

BOOK REVIEWS

Election Observation and Democratization in Africa. Jon Abbink and Gerti Hesselning (eds.). New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. Pp. 324.

In Africa and elsewhere in the world, election observation became a growing industry in the 1990s. The end of the Cold War ushered in a new era of promoting democracy that was to be sponsored and monitored in the parts of the world orphaned after the geopolitical fallout of the end of the Cold War. The ensuing management and monitoring of sponsored democracy took the form of continued conditionality. In a political atmosphere where the state has had its legitimacy and trustworthiness repeatedly questioned, election observation was needed to boost public confidence in the democratic process and to secure the fairness of the elections. As a fairly recent phenomenon, there has been scanty information available on the mechanisms needed for and the processes of election observation. Nearly a decade after the start of the election observation era, emerges the book *Election Observation and Democratization in Africa*. The aim of the book is to provide guidance to election observers "on issues of election monitoring in non-Western settings, with less economic means and less secure institutional infrastructure (p. xii)." Africa is chosen as the primary case study because "the most interesting and challenging material to study this topic comes from there (p.10)."

The book is divided into three parts. The first section deals with the context of elections in Africa. The second consists of case studies, while the last segment deals with policy issues facing election observers. Throughout the book, the contributing authors discuss issues facing "foreign" monitors, the moral/ethical issues involved, the brevity of time spent in a particular location, and the lack of understanding of the culture and politics of the country where elections are being observed.

Jon Abbink introduces the book by stating what has become a commonly held belief: afro-pessimisme.¹ Initial election observer missions failed to obtain adequate outcomes because they declared faulty elections as "a step in the right direction (p.2)." Part of the problem was that external observers had unclear mandates and ambiguous standards and methodology. Additionally, donor states may have their own realpolitik interests and thus, they may care more about their particular concerns, rather than the long term prospects for democracy. Finally, the "free and fair" qualification is meaningless so long as it does not engage the broader problems of democracy, equality and justice (p.8).

One of the contributors, Van Cranenburgh discusses the theoretical relationship between multiparty politics and democracy. Multi-party elections are part of routine political practice everywhere in the West. The author criticizes, quite rightly, the reductionist and elitist view that multiparty elections are the necessary and sufficient condition for democracy. The picture is more complex than that and the totality of problems should be taken into account,

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v5/v5i3reviews.pdf>

presumably with an interdisciplinary approach which gives fair coverage of historical, political and cultural issues as the book promises to do on its opening page. Does the book deliver on the promises? Only partly. While international relations and political aspects are widely covered, there is inadequate coverage of historical factors, the economic background, and other features impinging on democratization in Africa.

The search for mirror images after imposing Western features on non-Western setting is bound to backfire. A working paradigm requires certain grounds to explain a social, political and economic reality. A western multi-party system presumes the existence of, among other things, a modern state, a fully functioning civil society, and a free press. "Organic" constitutions that are grounded on the soil need to clearly define the powers, rights, and responsibilities of all involved. The social contract is such that parties, both in opposition and in power, understand and abide by the rules. For many African states, this contract was handed down at the time of decolonization and is poorly understood by the people. In the realm of society, the sponsored democracy seeks the "civil" society. That, however, is not the same as Goran Hyden's "uncaptured peasantry"² or Mahmood Mamdani's "decentralized despotism"³ where the subjects are "trapped in a non-racial version of apartheid." It is a fact of life that in Africa, rural societies account for the largest portion both in population size and in terms of economic activity, this obviously does not conform to the expectations of technologically advanced countries. The focus on literati society is not surprising looking at the evolution of western, liberal democracy. But when the rural world is left out of the oppositional politics, it does not augur well with the spirit of democratization. There is another, yet more important dimension: economic activity. Most countries in Africa are characterized by mono-economic structures, producing and exporting a select few agricultural or mining products. More importantly, where the state is the focus for shrinking economic resources, the premium on losing and winning power becomes hugely expensive.⁴

All this happens in an African setting where heterogeneity is the norm. Van Cranenburgh sees "consociational or consensus model of democracy" to be "increasingly relevant (p.26)." Also, Ellis is adamant that the sovereignty of the popular will, tested most obviously through general elections, was replacing all other principles of sovereignty throughout the world. Indeed, it is crucial to any country that wished to develop (p.39). Consequently, rather than focusing on fundamental political reforms, democratization was narrowly construed, making it unsurprising that elections failed to bring increased power sharing or greater economic prosperity (p.43).

The issue does not end with the nature of postcolonial state, which remains colonial in its adherence to generally anti-democratic and repressive measures and attitudes. Van Kessel queries about the goals, rules, roles, and responsibility of election observers, as well as those of the donor countries. If donors who sponsor election observation are concerned more with political stability than democratization, then the right approach is to send peace monitors rather than election observers.

In chapter 4, De Gaay Fortman analyses political violence sometimes as an occasional aspect of the political struggle. Ted Gurr argues that it is part of a human being's constitution that if frustration, dissatisfaction, and grievances are sufficiently prolonged or sharply felt, aggression is quite likely, if not certain to occur.⁵ Whereas democracy must begin with the

process of democratization, the sudden introduction of multiparty elections may lead to protests, rebellions and regime orchestrated violence, as occurred in countries such as Rwanda, Burundi, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ethiopia. The author grapples with the fact that even in the West, where democracy implied representation, accountability and participation, the Westminster style “winner takes all” model produces a “single party government as a result of multiparty elections (p.86).”

Given the widespread dissatisfaction with the experience of multiparty democracy in Africa, the question remains. If multi-party politics are problematic in Africa what alternatives are there? In the second section dealing with case studies, M. Doornbos recommends that the Ugandan no-party system “introduced by the [National Revolutionary Movement] in 1986 is quite novel for Africa or anywhere for that matter (p.109).” The substance of the no-party alternative lies in competing individual candidates vying for votes as individuals and not as members of a party. Skepticism, at best, is what the reviewer feels in copying any social model that were developed for certain circumstances that may not exist in other places, times and conditions. The Ugandan practice has its own political and historical background. Uganda, which is a country greatly haunted by its turbulent past, is quite different from its immediate neighbor, Kenya, which does not see it fit to dismantle the entrenched one party system dominated by KANU.

Here, as Foenken and Dietz found out, ethnicity is another issue multi-party democracy has to contend with. African ethnicity as a form of nationalism has not been accorded sufficient attention. Most of the times, the attention it attracts both from academic and media outlets has been negative. Neglected are the analyses of why it is a resilient a reality in Africa as Timothy Shaw persuasively argued,⁶ as well as the positive sides of ethnicity.⁷ Conforming to the existing approach, Kenya’s political system is characterized by “ethnic voting” which is illustrated in the 1992 election results being along ethno-territorial boundaries (p.128). Mention is made of ethnic clashes and manipulations and division of opposition largely along ethnic lines. The role of election observation in this respect is murky though the preliminary conclusion is that the election results would have been more “unfair and “unfree” without the observers.

Looking into Ethiopia, Jon Abbink, goes beyond the watered-down declarations of “free and fair.” The narration of “Democracy and ethnicity: The Ethiopian approach” may sound more than novel where ‘ethnicity... has made its entry in the official political discourse of Ethiopia and perhaps indeed of Africa (152).’ The reviewer would have been mesmerized had he not been from that part of the world. There is no doubt that external observers would find it interesting, and at times carried over by official account. To critical students of Ethiopian historiography, the events of the late 19th century, the conquest and the imperial expansion to the south that resulted in the formation of modern day Ethiopia, largely explains the revolutionary declarations of the Derg military rule that ended in 1991 and the EPRDF rebel army rule that replaced it. For the latter, the organization of elections meant the organization of its victory. Some external observers understood this, especially the large donors who were concerned less with democratization and more with “strategic geopolitical motives.” These donors found moral relief by comparing the new arrangement “with the worst cases as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Sudan” (pp.171-172). The EPRDF is also accorded with another

exotic notion of “ethnic federalism” and the most revolutionary constitution on earth, a contract that neither the citizens nor the subjects have the will and the capacity to put into practice. The views of protagonists vary. For some, the post-1991 order represents nothing but the extension of the old system with new methods of divide-and-rule; for others the semblance of language and cultural barriers constitute nothing but an “ethnic apartheid.” This dark side is apparent to everyone except those who want to believe that democracy is flourishing in the middle of the city.

Thus the secrets of multiparty democracy know no bounds. R. van Dijk provides the anthropological slant to the secret worlds of culture, including the political culture. He notes that “the cultural implications of the imposition of democratic procedures and their monitoring” are often overlooked (p.181). Many observers take for granted the development of the Western nation state in Africa. But the realities in Africa do not guarantee such assumptions. That is why, in Malawi, for example, the secrets of “muttiparty”, as they knew it locally, needed to be told by the young cadres that it was not “just another party.” The new converts explain to the elderly that it is an alternative to Banda, who also used Nyau secret society as a means of oppression and repression. To the international observers the idea of Nyau secret society inspecting and monitoring the ballot boxes by “placing ‘magic eyes’ in polling booths” in the villages is secret in itself (p.198). For they lacked “knowledge of the local culture” and time “to prepare themselves (p.203).” In Chad, they arrived too late, made “public their findings within two days of the elections,” and left the scene just after the polls. Then the “hasty and imprudent reports were used out of context by the Chadian authorities to serve their own ends (pp.221-24).” For those who knew their world in Mali, the new democracy was a “process of the democratization of access to the financial resources either of the state or of foreign aid” (pp.245-46). The role of observers in this instance “appears as without any real influence on the democratization process in the country (p.250).” Here as elsewhere in Africa, the very legitimacy of election observation is at risk Lange notes: “Is not a kind of consensus ... being constructed between African leaders and Western leaders, ready to accommodate regular and “free” elections which they have no real political stakes, lack financial transparency on party finances and electoral campaigns, and which also are increasingly held in the absence of the voters (p.251)?”

The policy and practice of international election observation faces tremendous problems stemming from the mandate and the role of foreign election observers as well as the organization and execution of election observation. One problem for the observers is acting as arbiters whose values and standards may differ from those held in the country they are stationed in. The other related point is the issue of sovereignty and involvement in the political process. The masses who protested against bad governance in the early 1990s are now facing even more difficult times, since what they obtained is multiparty politics, rather than democracy, participation, accountability, and representation. As a matter of policy what can individual countries that contribute election observers do to combat this substantive failure? At the moment, it seems that very little can be done. For example, the Dutch government, admits its limitations by stating that while its policies “have moved out of the infant phase,” they “still suffer from some childhood diseases (p.291).”

The final chapter of the book is an epilogue that revisits Kenya's 1997 election, which was purported to be the test case of the new model of international election observation. In the May-June 1997 election, a group of 24 Western donors (known as Donors for Development and Democracy) met and formed an Election Observation Center. Despite the Center's presence, the ruling KANU returned the incumbent president back to office. It matters little if the "model" was applied elsewhere, since the same familiar outcomes remain. The problem of the short-term nature of observation led to the recommendation that resident diplomats conduct long-term observation. Chances are however, that resident diplomats would become passive in the face of the human rights violations by the governments in power, or even worse, supportive of the regimes.

In sum, one would conclude that due to the imperfect packaging and delivery, multiparty democracy is becoming increasingly unsaleable. The level of apathy is powerful enough to question the motives behind a very restricted aspect of democracy, multiparty election and its observation. Undermined are the cultural and economic, historical, and political underpinnings of a particular slant of the global project coming from a single direction.

The book under review provides readers with ample opportunity to examine the most recent experiment on Africa, its limitations, and prospects. It is rich in offering critical appraisal so wantingly missing in democratization and elections observation literature in Africa. However, it still leaves the readers desirous of alternatives other than multiparty politics, save a single chapter on Uganda, whose recent referendum resulted in a win for a no-party system. Additionally, the work would have benefited much had African scholars had an opportunity to voice their own perspectives in the volume. It seems that the book was written by western Africanists for Africanist discourse and policymaking rather than providing a forum for a multidirectional flow of ideas.

The book is a rich source for critical appraisal of election observation in Africa. It is important to state however, that Africans need to be involved in these processes. Furthermore, although election observation was widely conducted in the 1990s, it bore inconsequential results far too frequently. The only consolation is that things might have been worse had there been no observers at all.

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Notes

1. Bayart presented a unique perspective of this. See Bayart, Jean-François. *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*. London and New York: Longman, 1993.
2. Hyden, Goran. "The Anomaly of the African Peasantry." *Development and Change* 17 (1986): 677-705.
3. Mamdani, Mahmood. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.
4. See Seyoum Hameso. *Development, State and Society: Theories and Practice in Africa* (forthcoming).

5. Gurr, Ted R. *Why Men Rebel?* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.
6. Shaw, Timothy. "Ethnicity as the Resilient Paradigm for Africa: From the 1960s to the 1980s." *Development and Change* 17 (1986): 587-605.
7. Hameso, Seyhoum. *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Africa*. New York: Nova Science Publishers, 1997.

The State against the Peasantry: Rural Struggles in Colonial and Postcolonial Mozambique.
Merle L. Bowen. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press. Pp. 320.

The coming to power of Frelimo in 1975 was facilitated by the Mozambican peasantry due to the fact that Frelimo was actively supported by the rural peasants. Along with ZANU in Zimbabwe, Frelimo was one of the few liberation organisations sustained and supported by China to achieve state power, in part due to the adoption of avowedly Maoist tactics. Indeed, Mozambique's population was almost all peasant and rural and the economic base of the country was agriculture. Yet, having achieved political power at the state level, Frelimo degenerated "from a popular and victorious liberation movement into a bureaucratic, anti-peasant, one-party state (p. 1)." At the same time, Frelimo gave priority to industrialisation, common to many African countries at the time, with agriculture reduced to supplying exports for earning foreign exchange and raw materials for domestic industry. As it turned out, the policies adopted by Frelimo were as unfavourable to Mozambique's peasantry as those of the Portuguese. Bowen demonstrates that this has not been an aberration arising after the wholesale adoption of neo-liberal solutions to Mozambique's developmental impasse, but rather, it was already in place during Frelimo's socialist vanguard era. They have continued under World Bank strictures and directives, but essentially spring from a shared set of negative policies towards the peasantry. Bowen's work seeks to provide a new look at the effect these policies have had on the peasantry and agricultural production.

Bowen focuses on the colonial period between 1950 and 1975. It is from this point that she then looks at the socialist collectivization experiment. In contrast to those who have blamed Mozambique's calamitous post-independence decline on apartheid South Africa's destabilization attempts and the vicious civil war with South African supported contras (i.e. Renamo), Bowen argues that Mozambique's decline in production is rooted in policies established during colonialism and continued by Frelimo. She takes issue also with those who argued that the main reason for the major fall in agricultural production was the disturbance of settlement patterns and the denigration of traditional practices by the "modernizing" Frelimo cadres sent out into the rural areas. Bowen rightly, I believe, argues that such attempts by Frelimo were progressive and provided, invariably for the first time ever, precious health and education facilities, as well as potable water, to nearly one and a half thousand communal villages. In addition, Bowen is right to point out that much of "traditional authority" derived its position from the colonial period and with ties to the authoritarian colonial regime. Their demise should not be overly lamented.

Frelimo's problem, Bowen asserts, was that it thought it could change the peasantry through collective production, the setting up of co-operatives and urbanisation through establishing communal villages. The opposition to a fraction of "middle class" agricultural producers was rooted in a hostility by Frelimo, shared by the Portuguese colonialists, to an emergent middle class that may develop economic and political independence and resist the state. Whilst it did dismantle oppressive rural structures, Frelimo's ambition to clear away what they regarded as an antiquated way of living and production was doomed, particularly as there was no debate with affected persons on how this could be achieved and whether, indeed, change was even desired. To argue her case, Bowen uses data collected from in-depth fieldwork carried out in the Ilha de Josina Machel for two years, which is a rural area where the Incomati and Matseculi rivers merge in Manhica district, Maputo Province.

The strength of Bowen's book is in the assertion of the continuation of the colonial period and Frelimo's rule -- both the Portuguese and the post-independence authorities set up co-operatives. She also shows how individuals and family groups accommodated both colonialist and socialist policies to form survival strategies. Simply put, Frelimo (and the colonialists) did not curtail options outside of the official policies: agency remained and indeed stimulated a relative degree of manoeuvrability, with the co-operative ventures being utilised to the peasants' own benefit. This of course was severely diminished as the war intensified in the rural areas.

The book is an intriguing story of the development (and decline) of peasant-based agriculture in southern Mozambique from the 1950s until the mid-1980s. The study broadens its focus to illustrate how the micro-region was brought into the South African mining industry and how peasants interacted with the Portuguese settler farms. The focus on southern Mozambique does lead to perhaps an over-emphasis on the effect of this integration, with Bowen arguing Portuguese Mozambique was integrated into a regional southern African economy and that this was necessarily under South African hegemony. Mozambique's economy was hence structured mainly in the interests of South African capital. Whilst this is true to a degree, it is far more so for the southern part of the country, namely Maputo, Gaza and Inhambane provinces, than it is for the central and northern parts of Mozambique. This aside, the study is an excellent example of in-depth fieldwork and critical empirical analysis. The book is recommended for researchers interested in the history of southern Mozambique, agriculture in southern Africa, and of the role of the peasantry in African economic life.

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Political Discourses in African Thought: 1860 to the Present. Pieter Boele van Hensbroek, Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1999. Pp238.

Political Discourses in African Thought is one of the great works in contemporary African studies. Inspired by Ayo Langsley's *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa*, the study

makes “a critical inventory of African political thought at the close of the twentieth century” in order to show the tools available “for attacking urgent present-day issues” (pp.1-3)¹. As African states struggle to reconfigure their polities along democratic paths, Hensbroek asserts, “the great challenge of democratic theorizing is to contextualize democratic arrangements by shaping them to suit historical situations and cultural resources at the individual and collective level (p.189).” This challenge necessitates the ensuing dissection of key models of political thought found in African discourse (p.1).

Four things in particular makes Hensbroek’s book brilliant. First, its novel view of the ideas of African thought aims to reclaim their proper place in history. Over the years, African thought is generally perceived as either influenced by Marx, Locke, or other Western thinkers. Consequently, the legacies of individual Africans’ theoretical thought are often dismissed as incoherent “traditional” African ideologies. Hensbroek contends that the study of African political thought should rather deal with these “discourses in their specific historical situations (p.19).” The study asserts the original heritage of these discourses is “intimately connected to the political history of Africa itself, rather than a reproduction of Western thought as is often alleged (p.144).”

Second, its call for a methodology “that involves a more empirical attitude towards African political thought than is common” is significant (p.17). This highlights an interesting historiography lesson in its critical hermeneutic analysis of the various exemplars in African thought in their specific historical time contexts. Hensbroek’s meticulous and sophisticated style of analysis opens the eyes of the reader to the problem of anachronism in African studies. Anachronism, the judgment of historical authors with new problems and concepts that were not obtained during their eras, precludes the “understanding of historical authors within their own frame of mind and within their own historical context. The historian, in such cases enters the field with a prior substantial theory of history (p.13).” Through a combination of textual and social analysis, Hensbroek convinces the reader of the need for “a hermeneutic approach, a positive historiographic program that finds out from the historical authors themselves what are relevant problems, agendas, and concepts to understand their work.” In fact, ignoring the African roots of Horton’s discourse is a consequence of the preoccupation with European intellectual history rather than with the particular West African condition in his time. “Texts are only comprehended when we understand the meaning of the words, ideas, and acts involved. Hermeneutics precede explanation (p.39; 54).”

The book also challenges the common perception of the colonial African political elite as a “westernized” group of individuals alienated from their cultures. The “alienation school of thought” is mostly evident in the works of Basil Davidson’s *The Black Man’s Burden*, David Chanaiwa’s “Colonial Education in Southern Africa,” E. A. Ayandele’s *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria*, and James Coleman’s *Nigerian Background to Nationalism*, to mention but a few.² Hensbroek refutes the notion of alienation as a myth founded assumptions. The view of non-Europeans sharing similar values as Europeans and as imitators of European standards is seriously challenged (p.39). Therefore the perception of Africanus Horton, for instance, “as being alienated from African realities, a ‘Black Englishman,’ and as ideologist of the educated elite, share the serious flaw that they do not derive their interpretation from the texts and the specific historical circumstances. Rather they develop conjectures about lines of influence, or

advance interest theories, and then ascribe ideas to 'sources' or to 'interests.' However sophisticated the historians' ideas and theories may be (which they are often not), the objects that they have to explain, that is, the texts themselves, have to be grasped first (p.39)."

Finally, the study attempts to establish common links between the various "exemplars" from 1860 to the present. As in Newton's scientific terminology, for Hensbroek too, an exemplar represents "the paradigmatic examples of good scientific work (p.19)." This approach closely links intellectuals that were century apart in time. For instance, while Kanduza Chisiza in the 1960s, echoes Horton in the 1860s, while George Ayittey in the 1990s sounds like a student of John Sarbah of 1900. Similarly, Leopold Senghor and Edward Blyden share an ideological proximity (pp.145-146). This view further buttresses the flaw in the alienation thesis. If Horton of 1860s was considered an "alienated Black Englishman", what makes Ayittey or Mahmood Mamdani in the 1990s less alienated or westernized?

Political Discourses further reveals the intricate weaknesses in the thoughts of the various exemplars. For example, Fanon's mythical concept of a pre-given "nation" ("the people or the oppressed") that was subsequently alienated under colonial domination is questioned as both historically and theoretically erroneous. The error stems from the perception of the "rich and diverse heritages of peoples, life forms, religions, and cultures" as a single entity (p.122).

What are the results of Hensbroek's inventory? It identifies three basic models of African political thought, each underlining "a basic aspect of society: the modernization model focuses on the economical-technological, the identity model on the cultural, and the liberation model on the social (p.199)." Viewed from a broad historical perspective, these strains, replicated in the contemporary democracy discourses, have largely "dominated African political thought over the last 150 years (177)." As socialism and development discourses formed the main concern for intellectuals in Africa until the 1980s, so do today's mainstream liberal democracy discourse on democracy (civil society, a reorientation towards indigenous political forms, and the question of the nation state), resound the same concerns (p.177).

Hensbroek reveals a few problems in the construction of political discourses in Africa, which need improvement to further the cause of Africa's democratic renaissance (p.198). One is the notion of "modernity" as claimed by the West, which tends to block "a host of interesting and pertinent questions of democratic thought for Africa (p.198)." If "modernity" is used in the plural, as "modernities," "then the issue arises of different variants of democratic polity that are congruent upon the historical and cultural context (p.197)." The second deficiency is inherent in such bipolar codifications as "We" and "They" or "Africa" and the "West" (p.199). Such bipolarity leads to "simplification of our thinking, thereby closing up other options to managing "a multitude of differences and resemblances, problems and options (p.199)." The implication for democratization in Africa is that it leads to the peculiar view that "basically" one major issue should be resolved for democracy to work (pp.199-200). Therefore a shift from the bipolar models of thought will make room for a more relevant and original contribution to the discussion on democracy in Africa (p.201).

Although Hensbroek challenges the notion of "alienation" and calls for a grounded understanding of the Texts, he fails to move away from the one-sided accounts of intellectual traditions of African intelligentsia in terms of the influence of Western culture through colonial institutions – particularly the church, school and ideology. The fact remains that the ideas of

these thinkers and their impact on the society cannot be fully understood without looking closely at their lived experiences in families, kinship, gender roles, relationship to traditional authorities and social lives as experienced in their various communities. This approach remains a challenge that must be tackled for a more balanced understanding of these individuals. Notwithstanding, any serious reader cannot ignore this book.

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Notes

1. Langsley, Ayo J. *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa: A Case Study in Ideology and Social Classes*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973.
2. See Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of Nation-State* (New York: Times Book, 1992); David Chanaiwa's "Colonial Education in Southern Africa," in A Mugomba and M. Nyagah (eds.), *Independence without Freedom: The Political Economy of Colonial Education in Southern Africa* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1980); E. A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis* (London: Longman, 1966); and James Coleman, *Nigerian Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1958).

Africa's Thirty Years' War: Libya, Chad and the Sudan 1963-1993. J. Millard Burr and Robert O. Collins. Boulder: Westview Press, 1999. Pp. 300.

Chad was part of the former French Equatorial Africa. Its population was divided between black Africans, either Christian or traditionalist in religion in the south, and northerners, largely Muslim and either Arab or one of the ethnic groups which, while not Arab, accepted Islam.

This war has received comparatively little attention. Indeed, the only book this reviewer can recall seeing is *Conflict in Chad* (1981) by Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff. Authors Burr and Collins have used a great variety of sources including newspapers, Congressional reports, material in the various French and English language journals dealing with Africa, and diplomatic documents where available.

Chad, named from the lake of that name, had been part of the French imperium since the scramble for Africa in the 19th century. Libya had, for about a generation, been part of the Italian empire while the Sudan had been under joint Egyptian and British administration for about 50 years.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) had taken the position that the boundaries of Africa, inherited from the colonial period, should be accepted on general principles since the majority of the new countries of Africa had ethnic groups divided by national borders. The problem with Chad was that in 1935, in order to appease Mussolini, a French diplomat had

signed an agreement with the Italians to cede a strip of territory on the northern boundary of Chad abutting the border of Libya. Named the Aozou Strip, it was essentially 45,000 square miles of sand with a fringe of mountains. This frontier the authors describe as "not only one of the most remote regions of the earth but one of the most worthless (p.15)." Geological formations, akin to those in Niger, immediately to the west, did suggest that it might contain uranium. France bought its uranium from Niger and of course Colonel Qaddafi wanted the rare mineral since it could make Libya an atomic power. The ownership of this barren strip of land was at the heart of the thirty years war.

The agreement with Mussolini relinquishing this portion of Chad had never been ratified by the French government. Further, Libya disagreed as to where the southern boundary of the strip should be, placing it to the south of the accepted line. (See the boundary as shown in the 1977 Libyan National Atlas as reproduced on p.XIX in this volume.)

The leadership of each of the three countries played decisive roles in the shifting fortunes of the military participants. Libya, after her oil revenues made her a good customer, found it useful to buy military hardware from the Soviet Union. With tanks by the hundred and military vehicles by the thousands, came Soviet military advisors. Soviet fighter planes came as well, until the Libyan military was larger than that of France. Unfortunately for Libya, money cannot buy skilled leadership and Qaddafi's senior officers often proved no match for Chad's leadership in the field, whose training at advanced schools in France combined with their knowledge of the terrain and the skills of traditional nomadic warfare gave them an important advantage.

Chad had the advantage of being a member of the community of French speaking African states. Under President Charles de Gaulle the French military actively supported their African clients, but once "le grand Charles" left the political scene, Chad was often nearly ignored. In part this neglect was a consequence of French dependence on Libyan oil; in part French disgust with the corruption of Chad's leaders. Chad did frequently call on France for aid during the war; normally, at least some French forces stationed in the country. The United States also helped the Chad government, but discretely because of French sensitivity.

The Republic of the Sudan was involved because refugees from famine, drought, or the fighting in the Sahel fled from time to time to Darfur Province of the Sudan. Libya discreetly sent forces into that area to recruit men for their military and to provide arms for guerilla forces ready to fight the Chad central government. Far from Khartoum, Darfur was the land of the Fur who tended to despise the Riverine Arabs who dominated the government at Khartoum, a feeling that was reciprocated in the capital.

Between periods of warfare, diplomats from the three countries met, either at one capital or another, or at meetings of the OAU. Protestations of a desire for peace by diplomatic representatives on these occasions seldom lasted more than days.

Chad's problem initially was the consequence of a politically inept chief executive, President Ngartha (Francois) Tombalbaye. Representing the African-sometimes-Christian portion of Chad, he failed to include representatives of the Muslim (Arab or otherwise) population in his government. Most of this Muslim population was nomadic or lived in small villages in the Sahel in the northern half of the country. By tradition, they were very independent, owing allegiance to their chiefs and raiding their traditional enemies was

common. President Tombalbaye clearly intended to suppress their independence by force. In practice, neither the government at N'Djamena or Qaddafi in Tripoli found them easy to deal with, though various leaders from the area became agents of Libya, although they frequently deserted to the central government of Chad. After the fall of Tombalbaye--assassinated in 1975 by forces commanded by the army's chief of staff--the former commander of the armed forces, General Feliz Malloum, was released from prison and became the new president.

Over the years various new figures appeared commanding some group of forces from the north, sometimes with assistance from Libya, sometimes with stolen supplies from one side or the other. One of these was Hissene Habre of the Dazan Toubou people, a man educated in various French schools. While his training had not been in military tactics, he proved a daring and formidable leader of the northerners. Over the years Habre sometimes held positions in the central government, but his strength was among his fellow northerners whom he organized in an army named the FAN (Forces Armees du Nord). An amusing side-light is that while Qaddafi had conventional tanks and vehicles, courtesy of the USSR, Habre's forces had substituted Toyoto light trucks for camels, striking quickly with their machine guns and light artillery and dispersing to various depressions or valleys, just as they had in their days of raiding their tribal enemies on camel back. Frequently they took large numbers of Libyan prisoners and incredible quantities of equipage. In time, Habre became president of Chad, though he was ultimately replaced by another northerner, of the Zaghawa people, Idris Deby. Finding himself isolated, Habre fled to Nigeria. Virtually all the leaders of Chad had a wretched record on Human Rights; Habre's had been among the worst, which accounts for the tepid support he received from the French, in spite of his brilliant military successes. One legacy of the war was the million land mines scattered across the Sahel.

In the end, even Qaddafi tired of his preoccupation with the Aozou strip, but not before he had wasted fifteen billion in oil money on military supplies. While Qaddafi had supported Idris Bey, the latter made it clear that he had not bartered away territory for support (p.278). Habre had earlier taken the issue of ownership of the Aozou Strip to the International Court at The Hague.

In February 1994 the International Court of Justice ruled 16 to 1 that the Aozou Strip belonged to Chad and that all the military and political officials from Libya should be withdrawn by 31 May 1994 (p.278). Libya complied with the ruling.

A weakness of the volume is the lack of detailed maps. Frequently there are references to villages or towns which do not appear on maps, or the spelling in the text does not agree with that on the maps. This is particularly surprising, since J. Millard Burr was a geographical expert with the US State Department. Additionally, the intermittent warfare and diplomatic posturing between three countries, such as we have here, might be approached as from an international relations perspective. Instead, the authors-wisely I feel-approach the subject matter as a straight narrative history. As such, it is an excellent presentation and is recommended for college level work in international relations and contemporary African history.

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Disciplining Democracy: Development Discourse and Good Governance in Africa. Rita Abrahamsen. London: Zed Books, 2000. Pp. 168.

Several works have been published on systems of government and development models to be adopted by states. Taking a refreshingly different approach, however, Abrahamsen primarily seeks to reflect and comment "on contemporary development discourse and practice, not a detailed account of transitions to democracies in African countries (p. x)."

Divided into seven chapters, the book first emphasizes causes influencing democratization, which she sees as an interplay of internal and external factors (pp. 8-11). Abrahamsen posits that development discourse produces "a form of knowledge about the third world that has facilitated and legitimized certain forms of administration and intervention (p. 22)." This discourse emphasizes the backwardness of third world states and seeks to justify intervention and assistance as necessary in order for them to become as developed as the West. The author suggests that the South maintains power through development discourse (pp. 14-15; 22-23).

Previous development models, Chapter 2 argues, focused on problems of development without respect to the system of government (even authoritarianism) in place. Democracy has become the most desirable form of government, in conventional wisdom. It is, therefore, a necessary component of sustainable development (p. 25). For Abrahamsen, the new development discourse and world order are means of undermining the governments and peoples of the south.

Chapter 3 explores the good governance discourse and its claim that capitalism is an inherent part of African traditional values (p. 49). This discourse seeks to restrict state control of resources, leaving economic investments to private entrepreneurs. This encourages civil society participation without actually defining "civil society" (pp. 47-53), even though civil society may be undemocratic (p. 54). She continues that the cost recovery effort that the good governance agenda valorises places a bigger burden on the local populace (pp. 58-59).

In the fourth chapter, Abrahamsen gives a critical assessment of democracy as electoral procedure (p. 70) and democracy in purely descriptive terms. For Abrahamsen, democracy is also prescriptive and must seek to promote political and economic equality, for without this, "democracy is likely to become a vehicle for the maintenance of elite dominance (p. 76)." However, Abrahamsen should also address democracy as a value concept.

Tracing the relationship between Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and democratisation, Chapter 5 explains that democratisation processes in the South did not come from the economic prosperity of SAP. Instead, it developed from the economic woes of states and the concomitant negative effects on the populace. This led to strife in the state and a call for democracy (pp. 97-98). She notes "bread-and-butter issues were at the very heart of the wave of protest that swept the African continent in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Gradually, economic demands came to be linked to more explicitly political demands for constitutional change... (p. 98)."

The author explores the dilemma of African states that are "caught between a rock and a hard place (p. 121)" in Chapter 6. She concludes that economic liberalization creates problem for the majority - who democracy seeks to serve. Leaders therefore are confused about whether to

satisfy external donors or to satisfy the aspirations of its people for both are irreconcilable constituencies.

Demands of economic liberalization by donor institutions have eroded democratic standards because they bring poverty to the people through SAP. SAP denies the masses benefits from the government, thereby threatening "the consolidation of democracy by exacerbating social conflict and differentiation, while at the same time undermining the state's capacity to respond to domestic demands (p. 136)."

In the last chapter (7), Abrahamsen criticises the hierarchical differentiation between North and South as a negation of "some neutral or accurate transcription of reality (p. 139)," noting that the good governance discourse promotes procedural or minimalist conceptions of democracy (p. 140). This produces "democracies that are exclusionary" because the poor cannot be included in any meaningful way because external power and influence is "extraordinarily high (p. 145)."

While advocating democracy at the domestic level, the good governance discourse leaves the international terrain unscratched, causing Abrahamsen to conclude that "one of the main effects of the good governance discourse, despite all its proclamations in favour of democracy, is to help reproduce and maintain a world order that is essentially undemocratic (p. 147)."

Though beautifully schemed in a plot-like write-up in which the central ideas unfold as the reader explores the work, there appears to be an assumption by the author that the public is familiar with the term "development discourse." In other words, there is no conscious effort made at defining its meaning.

Reading the book, one gets the impression that the economic woes of the South are the fault of the North. What, we wonder, has the South done to improve its lot? Though touching on the theme of corruption, Abrahamsen might also address issues of internal indiscipline, which are problems for all developing states.

These criticisms notwithstanding, Abrahamsen's work is particularly interesting for her incisive decoding of the operations of the West (especially through the Bretton Wood institutions) in the South, which aim to continue to dominate it through its under-development. The book is also a welcome addition to the volume of literature on democracy and development in Africa.

Muyizwa Falaiye and Eric Usifoh
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Trade Unions and Democratization in South Africa, 1985-1997. Glen Adler & Eddie Webster (eds.). New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. Pp. 238.

The South African transition and the South African labor movement are inextricably linked. This book leaves no doubt that the defiance of organized labor was the most reliable autonomous powerhouse in the anti-apartheid struggles of the 1980s. The book provides proof that labor militancy continues to fuel the social imagination of intellectuals now as in the 1980s.

Eddie Webster and Glen Adler describe the objective of the study in the following sentence: "The chapters in this volume examine labour's role in democratization and assess whether it can continue to exert such influence in the future." This objective is pursued in different ways. For example, Sakhela Buhlungu contributes a study on participatory management strategies at specific work places in the wood and paper industry. Buhlungu carefully compares examples the successes and failures of specific shop floor attempts to influence the work process and relates their impact on the union's ability to include shop floor voices and upgrade skills. From his careful micro-analysis he concludes that "unions must ensure that principles of democratic decision making and worker control...are maintained." Buhlungu's study is an extension of the very "lessons of struggle" tradition among progressive South African academics, as is Karl von Holdt's convincing piece on Steelco. Adherents to this tradition regard themselves as primarily conceptualizers of historical experience, rather than conceptualizers of analytical tools.

The post-modern tradition is also applied in some of these studies. The topics covered here are much more generic than the others making this a weakness of the book. Ian Macun's analysis of major historical trends convincingly argues that unions gradually moved into the political field when they were sufficiently strong. However, the preconceived notion of union autonomy makes Macun blind to the swings of working class mobilization from the community and back into the work place. Macun asserts that there is no correlation between significant political moments and union membership, which is not true. I find it appropriate to speak of four waves - 1979-1980, 1983-1985, 1989 and 1994 - where working class activism was mainly residential. These four peaks of community action happen to coincide with low or negative growth in union density in Macun's table on page 63. While the efforts were inspired by workplace activism, they also reinforced unionization, but only when they had peaked. A micro-study would have revealed such a correlation, eg. that the community mobilizations in Cape Town of 1979-1980 led to a much increased union membership but only by 1981.

The breakthrough of the UDF, the Defiance Campaign, and the first democratic elections were all moments when many union activists focused on the community struggles. Thus, these activists could only later reap the organizing benefits of these struggles at the workplace. Macun's uni-lateral assertion of the uniqueness of the workplace experience thus counters the strong 1980s tradition of regarding both community and workplace as interacting habitats for workers. I doubt Macun's assertion would have been possible if more women - at least one - had been part of the team behind the book. It seems to be very male perspective to see the workplace as the absolute fulcrum of struggle, thereby down-playing the role of the reproductive sphere.

Another problem with the book is that the editors treat chapters as independent articles. This makes the openings of most chapters a bit boring and repetitive, since all the contributors inform the reader that the unions and South Africa are undergoing transformation. However, this is a minor problem, since the book contains many interesting discussions. For instance, the role of unions - particularly the largest national structure COSATU-in the tripartite alliance with the ANC and the Communist Party-is a particularly interesting topic for those who want to predict the political future. It is very hard to conceive how that alliance could last another decade, since the ANC has assumed an increasingly middle class and pro-business identity. While everyone waits for the foreign investors to turn up, the daring individuals and collective

initiatives which brought about democracy are withering. P.G. Eidelberg's chapter on the problem asks all the right questions and gives many useful hints. His historical analyses though, are underpinned by the understanding that ideology is the most constant element in the histories of the allies. He thus overlooks how swiftly people can change faith if their opportunities change. Thus, I do not accept his assertion that nationalizing banking and mining monopolies was not a fully integrated part of the ANC's nationalism in the 1980s. His messy relationship to the chronology of the 1980s suggests that the analysis suffers from exaggerated hindsight.

The two last chapters of the anthology deal with the integration of the unions into the socio-economic policies of the post-apartheid state. They are both illuminating and informative. While the topics are almost identical, the approaches differ. Götz uses post-modern analysis to understand policy integration as a text, while Friedman and Shaw present a tour de force account of policy integration as an outcome of a changing power equation.

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Green Land, Brown Land, Black Land: An Environmental History of Africa 1800-1900. James C. McCann. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1999. Pp. 224.

The field of environmental history is inspiring some of the most exciting and creative recent research on Africa. James McCann's book offers a solid overview of this rich intersection of disciplines for the entire continent by stitching together various monographs set in southern, western and eastern Africa. In many ways, this text is a testament to the embryonic state of environmental history in Africa. Although full of promising leads for research, a wide number of topics and regions are left untouched. Despite this caveat, this work serves well as an introduction particularly for undergraduates to ecological issues in African history.

In his very succinct introduction, the author declares he wishes to examine the interaction between the physical world of plants and animals with people. Recognizing the importance of local settings for his subject, the book is designed to "illustrate rather than chronicle Africa's environmental history (p. 5)." He also seeks to challenge overarching narratives of decline and overuse of resources, which are popular in development work on ecological issues. Chapter 2 is an ambitious overview of major themes in pre-colonial African history with an eye towards the mutual interaction between natural settings and human action. Using John Iliffe's survey history *The Africans* as a starting point, McCann denotes the role of rainfall patterns and food crops in shaping historical events.

Chapter 3 explores environmental factors in the development of states in the Sahel, in the Ethiopian highlands and at Great Zimbabwe. Drawing from the work of George Brooks and James Webb, this section explores changing wet and dry phases in rainfall and their role in inhibiting or aiding military expansion and shaping migration paths. The author's knowledge of Ethiopia is particularly useful in exploring environmental and agricultural history in Aksum.

Moving to 20th century developments in chapter 4, the work reprises James Fairhead and Melissa Leach's deconstruction of various European models of desertification in East and West Africa. Popular images of environmental decline in the European and American press are based on erroneous and simplistic notions of ecological changes that blame Africans for overusing scarce resources. The shifting boundaries between savanna and forest areas depend on careful local management and changing climatic conditions rather than continual destruction of woodlands. Similar colonial misreadings of environmental processes took place in eastern Kenya. Clichés of overgrazing and carelessness give way to the central point that local conditions often create developments, such as increased plant cover from more intensive use of livestock and farming, that are counter-intuitive to popular discussion of environmental issues.

The historical context of European misconceptions of African environments is a central topic of the final three chapters. McCann's expertise comes to the fore in chapter five's discussion of deforestation narratives in 19th and 20th century Ethiopia. He begins by giving a genealogy of Albert Gore's recent claim that Ethiopia has declined dramatically since 1950. Like so many other statements on African ecology, Gore's view is based on suspect and poorly supported general claims on forest cover in the past. Through repetition, such statements become the basis for numerous Western attitudes towards African ecological issues. By showing how Ethiopians in the central and eastern highlands carefully controlled forest size, McCann suggests deforestation narratives often came from exaggerated notions of past flora. As in other parts of the continent, local forest growth and decline do not "offer a smooth, linear tale (p. 103)."

Moving to Ghana in chapter 6, McCann discusses food production in the southern part of the country. Drawing from biological research as well as social history, McCann notes how fallow agriculture radically altered the forest landscape and increased biodiversity without leading to rapid deforestation. The development of cocoa production also transformed human landscapes, as did European attempts to create forest reserves. The widespread expansion of maize agriculture, fostered by Green Revolution techniques after cocoa's decline in the mid-twentieth century threatens to destroy forests in much greater amounts than previous fallow farming systems.

Chapter 7 begins with another seemingly clear-cut argument on environmental degradation in Lesotho. Colonial officials saw large gullies that appeared suddenly and quickly grew in size as the cause of poor African land management. In a summary of soil scientist Kate Showers' research, McCann contends the real cause lay with badly conceived colonial anti-erosion policies, new attitudes towards agriculture introduced by European missionaries and the rise and fall of late nineteenth century grain farming. Much as officials envisioned solving public health problems with technical "magic bullets," British administrations considered the problem of erosion without taking into account the larger social and economic context of the region.

All in all, this is a fine introduction to recent work on environmental history in Africa. The author's brevity in discussions makes the general arguments very easy to follow. Despite its utility, several minor problems exist particularly in regard to its scope. African understandings of environmental change and historical narratives, examined by Tamara Giles-Vernick among others, are not well represented in this work. The rich amount of work done on environmental

history of Tanzania is neglected as is any reference to Central Africa. Rather than harp on these points, this reviewer looks forward to a second edition that can incorporate new scholarship several years in the future.

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When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda.
Mahmood Mamdani. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001. Pp. 357.

On April 6, 1994, members of the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) shot down the plane of Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana. Later that day, the RPF assassinated the Hutu prime minister of Rwanda, Agathe Uwilingiyimana. In the following four months, the notoriously brutal genocide of the resident Tutsi population and suspected Hutu collaborators enveloped the nation. Though the estimates of the number of those killed in the violence range anywhere from 500,000 to 1.3 million,¹ it is undeniable that the Rwandan genocide of 1994 marks the single most pervasive and atrocious massacre of the post-Cold War era. What is even more disturbing is the fact that as thousands upon thousands of Rwandan Tutsis were systematically exterminated, the rest of the world simply watched on their television sets from the outside, unwilling to aid in the cessation of such an immense tragedy.

It is this significant and tragic event of recent African history that Mahmood Mamdani seeks to explain in his nuanced and groundbreaking book *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (2001). Unlike most contemporary scholars focusing on the Rwandan genocide, Mamdani attempts to give his readers an understanding of all of the historical reasons underlying the massacre, rather than narrowly interpreting the particularities of 1994 in isolation. His holistic approach to explaining the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda makes Mamdani's *When Victims Become Killers* a must read for anyone interested in knowing how such an enormous calamity could occur in modern Africa.

Mamdani, unlike most of his contemporaries, begins his explanation of the evolution of Hutu-Tutsi enmity (which would eventually culminate in the genocide) by examining the origins of the Hutu and Tutsi ethnicities in Rwanda dating back to the thirteenth century. He notes that the Tutsi population (about 15% of present-day Rwanda) migrated into Rwanda from the Kenyan and Tanzanian grasslands of the north and progressively overtook the resident Hutu population (about 85% of present-day Rwanda), transforming local Tutsi-dominated clans into chiefdoms around the fifteenth century.² Over time, the divisions between the Hutus and Tutsis grew both socially and economically through the nineteenth century, with the Hutu agriculturalist population gradually becoming more and more subservient to their pastoralist Tutsi superiors. Thus, contrary to popular belief, Mamdani points out that internal social and economic divisions in Rwandan society were indeed present upon the arrival of the Belgian colonialists.³

Upon their arrival, Mamdani shows how the Belgians subsequently created the notorious Hamitic hypothesis to justify the minority Tutsi rule over the majority Hutu population. Unable to accept the fact that a distinctly African race could be capable of such military and political sophistication, the Belgians systematically ingrained the idea that the Tutsis were the cursed “Caucasian” descendants of Ham (son of Noah), unlike the distinctly African Hutu. Thus, Mamdani claims, the tensions between the Hutus and Tutsis were magnified as the Belgian colonial rulers institutionalized Tutsi superiority in the colonial system by giving Tutsis preference in the public and educational sectors, primarily between 1927 and 1936.⁴

After his analysis of the impact of Belgian colonial rule on Hutu-Tutsi relations, Mamdani delves into the numerous contingencies leading up to the tragedy of 1994. He begins with the all-important 1959 Social Revolution, in which the maligned Hutu elite, led by Grégoire Kayibanda, proposed a concrete segregation of the Hutu and Tutsi population upon independence from Belgian colonial rule. Although Kayibanda would ultimately be forced (by international pressure) to rule under a coalition of both Hutus and Tutsis in 1962, Mamdani contends that this separationist paradigm marked the beginning of an intellectual construct that would evolve into the genocidal ethos of 1994.⁵

After a decade of relatively peaceful rule, however, Kayibanda’s coalition began to fall apart as disgruntled Hutus claimed that he was reverting the Rwandan polity to its Tutsi-dominated past under Belgian colonial rule. Thus, Mamdani points out, General Juvénal Habyarimana (a Hutu) assumed power in a military coup in 1973 to prevent the widespread social chaos that was emerging between the resident Hutus and Tutsis.⁶ As Rwanda prospered during the 1970’s and 1980’s (due to high world coffee and metal prices), Mamdani cites that relations between resident Hutus and Tutsis subsequently were mitigated.⁷ However, at the turn of the 1990’s, Rwanda would enter a period of economic crisis in which their currency would be devalued 67 percent and their gross GDP would fall 15 percent as a result of falling world metal and coffee prices.⁸ These factors, Mamdani maintains in his book, paved the way for the Tutsi Rwandan Political Front’s (RPF) invasion of 1993 and the ensuing Hutu backlash that would claim thousands of innocent Tutsi lives.⁹

The RPF, formed in Uganda by displaced Tutsi elites led by Paul Kagame, would ultimately penetrate Rwanda into its capital in Kigali in 1994 and murder General Habyarimana and his prime minister, Agathe Uwilingiyimana, as a result of the dismal economic situation of Rwanda at the time. The Hutu population (as Mamdani thoroughly explains in his book), terrified of reverting to Tutsi rule after decades of Hutu dominance, would eventually heed the calls of Léon Mugesera and systematically attempt to exterminate all Tutsis in Rwanda in an effort to prevent the RPF from establishing an effective political authority over the resident Hutu population.¹⁰ Thus, Mamdani presents the conclusion of his research: the Hutu population killed out of a fear that had gradually developed from the relationship between the Hutu and Tutsi population in Rwanda since their initial interactions in the thirteenth century.¹¹

To support his innovative conclusions in *When Victims Become Killers*, Mamdani extensively cites numerous historical and contemporary scholars of Rwanda, including Catharine Newbury, René Lemarchand, Gérard Prunier, and Alison des Forges. By combining the copious research of these and many other intellectuals with his own, Mamdani created a book that, unlike any of its kind, holistically encompasses all of the underlying factors of the

1994 Rwandan genocide. *When Victims Become Killers* would be useful to anyone who is interested in not only knowing more about Rwandan history, but also how such a tragedy could be occur in the modern era.

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Notes

1. Sellstom, Tom, and Lennart Wohlgemuth. *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience, Study 1, Historical Perspective: Some Explanatory Factors*. Uppsala, Sweden: Nordic Africa Institute, 1997. p. 32; Taylor, Christopher. *Sacrifice As Terror: The Rwandan Genocide of 1994*. Oxford: Berg Publishing Group, 1999. p. 1.
2. Mamdani, Mahmood. *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and Genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. p. 48-49.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
8. Sellstom and Wohlgemuth, p. 34-36.
9. Mamdani, p. 149.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 231.

Kwame Nkrumah: The Father of African Nationalism. David Birmingham. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1999. Pp. 142.

This is a biographical study of one of the most complex African leaders of the twentieth century colonial era. The book admirably traces the problems Nkrumah faced as a student and aspiring politician. This African leader possessed a multifaceted personality and diverse interests which were reflected his early education in the fields of sociology, education and philosophy.

The various themes of each chapter nicely demonstrate Nkrumah's evolution from student to African hero. The author's writing style allows for an appreciation of the interaction between a young Nkrumah and world leaders during the colonial era.

An interesting aspect of the book is Birmingham's tracing of the radical influences on Nkrumah, including his association with such Pan-Africanists as C.L.R. James and George Padmore. This was evident in Nkrumah's involvement in the organization of the Manchester Conference on Pan-Africanism in 1945. Almost two decades later, in 1963, the spirit of Pan-

Africanism would be present as Nkrumah played an instrumental role in the founding of the Organization of African Unity.

To a considerable extent, the author has achieved his aim of providing an overview of the life of Kwame Nkrumah and the economic and social forces which were at work at the national and international levels. The various sections of each chapter depict an image of an African leader who experienced both adulation and denigration among his people in Ghana.

Whilst the book provides the reader with insight into Nkrumah's life, the author's analysis of Nkrumah's years of political rule is difficult to assess. For instance, in the examination of Nkrumah as a national statesman, Birmingham notes that one of the criticisms of Nkrumah's rule was that he encouraged a 'personality cult.' The author believes "the charge was both fair and unfair (p.81)." Also queried, but never resolved by Birmingham, is the extent to which Nkrumah's rise to power was attributed to his personal ambitions or the impact of world events such as the death of Gandhi and apartheid in South Africa: "... it is hard to judge how far this meteoric ascent was due to his own driving spirit and how far he simply happened to rise on the crest of the wave that was then sweeping the colonial world (p.15)." The work would have been strengthened if the author had taken a stance on these aspects of in Nkrumah's life and rule.

Another shortcoming is that Birmingham has not specifically addressed the problems encountered by Nkrumah in a separate chapter. Issues such as the 'preventive detention' act in 1958 to deal with dissident voices, the Congo crisis of July 1960, and the intervention of the imperial powers in the late 1960s are only discussed in passing in the chapters "National Statesman" and African Ideas."

Apart from these minor flaws, the book is a colorful biography and assists the reader in understanding the tribulations and aspirations of Third World leaders in guiding their countries through the uncertain transition from colonialism to independence. These leaders were burdened by pressure to conform to the demands of a realpolitik which often did not adhere to the realities existing in their countries.

Jerome Teelucksingh

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