

century; the rise of the Zanzibari commercial empire and of states in the Great Lakes region of East Africa; and African state formation and the expansion of white settlement in southern Africa. Part II explores the role of Islam and Islamic revival in the nineteenth century, though the focus is more political than religious, including the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of European colonization in North Africa; the politics of the West African *jihads* and the subsequent co-optation of Islamic authorities by colonial ones; and the fusion of Afro-Arab elements in Swahili society and the expansion of trade in East Africa.

The focus of the remainder of the book shifts from regional studies to thematic ones, with a resultant loss of historical narrative and detail. Part III covers events leading up to the colonial conquest: first, the abolition of the slave trade, the rise of legitimate commerce, and increasing slavery within Africa itself; next, increasing European engagement in Africa through missions and exploration; and, finally, the ways in which trade, technology, and racist ideas shifted to encourage direct European intervention by the end of the century. Part IV continues with the consolidation of colonial rule in the early years of the twentieth century through the establishment of hybridized military and political systems, and new cash-crop, settler, and industrial economies. The emphasis is on British policies (for example, co-optation of Muslim authorities) at the expense of others (French opposition to them). Part V then explores the high colonial period between the world wars: increasing colonial intervention in local economies and resultant peasant protest; a rise in overlapping identities and ethnic politics; the expansion of education and medicine; and increasing Muslim and Christian radicalization.

Part VI turns to the slow dissolution of empire following the Second World War, with the erosion of colonial power and the rise of nationalism. Finally, Part VII takes an expansive approach to the post-colonial era, surveying the legacies of colonial underdevelopment and authoritarianism; the subordination of African concerns to international ones during the Cold War; problems of rapid population growth, economic development, and environmental decline; and the succession of big-man politics, military rule, and militia violence.

In sum, this is a well-written text that rightly places colonialism in the context of African history as a whole, and it should prove to be an accessible and effective text for use with undergraduate students. It is also very well produced, but relatively expensive.

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THOMAS SPEAR

A PIONEERING ACCOUNT OF AFRICAN-BASED POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

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Africa's 'Agitators': Militant Anti-colonialism in Africa and the West, 1918-1939.

By JONATHAN DERRICK. London: Hurst & Company, 2008. Pp. ix + 483. £17.99, paperback (ISBN 978-1-85065-936-5).

KEY WORDS: African diaspora, colonialism, Pan-Africanism, politics/political, protest, resistance.

Despite a fairly substantial body of recent research and publication on anti-colonialist thought and activity in various parts of Europe and the world, on the

particular role of African-diasporic and/or Pan-Africanist intellectuals and activists in this, and of course on the roots of decolonisation itself, there still remain huge gaps in our knowledge. In relation to those whom Jonathan Derrick calls Africa's 'Agitators', we lack, for instance, substantial, properly documented biographies of George Padmore or C. L. R. James, let alone of numerous less-celebrated figures. We have no full, archivally based history of such organizations as the International African Service Bureau and the League Against Imperialism. In some key cases, the location of relevant archives – if they survived at all – remains mysterious. Some relevant earlier work, based on extremely uneven and inconsistent access to relevant sources, appears in the light of more recent discoveries to have fallen into numerous errors: and this certainly includes some germane efforts by the present reviewer.

Other major contributions to the field, right up to the present, continue to be marked, overtly or covertly, by the ideological schisms that so preoccupied many of the 'Agitators' themselves: liberals or social democrats versus revolutionaries, Marxists against Garveyites, Stalinists against Trotskyists, and more. Few studies of anti-colonial movements or ideas have embraced both Anglophone and Francophone milieux, let alone taken in activists in the Dutch, Belgian, Portuguese, and other 'minor' imperial spheres. And there has been another, perhaps more surprising, kind of schism too, whereby scholars of African-American life and ideas have often operated in relative isolation from historians of colonialism (or indeed anti-colonialism) in Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean. Thus, for instance, the African-American novelist Richard Wright draws the attention mainly of US-based literary scholars. Trinidad-born George Padmore interests students of Pan-Africanism, of the West Indies, or of Africa, especially Ghana. Yet Wright and Padmore were long-term close associates engaged in an intense interchange of ideas (probably even more so than the known surviving archival record suggests). The intertwined evolution of the two men's thoughts – whether on specific issues such as the prospects for Nkrumah's Ghana or on very broad ones such as the relationship between colonialism and modernity – would bear the kind of close investigation that the institutionalized divisions of contemporary scholarship do not seem to encourage.

Against this complex and sometimes troubled background, Jonathan Derrick's book is both a significant departure and a notable contribution to knowledge. The book has a slightly unusual history, since it derives in part from a PhD thesis dating from 1979 and largely based on research undertaken several years before that. Subsequently, its author worked as an editor for *West Africa* magazine and various African reference books, and is now an independent scholar and freelance editor. When a work has been so long in gestation, or is in part based on research undertaken many years ago and with a significantly different focus, the results can often be quite uneven. Most often and obviously, reference to recent research and publications may prove to be patchy and incomplete, if not downright haphazard. That is not at all the case here.

Africa's 'Agitators' is primarily a study of African-focused political movements, ranging from tiny – but often remarkably transnational, even global, in composition and aspiration – anti-colonialist organizations in the African diaspora, especially in Britain and France, to larger-scale but more localized protest activities in Africa itself, between the world wars. It has relatively little to say about the broader political ideas of those involved, still less about the cultural visions for which some of its key characters, such as C. L. R. James, are today probably most celebrated. To observe the latter is by no means necessarily a negative criticism: it might indeed be thought that Derrick provides a welcome corrective to the

excessive ‘culturalism’ and the theoreticist overkill of some important recent writing on such figures and movements. And even if in places one might wish to know more on the intellectual formations of the book’s *dramatis personae*, or on the conflict of worldviews and theories that (sometimes) underlay the clashes of tactics or personalities, the book already ranges very widely indeed. Most notably, it seeks to give in-depth coverage to African and pro-African agitation across its chosen period in both British and French imperial realms, and, indeed, the relations – fitful though these were – between the two. Derrick’s insistence, in his Conclusions, that he ‘has only been able to deal far too briefly’ with either protest and opposition among Africans or ‘moral objection to colonialism’ from Europe and elsewhere (p. 423), is surely over-modest when his book actually breaks so much new ground on both. Even if it were wholly true, as he goes on to say, that ‘events in any particular part of Africa have been given only summary attention in these pages, compared with what could be and to some extent has been written about them’ (p. 424), that would still leave his work standing as a pioneering attempt at synthesis. But his self-assessment is, again, too modest, for there is much here that will be new to even the closest specialist.

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STEPHEN HOWE

GRASSROOT POLITICS AND DECOLONIZATION IN GUINEA

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Cold War and Decolonization in Guinea, 1946–1958. By ELIZABETH SCHMIDT. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2007. Pp. xvii + 310. £49.50/\$50, hardback (ISBN 978-0-8214-1763-8); £24.50/\$30, paperback (ISBN 978-0-8214-1764-5).

KEY WORDS: Guinea, decolonization, nationalism, politics/political.

This is the companion volume to Schmidt’s *Mobilizing the Masses: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Nationalist Movement in Guinea* (reviewed in *JAH*, 47 (2006)). While the earlier work studied the nationalist movement and the political forces that led to Guinea’s ‘No’ vote in the 1958 constitutional referendum, this volume explores the nationalist movement in the context of French politics and the Cold War, and focuses specifically on the Left–Right political divide within the Guinean branch of the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (RDA).

After the humiliation of defeat and occupation during the Second World War, France was determined to reassert its position as a world power by re-branding the empire as the ‘French Union’ and introducing a programme of colonial reform in an effort to deter more radical solutions. However, these plans were at risk of being derailed by African and particularly Asian nationalist movements, and the onset of the Cold War only served to intensify French concerns.

In 1946, the RDA had chosen to affiliate to the French Communist Party (PCF) in Paris. The PCF was in government and, although it did not support nationalist demands for independence, it did have the most progressive stance of all the metropolitan political parties on the colonial question. However, with the onset of the Cold War and the Communists’ departure from government in 1947, the link with the PCF became a liability, as RDA activists were subjected to increasing