

more, such dense bodies of direct associations provide both firmer evidence for connecting speech communities with archaeological sites and a way to test dates derived with glottochronology.

*How Societies Are Born* asks a range of important questions about the project of reconstructing Africa's ancient history. Vansina's observation of alternating periods dominated by processes of convergence or divergence provides a new way of thinking about the transitions of Late Stone Age to Early Iron Age to Late Iron Age. Perhaps most important, by elucidating the collective concerns and interests of ancient historical actors with linguistic and ethnographic sources, Vansina is writing a history of the antecedents of ideas and things that are of *recent* importance and eloquently making a case for the place of deep-time history in the way we write about the recent past, such as the rise of the Lunda Commonwealth or Africans' participation in the Atlantic World. With *How Societies Are Born*, Vansina has revealed yet another compelling path through the African past.

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**Timothy H. Parsons. *Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement in British Colonial Africa*.** Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004. xviii + 318 pp. Maps. Photographs. Figures. Tables. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$59.95. Cloth. \$26.95. Paper.

Parsons has written an engaging book. After reminiscing about his own Boy Scout experiences ("We got teased a lot, but we were not just different from regular Scouts; we believed we were better" [xiv]), he confronts the reader with a dilemma. Scouting was supposed to adhere to a code of ethics, including the Fourth Code proclaiming all Scouts brothers. This was not true in British Colonial Africa, or, as Parsons rightly points out, in the United States. Lord Robert Baden-Powell, a veteran of the Zulu and Matabele wars, was the genius behind the scouting movement. Designed to improve British youth by blurring class distinctions to build character, it was never intended to include Africans. The very idea was anathema to this unforgiving racist and defender of empire, much as he might protest that he was not a "nigger-hater" and that he had "lots of good friends among them—especially the Zulus" (63). Baden-Powell dismissed "the stupid inertness of the puzzled negro [as] duller than that of an ox; a dog would grasp your meaning in one half the time." At best "a very large number of them would grow up into . . . white men with black skins" (51). Indeed, the widespread fear that Africans would become white men in black skins is one of the themes running through the book. Unfortunately, Parsons misses the opportunity to explore the psychological effects of all this on Africans.

Nonetheless, scouting proved appealing to Africans. The partnership between education and colonial rule, the author asserts, reinforced Lord Lugard's project of indirect rule. For imperialists, scouting bolstered British colonial schemes to retribalize African youth, perfect indirect rule, and strengthen traditional culture. Missionaries, for their part, saw it as a means of spreading Christianity among the supposed heathens, instilling civilization, and loosening the grip of traditional culture on the converted. As for Africans, scouting presented a more complex set of opportunities. Some viewed it as an instrument for undermining the colonial structure via independent African troops; others eventually enlisted the Scouts in support of groups such as Mau Mau. Then there were those who thought it a useful tool for entry into the promised land of Western culture, individualism, and material prosperity.

Only white settlers expressed the gravest of doubts. That Fourth Code worried them no end. The greatest opposition to scouting arose in areas with the largest concentration of white settlers, areas where Africans sought to maximize the intent of the Fourth Code. In South Africa, and to lesser degrees Kenya and the Rhodesias, arrangements were made to ensure that African Scouts adhered to rigid racist segregation laws. Baden-Powell advised the all-black Pathfinders troop of South Africa to go "softlee, softlee, catchee monkey" (a suggestion to go slowly in order to achieve one's goal), while counseling white South African Scouts to "buck up" and "not let the rising generation of Natives beat [them] in the race" (96). Ironically, Baden-Powell saw something in the character of Africans that was sorely lacking in white youth and instructed the latter how to perform so-called Kaffir war dances to improve their moral fiber.

Parsons makes a convincing argument that scouting was introduced as a means to control Africans. Furthermore, the British looked to the United States for models to achieve these ends. For example, James Steward, principal of Lovedale Missionary Institute, advocated adopting the Tuskegee-Hampton industrial model in South Africa early in 1900s, while Carnegie Foundation grants established an Anna Jeanes School outside Nairobi in 1925. Here, as throughout the book, Parsons does a good job of interweaving the history of scouting with other historic events, as well as with political maneuvers to undermine the Fourth Code. The text is well researched.

The reader will be led to conclude, however, that the African Scout did not fit the stereotype of imperial stooge. Yet the scouting experience was still a frustrating affair for Africans and, in the end, disappointing. And if poor maintenance of relevant archives and records indicates anything, it would seem to be that scouting is one aspect of the colonial past that Africans would rather forget.

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