

Africa, in Noel Mostert's panoramic account of the Xhosa story; and, in the case of Uganda, by Low himself, among others. But they *are* masterful, and contribute significantly to our understanding of the building of empire and imperial culture at its edges, *and* of the histories of the peoples inexorably caught up in the process. These two studies ultimately demonstrate that the different empires thus created were, in a variety of ways, as African as they were British.

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## AN EFFECTIVE INTRODUCTION TO MODERN AFRICAN HISTORY

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*A History of Modern Africa: 1800 to the Present.* By RICHARD J. REID. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. Pp. xvi + 386. £50/€60/\$89.95, hardback (ISBN 978-1-4051-3264-0); £20/€24/\$34.95, paperback (ISBN 978-1-4051-3265-7).

KEY WORDS: colonial, colonialism, post-colonial, pre-colonial.

This book nicely fills the need for a text for the second half of an undergraduate survey course. Unlike many texts that start around 1880–1900 and peter out after 1960, thus depicting the colonial period as a historical disjuncture, this one includes detailed coverage of the long transition to colonialism from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, as well as the era of independence, thus placing colonialism firmly within the context of long-term historical trends within Africa as a whole. The respective coverage of the three periods – 128, 144, and 54 pages respectively – balances the pre-colonial and colonial periods but gives too little weight to the post-colonial period, now nearly as long as the colonial period. The text is clearly laid out, with succinct introductions to the seven main parts, each of which is divided into three topical chapters and provided with excellent maps and illustrations.

The overall approach is thematic with a brief case or two evoked to educe a general point. This has the advantage of clear analysis, but it also results in a succession of broad generalizations with little sustained narrative or detailed case studies that would allow the student to appreciate events on the ground or to assess the general in terms of the particular. There are also some notable gaps in coverage and interpretation that a teacher will have to address. One is a lack of balance, in which British colonies and policies receive far greater coverage than their French, Belgian, Portuguese, or German counterparts; North Africa gets cursory attention; and the two world wars inexplicably occupy two of the six chapters devoted to colonial rule. There is also a clear preference for political and economic interpretations over social or cultural ones, such as the author's assessment of the causes of the *jihads*, and little attention is paid to changes brought by religion, education, or urbanization. Finally, there is a quirky tendency to entertain dated debates – such as the slave trade numbers game, collaboration versus resistance, primary versus secondary resistance, assimilation versus association, and whether colonialism was good or bad – at the expense of nuanced discussions of the contradictions inherent in tradition and colonialism.

Part I focuses on polity, society, and economy in the nineteenth century, including the slave trade and the rise of states in West Africa from the sixteenth

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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## 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