Foreword by Shula Marks. London: Zed Books, 2016. 2nd revised edition. Acknowledgments. Glossary. Chronology of Events. Bibliography. Index. xv + 350 pp. $24.95. Paper. ISBN: 978-1-78360-896-6.

Julian Brown. *The Road to Soweto Resistance and the Uprising of 16 June 1976*. Woodbridge, U.K.: James Currey, 2016. v + 204 pp. Acknowledgments. A Note on Language. Abbreviations. Bibliography. Index. $45.00. Cloth. ISBN: 978-1-847-01141-1.

Although they cover similar historical material, Baruch Hirson's *Year of Fire, Year of Ash* and Julian Brown's *The Road to Soweto Resistance* were written in very different contexts. First published in 1979, Hirson's book at the time was a pathbreaking contextualization of the Soweto Uprising of June 16, 1976, when the children of Johannesburg's South Western Township (So-we-to) marched to protest the imposition of Afrikaans as a compulsory medium of instruction under the apartheid government's system of Bantu Education. Written in the immediate aftermath of the uprising, and in what must have been a frenetic period for the author given the book's depth of research, the book remains an impressive study of the uprising for its meticulous detail and wealth of resources. Hirson was able to compile the study with the help of international agencies opposed to apartheid, such as the International Defence and Aid Fund, the International University Exchange Fund, and the Counter Information Service, which provided photocopies of banned documents, along with the tutelage of the doyen of South African revisionist history, Shula Marks at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Fittingly, Marks provides the brief foreword for the new edition.

Born in South Africa to Jewish immigrants, Hirson was a Trotskyist imprisoned in 1964 for his role in a sabotage campaign in the wake of the Sharpeville Massacre of March 21, 1960. After his release from prison in 1973 he emigrated to London with his family, where he approached Marks and asked her to supervise his Ph.D. at the University of London. *Year of Fire, Year of Ash* was the first book-length study of the Soweto Uprising and is a testament to the commitment of Hirson's generation to unearthing an alternative history to the one propagated by the apartheid regime. The result

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was an entire genre now commonly referred to as "struggle history"—the efforts of predominantly exiled South African scholars to document the historical struggles of black communities against colonialism and apartheid. For Hirson, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash* was also the first publication of what would be a fruitful academic life that produced five monographs and the founding and editing of the journal *Searchlight South Africa*.

In contrast, Julian Brown's *The Road to Soweto* is the most recent study of the Soweto Uprising and thus was written in postapartheid South Africa. Drawing on a doctoral thesis and subsequent research, *The Road to Soweto* is a young historian's contribution to a reassessment of an event that is now celebrated annually on June 16 as Youth Day. Teaching politics at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Brown writes from one of the epicenters of the recent "Fees Must Fall" movement, the sustained campaign by South African students for free and decolonized education. This is Brown's second offering; his first book, *South Africa's Insurgent Citizens: On Dissent and the Possibility of Politics* (Zed Books, 2015), is a sustained attempt to conceptualize South Africa's protest culture (which includes the highest number of strikes per year in the world) as a new articulation of "political agency . . . [,] insisting upon a radical equality within the social order" (3). Indeed, the protests at Wits and around the country feature prominently in both the introduction and conclusion of *The Road to Soweto*. Brown's books also benefit from archival resources that were not available to Hirson, as well as the body of secondary literature that has been published in the forty years since the Soweto Uprising. Perhaps because of these differences in source material and the contexts in which they were written, the contrast that stands out most prominently is that of tone—Hirson's is passionate, even strident at times, whereas Brown's is more detached and diagnostic.

Nevertheless, both books confirm British historian E. H. Carr's definition of history, in *What Is History?* (Palgrave, 2001), as "an unending dialogue between the past and the present." And both books share the same premise—the need to contextualize the Soweto Uprising as part of a sustained resistance to apartheid rule. The first section of Hirson's book points to the deeper history of protests at South African black educational institutions since 1799. The second focuses on the struggles of workers and students, while the final section presents an overview of the development of black consciousness in South African history and its contribution to the revolt. Brown similarly insists on the need to view the struggles of workers and students together, and not in separate silos. The originality of Brown's argument, however, rests in his observation that forms of protest in the decade preceding the Soweto Uprising consisted of "experiments," and that the Uprising was thus a culmination of a long period of discontent, the development of nascent forms of opposition to the state, and even of dialogue between white and black student activists. Brown is particularly insistent on the last point—the need to overturn dichotomies in South African history between white and black, and also between worker and student.

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At the same time, a rereading of the earlier volume in tandem with the later one suggests that some of Brown's assumptions—which are shared by many, including, until now, this reviewer—are faulty. For example, Brown takes aim at the "consensus account" (as he puts it) that the Soweto Uprising arose "out of a period of political quiescence" (3). Although this may be true of popular renditions of the Soweto Uprising—particularly those propagated by the ruling African National Congress, which attempts to lay claim to the uprising as part of its ownership of "the struggle" against apartheid—such an argument overlooks Hirson's sensitive and closely documented account, which covers much the same ground as Brown's. It is striking that the first published account of the Soweto Uprising pointed precisely to its grounding in previous protests, thereby overturning, if only by implication, any notion of a period of quiescence in South African history.

If Carr's definition of history suggests the need for all historians to look at the past through fresh eyes and for historical writing constantly to reinvent itself, it also should suggest the error of overlooking the contributions of those who went before. The re-publication of Hirson's account is a healthy reminder for younger South Africanist scholars of the vitality of struggle history and the continuing value of the earlier generation's contribution to the writing of South African history.

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Stephen Ellis. *This Present Darkness: A History of Nigerian Organized Crime*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. xv + 313 pp. Bibliography. Index. $29.95. Cloth. ISBN: 9780190494315.

This Present Darkness is Stephen Ellis's last book—sadly, he died as it was being completed. It is fitting, then, that it draws together many of the signature features of his distinguished scholarly career. Like his previous works, *This Present Darkness* combines the scope and sources of an ambitious history, a fascination with the cultural and spiritual underpinnings of everyday life and politics, and a "matter of fact" purpose and prose in accounting for one of Africa's most well-known but intractable issues.

This Present Darkness offers rather more than a specialist history of Nigerian organized crime. It is a general history of the country refracted through a discussion of crime. This is because, from the outset, Ellis opens up the definition of "organized crime" beyond the classic American sense of "Mafiosi-style" racketeering to include a wide spectrum of criminality, fraud, and corruption. Crime therefore becomes a productive way of exploring the faultlines of historical constitution, cultural integration, political engineering, and economic opportunity in the Nigerian national narrative. Above all, Ellis

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