

BOOK REVIEWS

The Post-Apartheid Constitutions: Perspectives on South Africa's Basic Law. Penelope Andrews and Stephen Ellmann (eds.). Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2001. 606 pp.

Few constitutions in the world have generated as much interest and controversy as South Africa's Interim and Final Constitutions. While it lasted, apartheid attained worldwide notoriety. Its anticlimactic ending was a momentous 'end of history' that generated global interest. With the end of apartheid, global attention shifted to the process of social engineering that would produce "a new South Africa," a just and equitable society. Thus, the constitution making process and some provisions of the constitutions (such as the inclusion of socio-economic rights in the Bill of Rights) were no less harbingers of controversy. Expectedly, the Interim and Final constitutions, the processes, institutions, and innovative rights enshrined in them have generated extensive scholarly debate and spawned substantial literature.¹ But it would be misleading to think that apartheid alone stimulated and sustained the worldwide scholarly interest in South Africa's constitution. The constitution's groundbreaking Bill of Rights places it highly in the pantheon of superstar constitutions to the extent it is now widely regarded as "the most progressive Constitution in the world."²

In many respects, this book is an important, welcome addition to the growing literature on South African constitutions. As an effort to assemble "a particularly wide and cross-cutting set of views" (p.2), the book indeed offers wide-ranging, distinctive perspectives. By no means the account of "strangers," the book presents the reflections of politicians and academics, participants and keen observers. The authors include leaders of the negotiation process; those actively engaged in implementing the constitutions; and those variously involved with some of the institutions created by the constitutions. Thus, the book is largely the account of individuals whose efforts partly made the constitutions a reality or shaped (and perhaps still shaping) the institutional and normative regimes created by the constitutions.

Systematically divided into three parts, the book is a collection of twenty essays, including the excellent introductory chapter, which sets the tone for the rest of the book and admirably provides a detailed synopsis of the various chapters. The nine essays in the first part explore the constitution making process. It takes the reader through the difficult process of negotiation; highlighting in its stride the grand brinksmanship, horse-trading, and compromise leading to the agreements on the basic tenets of the constitutions. The first section ends with the account of that suspenseful period when the result of the negotiations was tabled for certification by the Constitutional Court with a historic mandate to determine the constitutionality of the constitution.

The book explores some of the very important rights protected by the constitution. The second part (six essays) focuses on some of the key rights, including, the rights to citizenship,

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v7/v7i2-3reviews.pdf>

equality (especially of women), cultural freedom, free speech, and socioeconomic rights as well as the applicability of the Bill of Rights to private (non-state) actors. The essays in this part highlight the emerging challenges to make the hopes and promises of the constitution a sustainable reality. As one of the contributors, Penelope Andrews, underscored (p.348), simply enshrining rights in the Constitution does not automatically guarantee their enjoyment. Effective institutions are necessarily part of the equation.

The need to understand the protective structures designed to safeguard the rights protected by the constitutions is the focus of the third part. The four essays examine some of the important institutions created by the constitutions; namely, the federal features of the final constitution, the role of the constitutional court, of the lower courts and of the police, and the structure and functions of the Human Rights Commission. In addition to the historical overview, the essays provide a reasoned evaluation of these institutions' strengths and weaknesses and possible ways to strengthen them. Karthy Govender's piece (p. 571) on the work of the Human Rights Commission shares the legalistic pedigree of the United Nations-driven dominant conception of an ideal National Human Rights Commission which has a rather limited vision due to its heavy reliance on the formal powers of these commissions. This otherwise excellent analysis could have benefited from an enlarged, more holistic vision based not only on what the commission can do, but also on what can be done with it by civil society groups.³

Consistent with the editors' hopes, the book refreshingly sheds light on "the genesis of the new rights culture" (p. 18) in South Africa. Being the firsthand account of those involved in the process or with the institutions makes it all the more authoritative. It offers scholars and researchers a rare insight into the minds of some of those major players. While the book makes a candid attempt to identify the problems and challenges facing the realization of the "new rights culture," it shies away from taking up the challenge of interrogating the suitability of undue reliance on constitutional rights framework to transform the legacies of apartheid or to realize a just and equitable South Africa. Nor does it interrogate the double-edged nature of entrenched individual rights; to the extent some of these rights may work to preserve the fraudulent status quo of the apartheid legacy.⁴ However, the contributors understand the nature of constitutions as more of a work-in-progress than divine rules etched in stone. The editors rightly expect future interventions to respond to problems or exigencies the framers of the constitutions did not foresee (p.18).

One minor shortcoming of the book (not uncommon with most edited works) is that it is not arranged in numbered chapters. Instead of easy references to chapters, one is saddled with references to pages or titles where chapters would normally suffice. Nonetheless, the book remains a very important addition to the growing literature on South African constitutions. African and international human rights scholars, comparative constitutional law scholars and historians, political scientists, feminists, human rights advocates and researchers, and others interested in and intrigued by efforts to transform this former epitome of inhumanity into a just and equitable society for all its inhabitants, will find the book refreshingly valuable.

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Notes:

1. See, e.g., G. E. Devenish, *A Commentary on the South African Constitution*. Durban: Butterworths, 1998.
2. See Kristine Yigen, "Enforcing Social Justice: Economic and Social Rights in South Africa" *International Journal of Human Rights* 4, no.2, (2000) 13 at p. 21.
3. See generally, Obiora C. Okafor & Shedrack C. Agbakwa, "On Legalism, Popular Agency and 'Voices of Suffering': The Nigerian National Human Rights Commission in Context" *Human Rights Quarterly*, 24, (2002), 662-720 (espousing the adoption of an enlarged, more holistic paradigm in assessing national human rights commissions to enhance their transformative potentials).
4. On this see, Makau wa Mutua, *Human Rights: A Political and Cultural Critique*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002, p. 128-130.

Protestant Churches and the Formation of Political Consciousness in Southern Mozambique (1930-1974). Teresa Cruz E Silva. Basel, Switzerland: P. Schlettwein Publishing, 2001. Pp. 210.

This study presents an analysis of the role of the Swiss mission in the development of nationalism in southern Mozambique. Based on oral as well as written sources, the author interprets the relations between the Swiss Presbyterian mission, the colonial state and colonial subjects between 1930 and 1974. The oral sources consist of more than fifty interviews, including conversations with former missionaries of the Swiss Mission, and individual or group interviews with Mozambicans who went to school at the mission. Furthermore, the author consulted documents in archives in Maputo, Lausanne, and York as well as an impressive range of published works.

Teresa Cruz e Silva describes the founding of the Swiss mission in southern Mozambique by local evangelists. In 1880, seven years after the establishment of a station in Northern Transvaal by missionaries from Switzerland, a convert of Mozambican origin started preaching the gospel in his home area in Southern Mozambique. The fact that the mission was not, as in many other places in Africa, founded by European missionaries, but by local evangelists had important consequences. First, the Swiss mission was from the start strongly grounded in local society, a fact that exacerbated tensions between the mission and Portuguese authorities. Second, it contributed to early elite formation and African initiative in the religious sphere. This, in turn, led to conflicts between Swiss missionaries and local evangelists, as the missionaries feared too much African influence would entail a 'return to paganism'. Yet, the missionaries also saw the advantages of a strong local network and took to developing the training institutes that they deemed necessary to prepare evangelists and church elders for their task.

A major part of the book is devoted to the missionaries' role in education. The author rightly acknowledges the importance of education in a large number of areas. She describes the role of writing in the construction of ethnic identity, the conflicts over language policy between the colonial state and the missionaries and, the role of education in elite formation and political consciousness. The impact of the mission's youth groups, called *mintlawwa*, is especially stressed.

The *mintlawwa* groups fostered 'skills essential to the development of a critical understanding of social reality' (p. xvii). The songs and Biblical parables that were studied in the groups were interpreted as political messages by many of the students.

Many later nationalists acknowledged the role of the mission school and the *mintlawwa* groups in their political formation. As it is stated in one of the biographies of former mission school students: 'The Swiss missionaries had a kind of political and moral power. They taught us a certain number of things that were political...' (p. 160). Also in the biographical chapter on Eduardo Mondlane, the role the Swiss mission played in his life and political career becomes apparent.

The book is not without its flaws. A crucial point is the vagueness of some of the key concepts. It can be surmised that the author uses consciousness in the sense of awareness of Mozambique as a nation. She also seems to assume a relationship between such awareness and political activism against the colonial state. Yet, national consciousness and nationalism are not identical: the fact that some of Cruz's informants fought against colonialism, while others joined the Portuguese army already shows this. It also does not become clear how the consciousness of Mozambique as a nation relates to older forms of consciousness: the author assumes 'consciousness' to be a modern phenomenon. This conceptualisation could have led to an interesting contribution on the debates about modernity in Africa. Yet, the author refrains from discussing her definition of the terms used in the book.

The author emphasises the relations between anti-colonial resistance and the Swiss mission. Although she does not assume a direct relationship between the protestant missionaries and the anti-colonial movements, she stresses the importance of the Swiss mission in the formation of an elite. At times, her interpretation leads her to treat the evidence partially. Thus in the rebellion of 1894-1895 the missionary church was twice set on fire: once by the Tsonga rebels and once by the Portuguese army. Teresa Cruz e Silva gives an explanation for the Portuguese reaction, but does not discuss the Tsonga attack. Was the mission, despite the author's statements that the Tsonga differentiated between the mission and the state, associated with white rule? Another example of such partial interpretation is the explanation given for the fact that girls at the mission were trained 'to be good wives and mothers' (p. 167). This is seen as a concession to Tsonga traditions and not related to the conservatism of some of the Protestant missionaries. As the book seeks to explore the role of the Swiss mission in the development of a political elite that challenged an oppressive state, the Protestant missions are by and large interpreted as a progressive force.

This leads to the final point of this critique. There is a tendency in the book to discuss colonial Mozambique in three blocs: the Protestant churches, the state, and the Mozambican people. Yet, many studies have refined such a division and pointed out the internal tensions within 'the church', 'the state' and 'the people'.

Despite these flaws, the book is certainly worth reading. It gives us a fine example of the relations between Christian missions, literacy and elite formation. Using a wide range of sources, the author has managed to give us an overview of the history of the Swiss missions in Southern Mozambique. This history has led the author to discuss many important themes: the relations between protestant missions and the Portuguese colonial state, between education and

political activism, and between literacy and the construction of ethnic as well as national identity.

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Why Peacekeeping Fails. Dennis C. Jett. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000. 240 pp.

Former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt once described the United Nations as “the sandbox for the Third World.” This humorous image expresses the often petty, often peevish, and nearly always politically self-interested behavior of the member states which make up the United Nations. The continued viability and future role of the United Nations, in light of the global events following September 11, has been hotly debated in recent months, especially as United States-led coalitions are in the process of “nation-building” in both Afghanistan and Iraq without any significant role reserved for the UN. As these peace-building efforts proceed, the UN’s roles as the preeminent international debate forum, neutral mediator, peace enforcer and nation-builder are being seriously challenged. In the past, the most visible and controversial activities undertaken by the UN have been their wide-ranging peacekeeping operations (PKOs). These PKOs have been analyzed in detail, and the future success of such operations presciently predicted, in Jett’s book.

The book was originally written as a doctoral thesis, but the author adds his personal experiences as a foreign service officer in Africa and South America and as an Ambassador to Mozambique, to his in-depth academic research. The result is a coldly logical and cutting critique of the PKOs undertaken by the United Nations. Jett’s thesis is that modern PKOs typically fail because of the UN’s internal structure, the way the member states use the UN and the nature of modern global conflicts. He effectively uses the examples of two recent peacekeeping efforts in Mozambique and Angola to explain the inherent structural ailments within the UN, while also highlighting some unique contextual barriers to effective international peacekeeping. In the process, Jett navigates the reader through thick log-jams of the clumsy acronyms that are so prevalent in the UN, with names such as: MIPONU, UNPREDEP, and UNAVEM III. The book, while only 195 pages, is a slow march, but is extremely well researched and a sagacious and fair appraisal of the subject matter.

The book’s foreword alludes to what Jett sees as one of the deeper philosophical problems of the United Nations. This problem is its unwillingness to assign blame in global conflicts. The UN generally views conflicts through the lenses of materialism, meaning that conflicts are the result of poverty, and therefore not the result of human agency. Jett writes that, “if poverty is the cause of war, political leaders are absolved of the responsibility for starting conflicts or ending them.” As Jett correctly points out, “the more general poverty-causes-war theory is wrong” as it “ignores the issue of who is responsible for starting such conflicts,” which, he goes on to say, are caused by “leaders like Saddam Hussein who are unrestrained by democratic institutions.” It should be immediately obvious why this argument does not resonate among

many of the member states of the UN, a large number of whom are certainly not “restrained by democratic institutions” themselves.

The nature of global conflicts and therefore the nature of PKOs have also changed in recent years, from traditional interstate wars to complicated civil wars. In traditional wars, Jett argues, PKOs are typically more successful because the UN has to simply deploy their blue helmeted soldiers between the warring states. In modern conflicts, however, PKOs have been much less successful and have been asked to expand their roles from traditional peacekeeping to multidimensional peacekeeping efforts involving democracy building and other lofty objectives.

Peacekeeping operations have often been rightly accused of merely being pusillanimous political cover for the Security Council members who are unwilling to fully commit to aggressive action to bring lasting peace. The PKOs on the ground, bound as they often are by weak mandates, cannot enforce their own decrees, pressure individual parties to comply or even avert atrocities. A tragic example of this was the infamous occasion in Srebrenica, Bosnia, in the summer of 1995, where peacekeepers, restrained by a weak mandate, stood helplessly as thousands of civilians were murdered in front of them, in what was supposed to be a “safe haven.”

Jett’s predictions for the future are equally pessimistic. The continued success of future PKOs, he argues, will require more political will on the part of the international community. The PKOs should only be attempted when the conditions are right, they should be fortified with a strong mandate and staffed with creative and politically savvy staffers. He is convinced, however, that there will continue to be a decline in the UN’s peacekeeping activities, that real reform will be unrealistic and that PKOs will continue to be misapplied and doomed to failure.

His predictions are proving sickeningly correct in the case of the UN’s peacekeeping efforts in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In the Ituri region of that enormous country, seven hundred UN peacekeepers, bound again by a weak mandate that makes them unable to protect civilians or even themselves, have had to impotently witness the on-going massacres. These peacekeepers, who are mostly Uruguayans, have themselves been targeted by the warring factions, who harbor no fear of reprisal from the international community and whose outrageous actions produce only embarrassed throat-clearing at the Security Council. The Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni, whose country unabashedly supports one of the leading tribal factions in the Congo, sardonically describes the UN peacekeepers as “dangerous tourists.” The Ituri region is Srebrenica all over again.

Jett’s book is particularly interesting in the light of recent international events following the attacks on September 11, 2001. The Afghan and the Iraqi Wars have both been fought to the completion of major hostilities, and the process of nation-building has begun in both countries. This phase, which Jett and others have characterized as “peace building,” has traditionally been the phase in which the UN was the most successful. But these recent conflicts are unlike earlier ones, in that the UN as an organization wants to intervene to prove its relevance, but may be denied a significant role.

Perhaps Jett’s most prescient prediction is the increased use of “coalitions of the willing,” of the sort recently employed in Afghanistan and Iraq. These international alliances fill the PKO vacuum by performing the jobs that have in the past been performed by the UN. It seems likely

that these new shifting coalitions and more established alliances such as NATO will continue to bypass the UN as long as the UN exists in its current structure.

Various remedies have been proposed to heal the ailing UN, ranging from the most outlandish to the merely cosmetic. As Jett writes, “the ways to improve peacekeeping are far easier to list than to implement effectively.” Much as he predicts, the UN will most likely remain in its current form and will continue to be politically timid, hopelessly bureaucratic and increasingly irrelevant. This continued course will only lead to further cooption by other international structures and to further pointless and counterproductive squabbling in the dirty mess of the sandbox.

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The Bang Bang Club: Snapshots From a Hidden War. Greg Marinovich and Joao Silva. (Foreword by Archbishop Desmond Tutu). New York: Basic Books, 2000. 253 pp.

South Africa was, for all intents and purposes, a war zone in the period from 1990 to 1994. So called “black-on-black” violence was in reality both a direct manifestation of apartheid and a phenomenon fomented by the South African state and its draconian security forces. It tore up the black townships and homelands that had served as the most blatant physical manifestation of the apartheid system. As the prospects for change within South Africa became inevitable, the white government and securocrats hoped to divide the masses that supported Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress (ANC) coalition from the minority who followed Mangosuthu Buthelezi’s Zulu-dominated Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

As with any war, on the scene, but literally behind the camera, were intrepid war reporters who were both part of, and yet separate from, the stories they covered. One group in particular gained fame for their swashbuckling, fearless, and profoundly influential photography from the frontlines of apartheid’s last stand. After a South African lifestyle magazine dubbed this small crew the “Bang Bang Club,” a name that referred to their experiences on the front lines where the “bang bang” (i.e. fighting) occurred, that nickname stuck. Although the membership of this club sometimes changed, there were four consistent members: Greg Marinovich, Joao Silva, Kevin Carter, and Ken Oosterbroek. They knew the lay of the land and where events were going to take place even before they happened. They took the best pictures. They showed the most drive and displayed the most bravado. Two of them lost their lives in events directly or indirectly related to their work in southern Africa’s most visible hot spot. In effect, the Bang Bang Club was the most exclusive clique in photojournalism in South Africa during a time when South Africa was the place to be.

The Bang Bang Club is a memoir cum history of these years of struggle. Greg Marinovich and Joao Silva, the two surviving consistent members of the club, have produced a valuable, insightful, and highly readable work that at different times inspires admiration, repulsion, sadness, awe and disgust. Although a work of both men, the book takes the voice and

perspective of Marinovich, who won the Pulitzer Prize for one of his pictures from the “Hostel Wars” in Thokoza, a township 16 kilometers southeast of Johannesburg that was the scene of some of the worst violence in the period of transition. This is an effective approach, as it allows Marinovich to introduce the story with one relatively fluid narrative line and memoirist’s voice while at the same time providing him with a somewhat more omniscient approach than works of this sort can ordinarily have.

Marinovich and Silva do not shrink from some of the more disquieting elements of their profession either. Indeed, the most effective sections of the book deal with the self-doubt that the men have when taking pictures while all around them atrocities are being committed. These feelings are especially acute when the men are thrust into situations where they can actually aid victims, protect unarmed people, or save the lives of their putative subjects. And oftentimes the men do take these steps – almost always after getting their shots. But sometimes they do not. One example of this that provides the centerpiece for the book comes after the deeply troubled but remarkably talented Kevin Carter takes a picture of a little girl in the Sudan (although the book’s center is the South African struggle, like all freelancers and especially war photographers, the Bang Bang Club sometimes found themselves in other parts of Africa and even in Bosnia and elsewhere). The girl is starving, curled up in the fetal position. In the picture, seemingly stalking the starving girl, is a vulture. The picture is stunning in its composition, and garnered Carter the Pulitzer Prize, the first for photography in the history of the New York Times. But almost immediately the question arose: what happened to the little girl? Did she live? And perhaps most important, what did Carter do to help her? This answer would haunt Kevin Carter for the remainder of his life. The little girl was no more than one hundred meters from a newly established relief station, yet Carter did not carry her to assure that she would get food. He would later promise people that she survived – that he had scared off the vulture, and that the aid station was close and she would have been fine. But why did he not just carry her there?

Not surprisingly, Marinovich and Silva do not answer beyond a shadow of doubt the question of the photographer’s role in the events that they depict. On numerous occasions this issue emerges, and each time the photographers respond differently, with duty to the job usually, but not always, coming first. This was part of their unwritten code. They were providing a service, often at great personal risk, and usually in such a way that inevitably made them enemies within the apartheid state and sometimes among the factions their photographs depicted. They were photographers first and foremost. Further, given what the group saw, it was almost impossible not to become calloused to atrocities around them to some degree, or at least to subvert everything to the job.

In the end, Kevin Carter ended up committing suicide, though not necessarily because of the uproar over his composition, which on the whole still garnered him great acclaim despite the implications that the picture raised. Instead, Carter was a tortured soul with a drug addiction and personal life he could not overcome. Marinovich and Silva depict Carter’s descent sensitively but unflinchingly.

Carter was not the first of the Bang Bang Club to die, however. That (dubious?) distinction fell to Ken Oosterbroek, the oldest member of the group, and the one who, early on, had the most success of the group. Competitive, handsome, tall, and imposing, Oosterbroek was the

mentor of the other three, most of all to Kevin Carter. On 18 April, 1994, a particularly intense fighting had broken out in Thokoza, and the newly formed but ill-conceived National Peacekeeping Force (NPF) was on the scene to try to restore order. Instead, the presence and actions of the NPF exacerbated things. In the midst of heavy crossfire, Oosterbroek and Marinovich both took gunshots. Oosterbroek died as a result of his injuries. Marinovich did not fully recover for more than a year and was unable to cover the South African election just days after the shootings.

These shootings, and Oosterbroek's death, are in many ways the heart and soul of this arresting book. In one of the most poignant details, we see how Joao Silva snaps pictures of his slain friend while others are carrying him off to find help. Silva, like the others, loved and admired his friend and he knew that Oosterbroek would have expected nothing less. Ambivalence settles over this event: Had Silva done the right thing? And again, what is the photographer's role in such a situation?

This is a moving book about an important time in South African history one that scholars are still just beginning to understand. Marinovich and Silva are not scholars and they do not attempt to present a scholarly work in the *Bang Bang Club* (which is in the process of being made into a motion picture). Yet this book is one that any student of Africa and especially South Africa, journalism, and photography will want to read. It is also a book that has received, and should continue to receive, wide popular readership. It is written in a straightforward, lucid, sometimes vivid prose. It evokes a range of emotions. Not surprisingly, it contains three sections of pictures that show both the work of the Bang Bang Club, as well as the club members in action. The two Pulitzer Prize photographs, Carter's in the Sudan and Marinovich's from the Hostel wars are shown, as are many others that won awards or acclaim. One wishes that there had been more of these pictures, but this is a desire born of admiration and interest, rather than a quibble or complaint.

This is a wonderful book. Hopefully, if Hollywood doesn't twist it up, it will make great a movie, although it is hard to see how Hollywood effects can add to the crisp prose and monumental photographs that the real-life Bang Bang Club provide in their memoir.

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The London Missionary Society in Southern Africa, 1799-1999: Historical Essays in Celebration of the Bicentenary of the LMS in Southern Africa. John de Gruchy, ed. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000. 229 pp.

As the title suggested, *The London Missionary Society in Southern Africa, 1799-1999: Historical Essays in Celebration of the Bicentenary of the LMS in Southern Africa* is a historical account of the Christian mission work of the London Missionary Society (LMS) in southern Africa for the past two hundred years (1799-1999). It is a recollection, reflection, and review of the lives of both

church ministries and political activities around several LMS missionaries whose mission fields included colonial centers of Cape Town, Grahamstown, Natal, and eastern Cape frontier.

John de Gruchy, the editor, is professor of Christian Studies and Director of Religion and Social Change in the University of Cape Town. In the introductory chapter, *Remembering a legacy*, he characterizes the purpose of this book as follows: “to reconstruct the LMS story as truthfully as possible... to give the reader a useful guide to the way in which the story of the LMS has been told and evaluated.” (4) This is exactly what this book is about.

In chapter two, *Looking back: 170 years of historical writing on the LMS in South Africa*, Christopher Saunders launches a broad chronological approach of interpreting both earlier literature and recent scholarship on the LMS in southern Africa. Then he concludes that some areas still need further research, for instance, less known LMS missionaries and less known missions stations.

In the next chapter, *The alleged political conservatism of Robert Moffat*, Steve de Gruchy agrees with the appraisal of Robert Moffat’s son on his father. Both a missionary and a government official, John Moffat said that political intervention on behalf of the natives had mostly ended in failure, but this frustration was not experienced by his father. (35)

The title of chapter four is *David Livingstone: the man behind the mask* in which Andrew Ross investigates the alleged incompetence of Livingstone as a leader of expeditions and discovers the fact that Livingstone was the second generation of a Gaelic family that immigrated to Scotland. Consequently, he suggests that further research into the family background and theological influences of Livingstone may bring new insights into Livingstone’s faith and life as a missionary.

In chapter five, *Cultivation, Christianity and colonialism: towards a new African genesis*, John L. Camaroff and Jean Comaroff writes about the mission garden as the master symbol of civilization and Britishness. Transformation of the land use means food production, an exemplary use of space, and also an icon of colonial evangelism. (63)

In the next chapter, *Jane and John Philip: partnership, usefulness & sexuality in the service of God*, Natasha Erlank examines the personal lives and roles of Jane and John Philip as a team utilizing gender analysis of history. Therefore, this essay suggests that the private sphere has impact on the public arena.

In chapter seven, *‘Working at the heart’: the London Missionary Society in the Cape Town, 1819-1844*, Helen Ludlow concludes that there were two distinct accomplishments by the LMS in Cape Town. First, it was the establishment of the Union Chapel, as an urban church for white worshipping settlers. Second, the mission work of LMS among ex-slaves and their children through the provision of educational opportunities in missions schools.

In the following chapter, *Congregations, Missionaries and Grahamstown Schism of 1842-3*, Robert Ross recounts the conflicts between the Rev. John Locke, the senior pastor and Nicholas Smit, a native South African, and the congregation of the Union Chapel. These conflicts reveal two relating issues: the relationship of the LMS missionary and the local congregation in terms of authority and the quest for self-expression and self-determination in the colored congregations.

In chapter nine, *Whose gospel? Conflict in the LMS in the early 1940s*, Elizabeth Elbourne examines the relationships of missionaries within the LMS and the LMS as a religious

institution with several African congregations in terms of church government, racial conflicts, and authority relations.

In chapter ten, *The standard of living question in nineteenth-century missions in KwaZulu-Natal*, Norman Etherington looks into the issues of inter-racial marriages between the missionaries and with native women, the issues of income inequality among the missionaries from different mission societies, and between the missionaries and the native assistants.

In the final chapter, *American missionaries and the making of African church in colonial Natal*, Les Switzer researches into the American Zulu Mission at various levels with concerns of white male domination, racial inequality, and independence, within white missionary circles, between white missionaries and African Christians, and within the African Christian community.

This book is recommended to those who are interested in learning more about mission studies in southern Africa. Although it does not claim to be a complete historical account of all the LMS missionaries and their activities in southern Africa, it has surely retold some significant stories of LMS mission-related and/or other activities for engaging discussions and interpretations. During this process of historical inquiry, certain themes are clarified and conceptualized, for example, distinct theologies of mission held by different missionaries, the Africanization of Christianity, and power struggles in terms of racism, classism, sexism, and local church autonomy.

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Proclaiming Political Pluralism: Churches and Political Transitions in Africa. Isaac Phiri. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2001. 169 pp.

Proclaiming Political Pluralism: Churches and Political Transitions in Africa is one of the titles in the series of Religion in the Age of Transformation of Praeger Publishers. Isaac Phiri, the author, is the director of international training for Cook Communications and adjunct professor of social science at Regis University in Colorado.

The titles of the five chapters in the book are as follows: 1. Churches and the African Political Arena; 2. Churches and Political Transitions in Zambia; 3. Churches and Political Transitions in Zimbabwe; 4. Churches and Changes in South Africa; and 5. Proclaiming Politics of Peace and Love: A New Role for Churches in Pluralist Africa.

In the first chapter, Phiri reveals the purpose of this book as an exploration of the reasons and processes that the churches played in African transitions to plural politics in the 1990s. This book is significant in three distinct ways. First, it addresses the importance of Christian churches in African politics. Second, it provides a broad comparative perspective and analysis. Third, it evaluates the role of churches as an integral part of the larger society. Based on the framework of theoretical analysis on Cameroon researched by Jean Francois Bayart, Phiri develops three models of church-state relations: collaborative, complementary, and confrontational in three African countries, namely, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa.

However, he qualifies that in reality they are not mutually exclusive because they may exist simultaneously at different levels or in different segments of the collective Christian community at various points of time.

In chapter two, Phiri first established the historical importance of Christianity in Zambia with the fact that seventy-five percent of the country's ten million people are Christian. In the postcolonial era, Kenneth Kaunda's government maintained relative benevolence, therefore, defusing direct conflict with churches. When a wave of democracy was sweeping across Africa, Kaunda, who first resisted change, was willing to subject himself to the electoral process. When the state is more responsive to the demands of civil society, conflict with the churches is less likely to occur. Therefore, the church-state relation in Zambia is an example of the collaborative model.

The third chapter examines church-state relations in terms of state repression of political opposition in Zimbabwe (formerly Southern Rhodesia) during the four following epochs: 1. The colonial period (1890-1965); 2. The Unilateral Declaration of Independence years (1965-1977); 3. The Muzorewa years (1977-1980); and 4. The Mugabe years (1980-1995). The masses expect the churches and church leaders to assume political roles as a substitutionary function. As soon as civil society is realized, church leaders who stay in the political arena and assume partisan positions lose their legitimacy. Therefore, church leaders have only transitory role in politics. Therefore, church-state relations in Zimbabwe is interpreted as complimentary.

In chapter four, the church-state relation in South Africa is regarded as confrontational because reaction against the repression of civil society is the primary explanation for the involvement of churches in political activities. Bishop Desmond Tutu and other black clergies in the South African Council of Churches (SACC) became the main opposition force to the state under the repressive system of apartheid.

In the final chapter, Phiri proposes a unique role for churches to play in Africa in the pluralist era. His suggestion is that churches should remain active and influence Africa's plural politics with peace and love through the press, radio, television, public rhetoric, peace education, peace and reconciliation conference, relief and development aid, and prayer.

This book affirms the political contribution of the Christian church as an important factor in terms of participatory stabilization and/or activism in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. Phiri's idealism of promoting peace and love through the churches in Africa should be applauded. A bibliography with more than two hundred and twenty entries of books and articles following the five chapters is extensive. This will be a great resource for all who are interested in further studies in church-state relations in Africa in general and in the countries of Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa in particular.

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Understanding African Philosophy: A Cross Cultural Approach to Classical and Contemporary Issues. Richard Bell. New York: Routledge, 2002. 189 pp.

Understanding African Philosophy reflects on the pain and pleasure of understanding an “other culture”. In this effort, we see strands of history; anthropology, traditional sociology, literature and governance weaved together on a solid platform of philosophy. It is a reflective endeavor, which focuses on the problematic and the not-so-problematic aspects of African thought.

Using a contention-conclusion style, Bell presents key positions, arguments, authorities and temperaments concerning various issues in African philosophy. At the end of each issue, Bell draws his own conclusion. Consistently throughout the book, all contentions and conclusions point at one direction: understanding. Clearly, the entire publication is driven by the philosophy of understanding with an African slant.

With a Wittgenstenian instrument and phenomenological methodology, Bell argues that the African milieu must be seen as it is. He therefore asserts the need for an understanding of the African philosophical environment using five “reminder” parameters of aesthetics, universality, conversation, cross-culturalism and historical experientialism. According to Bell, African philosophy, which has a history, remains a subject of major modern concern for philosophers all over the world because it is an enterprise with untapped potentials and a plural content requiring attention, study and analysis, which cannot be left for African philosophers alone.

The first chapter deals with the socio-epistemological problems encountered by an outsider, who sets out to comprehend another culture. The chapter takes the position that seeing something as it is is the backbone of philosophy. All analyses and arguments for the understanding of another culture sit on this position. It is on that premise that Bell raises the issue of relativist and indeterminate nature of understanding itself, implying that understanding is a basic necessity of existence. Bell also examines Peter Winch’s postulation of ‘being in tune with others’ and uses it to debunk the argument that only Africans should write about African philosophy. He therefore calls for all to pay attention to others – to open ourselves and accommodate the categories in other things, which we seek to understand. In relation to that, Bell contends that after a thorough understanding of the nature of understanding itself, what must follow (in an attempt to understand another culture), is an aesthetic evaluation and acceptance of the peoples’ metaphysical thinking and the logic of their language. Therefore, in understanding African culture, an outsider must know the type of questions the people ask and the sort of answers they provide for such questions. It is only by this method that we can open up the ‘other culture’.

Chapter two examines the disputation between the old and younger generations of African philosophers. It argues that this disagreement is unnecessary because both generations draw from the same source, at least partly. Representing the older generation, ethnophilosophers (Placide Tempels and others) are presented as pluralistic and universal in their enterprise and lacking in reference to an African literary background. But Bell says that ethnophilosophy (like sage philosophy) is relevant in contemporary African philosophy because it provides written account of a hitherto oral tradition, thereby creating an identity pattern in African philosophy. On the other hand, Bell tells us that the younger generation of African philosophers are mainly

concerned with scientific criticism and surgical thinking – a temperament rooted in western tradition in philosophy. However, Bell merges all the generational characters in African philosophy with one word: dialogue. Whether old or new, Bell posits, African philosophers have a “voice” and all are in one conversation or the other. That is one thing that makes African philosophy universal without the generational bar.

Chapter three dissects African political philosophy, starting off with the concept of negritude. It exposes the role of the concept in creating and motivating the ideas of ‘African Humanism’ and ‘African Socialism’ especially during the period of colonial struggles. With recourse to history, this chapter explains the philosophical tendencies of Leopold Senghor and Kwame Nkrumah and presents them as the leading light in the assertion of African-ness. Bell’s presentation of post-colonial African thought shows a turning point in African political philosophy where the past is jettisoned and a new future sought to be carved out by a crop of philosophers. Their radical position views the colonial experience with contempt and therefore seeks to obliterate it altogether. However, Bell says that the African colonial experience speaks for itself whether we articulate it or not: “The post-colonial African reality is speaking, writing and artistically expressing a philosophy out of its encounters with European modernity. It is also speaking out its poverty, suffering, and affliction, and from its own rich heritage of humanistic dignity”.

In a medley, chapters four and five present and analyze the contributions of African philosophy to universal moral issues, the various ethical arguments in the African context and the significance of such arguments. In this endeavor, moral concepts such as justice, rights, truth, self respect, reconciliation, responsibility, etc are examined. Also, African values such as generosity, compassion, reciprocity, mutual sympathy, cooperation, solidarity, confession, and communal punishment are explained as powerful instruments in African thinking. In spite of all these, Bell noted that certain questions couldn’t be left unanswered. These are questions concerning the reality of poverty, disagreements, and afflictions. Bell says that the combination of these problems and the existence of African ethical values make the continent quite distinct and experientially difficult to comprehend. Once again, he calls for a two-way understanding of this fact by non-Africans who should feel the pulse and help heal the wound of the African condition.

Chapter six deals with the role played by oral narratives in African philosophy especially in ‘interface’ with western thinking. With reference to the village life, Bell says that African art, literature, music, dance, mode of governance (‘African democracy’) and philosophy take their roots in oral proverbs and stories about forebears. African oral narratives should not surprise any non-African because they stand for the engaging thoughts of the people while symbolizing the instrument of consultation, participation and reciprocation in traditional relationships.

Bell concludes that the African oral tradition, system of governance, values and experience have consummate philosophical significance for the human race and therefore, cannot be ignored.

No doubt, Richard Bell is quite contemporary in this book. In doing so however, he avoided some essential elements in the foundation of African philosophy: African myths and religions. Myths and religions are in the heart of the African; and they actually provided the background for ethnophilosophy, which Bell referred to in the first chapter of his book. For this

reason, it would be useful to read alongside Bells' book, Newell Booth's *African Religions: A Symposium*, and *African Philosophy* by E. A. Ruch and K. C. Anyanwu. Also, Bell raises new questions in African philosophy: whether understanding itself can be perfectly understood, whether seeing something as it is, is truly the backbone of philosophy, whether it is possible to transfer a cultural experience from an insider to an outsider without losing something, whether a non-African can be as well-positioned as the African in understanding and presenting the problems of African philosophy.

Understanding African Philosophy is a fluid, scholarly work with postmodern appeal to young researchers in African philosophy. It is one philosopher's clarion call for an understanding of a philosophy outside his own state of affairs. The appreciations for Bell's effort will linger for a long time.

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Media and Resistance Politics in Namibia: The Alternative Press in Namibia, 1960-1990.
Heuva, William. Basel, Switzerland: Schlettwein Publishing, 2001. 166 pp.

William Heuva's 2001 publication is part of The Basel Namibia Studies Series launched in 1997 by Schlettwein publishing. The objective of the series is "to make research results on Namibia accessible and known to a new generation of Namibian readers in particular and to the international research community in general." (p.ix). Heuva, a journalist by profession, presents a comprehensive historical analysis of the advent and development of the alternative press in Namibia. This historical extrapolation of the alternative press in Namibia focuses on the objectives, institutional character, economics, and ideology of the alternative press in Namibia prior to the attainment of political independence from the forces of imperialism and colonialism. The Namibian alternative press was a fragmented group as it addressed different issues affecting the colonized Namibians. This press was made up of early nationalist, community, labor, church, and student press.

The study provides an account of the emergence and use of the alternative means of mass communication by the Namibian people against the colonizers. The study also analyzed the major alternative press focusing on aims and objectives, content, language and messages transmitted and the context under which they emerged.

The first of four sections of the book explores the historical emergence, development, and aims of the alternative press as well as the roles of the intellectuals in establishing the alternative press. The author focuses on the nationalist, church, community and the progressive-independent press, explaining the major issues that affected the targeted groups. The nationalist press was a brainchild of the intellectuals emerging from the colonized bloc. *The South West News* was the dominant paper in this category and was used to champion the emerging Black Nationalism in Namibia. The introduction of liberation theology transformed

the church press as it began to challenge the dominant apartheid ideology. The political theology that emerged in the church press was opposed to the conservative values of the apartheid system. The community press communicated grassroots issues, especially community struggles against the apartheid system. The progressive-independent press voiced the aspirations of the colonized people at a national level. Even though the alternative press was fragmented, they managed to provide a voice against the entrenched apartheid system.

The second section dwells on the institutional character of the alternative press and examines the key themes of ownership, control and structure, journalistic practice and target audience and news source. The alternative press was owned and controlled by forces oppositional to the hegemonic block of the state. This created a leeway for the alternative press to unabashedly develop and advance the anti-apartheid discourse. The libertarian and democratic-participant theoretical perspectives characterized the alternative press. There was lack of clear-cut bureaucratic structure at most of these alternative presses and this entailed a collective responsibility among activists in the production and distribution of the press. The media activists in the alternative press practiced 'advocacy journalism': fair and balanced news presentation was not their main driving force due to their role in the struggle against apartheid system. In Heuva's words, these media activists were "functionaries of their people's hegemonic struggle... (hence) could not be neutral, impartial and objective in the process" (80). The news sources of most of these publications were leaders of the progressive movements and individual activists within these movements. Their targeted audience was a broader spectrum of the colonized people of Namibia.

The third and fourth sections focus on the political economy and the content and language of the private press respectively. Funding and distribution (and how they affected the content and distribution of the alternative press) were the major themes explored. While the mainstream press was profit-oriented and catered for the dominant elites, the alternative press was essentially not for profit and provided a platform to challenge the oppressive apartheid system. Financing of the alternative press was donor-centered since the inherent contents were not politically correct and thus did not attract advertising: what was omitted in the mainstream press found coverage in the alternative press.

Although Heuva deals with complex material regarding the alternative press as a site for resistance against the oppressive apartheid, his writing is concise and logical. His main thesis that the anti-apartheid presses were alternative in nature to the mainstream colonial press is well developed and well supported. The purpose of these alternative publications was to provide a counter narrative to the grand propaganda provided by the elites to justify the apartheid system. Thus the targeted oppositional readership was provided with alternative symbols and means of receiving and imparting information about the socio-cultural, economic and political reality under apartheid. This was from the prism of the oppressed, hence it was racially and class centered.

The study utilizes a theoretical framework that draws from critical cultural studies, the Latin American left press and the South African alternative press of the 1980s. What is common among these three approaches is that they "address the creation of symbols of resistance and alternative means of communication by dominated groups in society, in their struggle against the dominant bloc." (8). This framework provides us with tools to analyze the production and

circulation of the alternative messages that serve to counteract the status quo. The major thrust of this framework, as espoused by John Fiske, is that meaning is essentially contested and provides a site for struggle between the dominant bloc and the marginalized group in the society. The dominant group tries to 'naturalize' the meanings that advance their interests while the marginalized resist them.

The author employs indepth interview and document analysis for his data collection. The in-depth interviews were conducted with Namibian elites (intellectuals, editors and journalists) who worked for the alternative press. The document reviews supplemented the in-depth interviews in providing the history and context surrounding the emergence of the alternative press. Secondary materials in the form of books were utilized to support the interviews and documents reviewed. The author also used qualitative content analysis of the alternative press to assess the type of news articles and content that dominated these papers. Thus, the author had at his disposal a substantial array of data gathering techniques.

Heuva's study serves to successfully provide a comprehensive historical and analytical account of the advent and development of the alternative press in Namibia. His work is-and will be-of tremendous value to scholars and students of many disciplines such as media, cultural studies, history and anyone interested in the theoretical perspectives of alternative press as well as its origins, structure, role, and language in Namibia. Heuva's simple but effective language makes the book even more interesting to read.

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Workers, War and the Origins of Apartheid: Labour and Politics in South Africa, 1939-48. Peter Alexander. Ohio University Press, 2000. 214 pp.

In his book, *Workers, War and the Origins of Apartheid*, Peter Alexander illustrates the connection between race, organized labor and politics in South Africa. He explains how capitalism produced competition between workers, and thereby encouraged racial division, but at the same time forced workers to cooperate with each other. This work masterfully presents an alternative explanation of the link among labor, race, the political economy of South Africa, and the origins of apartheid.

The author begins by tracing the pre-war labor conditions, which established the basis of racial division of workers and excluded black workers from certain skills and positions. The racial division of the working class was reflected in, and probably boosted by, early industrial conflicts in 1913, 1914, and 1922. The war, however, and its impact on the economic growth, spurred the development of a new working class and heightened industrial conflict. The trust of Alexander's argument is that structural and demographic changes in wage labor gave rise to a high level of wartime industrial militancy characterized by strike actions. At the same time, the nature of trade union movement was shaped by the wartime economic growth, increase in membership and interracial cooperation. While fundamental changes occurred in the scale and

demographics of trade unions, the low level of mechanization, Alexander suggests imposed limits on the extent to which racism was undermined. The relationship between labor and industry was also shaped by the rift between factory owners—some who having introduced modern machinery wanted a “settled African population,” and others who operated with “large amounts of migrant labor” (p. 3). The agricultural sector was impacted as massive growth in the urban workforce ripped white farmers of adequate labor. These developments led to two important events: Many white farmers disillusioned with General Smut’s economic, policy switched their support to the National Party. In response to the emergence of a strong multiracial union movement in this period, General Smut suppressed African unions and attacked all workers, thereby alienating part of his white constituency.

Alexander traces the attempt by the Smuts government to manage the opposing forces (those that either favored neutrality or supported Germany and those who supported the war on the side of the British) that emerged in his government as a result of the war. In response to the high level of opposition to the war, Smuts collaborated with pro-war parties including labor unions, but he also used coercion, including internment of individuals regarded as “subversive” and suppression of militant strikes. The author persuasively questions the overwhelming view that the World War II was responsible for the rapid mechanization that provided employment for large numbers of blacks and semi-skilled workers and threatened white workers, forcing many to vote for the National Party in the 1948 elections. In contrast to the mechanization thesis, Alexander argues that the uneven character of capital formation and relatively slow rate of mechanization characterized the period—because growth in the sector was achieved through greater use of wage labor. He provides examples of the attempts, which were not very successful in checking labor militancy, made by the government to ameliorate the condition of poor workers.

Alexander proceeds with an analysis of the upsurge of labor militancy in 1942, focusing particularly upon interracial cooperation between African workers and others in Johannesburg and Durban; and the significant black challenge to white authority since the 1920s. The author shows that there was far more strike action during World War II than has been officially acknowledged. A new working class, sometimes organized into multiracial unions, won improved wages and softened racial prejudice among white workers. He argues that labor militancy in this period provoked the promulgation of War Measure 145, which, while providing avenue for some form of negotiation for black workers, inevitably made them subject to the “whims of officialdom (p. 53-54).

The book addresses the racial and industrial policy of Smuts, particularly the dilemma his government faced on whether to recognize African trade unions. Both blacks and the mining interest had different ideas of how to proceed, but Smuts’ recognition of African workers and their designation as “employees” marked steps through which Alexander analyzed the attitude of labor and capital in relation to African demands. He argues that the position of white labor in this question was complex, because neither white labor nor white capital was homogenous since both were subject to contradictory pressure, accounting for the greater sympathy which white labor showed for African workers. He argues that labor militancy continued as a result of the imposition of War Measure 145, resulting in more strikes than the previous year. Continuing African militancy, the effects of a strike by Durban engineers on South Africa’s war

effort, and the perception that the war had turned in favor of the allied forces led to a high level of industrial actions, weakened the case against strikes and hardened the attitude of employers.

Workers' actions in this period were defined not only by both race and gender. He argues that African union victories led to increases in membership, but membership could not be sustained as a result of unsuccessful strike actions and the difficulty of securing higher wages, causing the movement to enter into a decline. Nevertheless, the war years, Alexander argues, witnessed increases in racial toleration and equity and the challenge to white supremacy. The author traces the emergence of post war economic and social problems, a restless African workforce and the treatment of militant trade unionism on South Africa's economy. The government's response to mounting social and economic issues created further discontent that culminated in the electoral victory of the National Party in 1948. The institutionalization of apartheid, he argues, was a tragic defeat for all workers, white as well as black, and ended multiracial unionism.

Contradicting earlier accounts, Alexander concludes that wartime mechanization and black advancement into semi-skilled positions were limited and cannot explain subsequent support for apartheid. In his view, underdevelopment was a precondition both for apartheid's victory and for its initial success; at the same time it led to modernization and growth of a stronger, more homogenous proletariat which brought about its demise. Unlike previous studies of the labor movement in South Africa, this book attempts to treat labor in its totality, emphasizing the cooperation and interracial mixing that existed between different unions and centralized the importance of strikes. With extensive use of secondary and oral sources, this book is a significant revision of South African labor history and should be useful to those interested in labor and economic development in South Africa during and after the World War II.

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Money Struggles and City Life: Devaluation in Ibadan and Other Urban Centers in Southern Nigeria, 1986-1996. Jane Guyer, LaRay Denzer and Adigun Agbaje (eds.). Portsmouth NH: Heineman, 2002. 269 pp.

In the past decade, popular life in Africa has been explored in a number of monographs and edited volumes on African popular politics, culture and literature. In this book, editors and contributors further contribute to the understanding of everyday life in Africa by investigating popular economic life. Focusing on the city of Ibadan in particular and on southern Nigeria in general, the book's main aim is to contribute to an archive of knowledge on the popular economy during the years of structural adjustment programs (SAPs) from 1986 to 1996. Questioning standard interpretations of unequivocal economic decline and chaos during this period, the book also endeavors to be of comparative interest to non-Nigerian scholars and to contribute to the debate of Nigerian scholars cut off from western theorizing during the years of structural adjustment.

The book is divided into four parts, each of which includes at least two case studies. The first two parts concentrate on the popular economy of Ibadan and its hinterland. The four contributions of the first part focus on the city as a regional center of politics, administration and trade. In an excellent analysis of power politics in Ibadan, Agbaje investigates the complex relationship between local political networks and the city's inability to attract sustainable economic patronage by the federal government. Okafor discusses the negative impact of neoliberal local government reforms on public welfare, and Arimah convincingly argues that both the quality and quantity of housing available in the city has declined due to the currency devaluation associated with SAP. Isamah and Okunola's chapter describes the increase of child breadwinners throughout the city.

The second part of the book examines the way in which different occupational groups in and near Ibadan have dealt with the changes brought about by SAP. Among others, Denzer's study of the garment industry and Ikporukpo's investigation of the motor mechanic trade point towards an increase in the use of imported used goods due to increasing import prices. While this phenomenon has been associated with a relative decline of these industries, Guyer convincingly suggests that a commercialization of local food production in the Ibadan hinterland has led to more recycling of domestic used tractors and a consequent growth of mechanized farming. Sridhar et al. argue that the increased need for domestic recycling has also led to the establishment of local reprocessing industries. Meanwhile, other professions were affected in different ways: Adesina describes how the decline of the formal banking system gave rise to an expansion of the underground foreign exchange market, while Obukhova outlines increasing professionalism and emergent institutionalization among newspaper vendors in the informal economy.

The final two parts of the book deal with culture and international links and examine popular views on wealth and economies of international resources respectively. In a well-researched chapter on money-magic and ritual killing, Enwerem links the social and political economy in Nigeria to magical beliefs and ambivalence about wealth and social difference. Examining the artistically uncompromising and realistic depiction of poverty in contemporary Nigerian videos, Haynes suggests that it is linked to an increasing fear of economic destitution. Finally, Okonkwo explains the financial rationale for increased investment by Igbo mirants in houses in their home villages, and Klein investigates the bitter private recriminations that can be associated with local artists' access to the international market in artistic and cultural production. Klein's chapter also illustrates the potential ethical limits of small-scale studies of popular life: while it is very successful in giving an intimate description of artists' disputes over overseas contacts and money, its availability to the community of Erin-Osun will undoubtedly further complicate personal relationships.

Overall, the book gives an impressive insight into how people in different walks of life have continued to make a living and contribute to the growth and change of different economic sectors during a period when there was little in the way of a consciously formulated economic policy in Nigeria and macroeconomic indicators were either not available or inconclusive. Many chapters beautifully illustrate the adaptability and inventiveness of local responses to the effects of globalization and the increasing privatization of state resources by the military.

The inclusion of a number of maps and illustrations in addition to the often very useful tables would have improved the book's readability further, but the number of good to excellent chapters makes this book a valuable contribution to the understanding of popular economic life in Africa. Apart from those directly interested in southern Nigeria and its popular economy, individual chapters will certainly appeal to those interested in the postcolonial politics, 'informal sector' and 'development' studies, as well as to many economic and political sociologists of Africa.

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The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars. Douglas Johnson, Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press 2003. 234 pp.

Drawing on his own research as one of the foremost historians on the Sudan, as well as first-hand experience working in the southern Sudan, Douglas Johnson has written a concise, accessible and authoritative guide to the civil wars that have plagued the country's modern history. First begun as a 1992 report commissioned for relief personnel engaged in the Sudan, Johnson has expanded and updated the work to include the events of the past decade in order to remedy "the institutional amnesia afflicting diplomats, journalists, and development, relief and human rights workers: anyone who has dipped into the current of the war with only a vague apprehension of its source".

Organized around a set of "historical factors" that he places at the root of Sudan's civil wars, the book provides an excellent comparative framework for analyzing one of the world's most intractable insurgencies. Foremost among the causes of the country's recurring wars is a durable political economy that sets the centralizing power of expansionist states against peripheral regions. Manifested in the transcendent practices of slave and cattle raiding and land displacement, Sudanic states have, since the 18th century, exploited and alienated peoples along the periphery, "creating groups of peoples with a lastingly ambiguous status in relation to the state". In other words, the history of contemporary conflicts predate colonial interventions and Britain's decision to grant independence to a united Sudan before inequalities between North and South – inequalities exacerbated by Britain's "Southern Policy" for administering the South – could be remedied. That the colonial period is so often the starting point for analyses of the country's war is indicative of what Johnson terms our historical "amnesia" in regards to the Sudan.

A theme that emerges later in the book, and is intrinsically related to exploitative modes of state consolidation, is the persistence of fragmentation among and between communities in both the South and North. Among the founding principles of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in 1983 was the need to prevent the sorts of military factionalism that beset southern forces in the first civil war (1955/61-72). Johnson is at his best in discussing the

internecine SPLA split in 1991 and the still unresolved Nuer civil war. He also traces the fracturing of the “Northern Muslim consensus” as the North-South war has expanded into regions of the North – Darfur, Southern Kordofan, Red Sea – over the past decade as a result of Khartoum’s meddling in neighboring conflicts, and the government’s pursuit of a radical, exclusionary policy of Islamization at home and abroad. Also noteworthy given current preoccupations with so-called “resource wars” is Johnson’s analysis of the relationship between war economies and relief/development policy. He traces how “having captured the relief effort, Khartoum will continue to work for the subjugation of Southern labour and Southern resources”. Those contemplating peace as part of the Machakos peace process currently underway in Kenya should contemplate the effect of peace on the persistent pattern of the North’s commercial exploitation of the South.

It is clear that the author’s sympathies lie with southern resistance to Khartoum. In this respect, however, the book provides a useful counter to what Johnson correctly identifies as the predominant focus on the North in the historiography of the Sudan. *The Root Causes of Sudan’s Civil Wars* is an immensely important contribution to the literature. It should be read by students of conflict, on the continent and elsewhere, as well as all those associated with relief, development and peacemaking in the Sudan.

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The African Stakes of the Congo War. John F. Clark (Ed.), New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. 249 pp.

‘The African Stakes of the Congo War’ is an edited volume based on papers presented at a conference on ‘Conflict and Peace-Making in the Great Lakes Region’ held in the Ugandan capital, Entebbe in July 2000. The chapters have, however, been revised and updated to take recent developments in the Great Lakes conflict into account. Consequently, both the first (1996-1997) as well as the second (1998-) Congo war are covered.

The book is divided into thirteen chapters written by a mix of highly acclaimed Africanists along with a few junior but promising scholars. The reader is provided with an interesting account of the reasons behind the involvement of African states in what has been termed ‘African World War I’. Former Zaire (or what is today called the Democratic Republic of Congo) has indeed become the battlefield of a continental war. No less than a dozen African countries have at one point or another been military engaged in the war. An equally impressive number of Congolese and foreign rebel movements and armed factions of various kinds are adding confusion to an already extremely complex situation.

These armed forces and movements are not only combating each other but also targeting civilian populations, plundering the resources of the country and bringing destruction to what is left of the state’s social services. All this is inflicted to such an extent that one has termed the conflict ‘the most deadly war ever documented in Africa or anywhere in the world during the

past half-century.¹ And yet, with very few exceptions, events in the Congo hardly ever make the news. Not only is the conflict fought far from what is considered the centre of the political world, it is perhaps too complex a situation for the media to easily cover.

However, the last argument is no longer valid since the publication of 'The African Stakes of the Congo War'. The authors have, however, succeeded in making this complex history very accessible by explaining the motives of most African countries in the conflict, be it the major belligerent parties (Angola, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, and Uganda) or the principal driving forces behind peace initiatives (South Africa) as well as the rebel groups involved. The chapters are well documented and provide a number of keys to understanding and reading the events, which gives the reader plenty of background material.

The analysis of the motives of the various stakeholders is further contextualised in two introductory chapters; one on the current academic debate over order and disorder in postcolonial Africa and the other on the origins of the Congo War. Finally we are presented with three broadly lateral chapters on the proliferation of arms, the economic impact of the war, and the issue of refugees and internally displaced persons. As such 'The African Stakes of the Congo War' forms a coherent whole based on a judicious selection of the warring factions' motives for intervening in the conflict. Although the aim of the editor is clearly to cover the *African* stakes in the war, in order to present an over all picture it would have been interesting to broaden the analysis beyond the African stakeholders alone. Western states that likewise have a stake in the D.R.C. (such as Belgium, France, the UK and the USA), have also manoeuvred to protect their interests in the wider region. Similarly, since it is often argued that the current (low to medium intensity) war in the Congo is dragging on because of the economic motives of the parties involved, it would have been useful to extend the analysis of the economic impact of the war to the corporate world as another stakeholder in the conflict.

This notwithstanding, the book is certain to be of use to a broad spectrum of readers concerned with the analysis of conflict in general, be they academics, diplomats or journalists. But it will be of particular interest to all those eager to learn more about this forgotten war. In light of recent attempts to end the conflict, one may hope that a publication like this will contribute to a more effective peace negotiation process. We must not forget that more than three million people have already died as a result of the war and that the complexity of the situation has for too long hindered its effective resolution.

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Notes:

1. International Rescue Committee, *Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Results from a Nationwide Survey* (April 2003).

Africa Since 1935 (General History of Africa. Volume 8). Ali. A. Mazrui ed. California: University of California Press 1999. 1072 pp.

Persons familiar with UNESCO's History of Africa series would welcome this final volume, which deals with Africa from 1935 to the 1990s. The years under consideration cover a crucial period in world history, particularly Italy's invasion of Ethiopia (1935), World War Two, anticolonial struggles and independence.

It is commendable that the thirty chapters are divided into seven sections with appropriate themes. One noteworthy feature is that the publication does not attempt to glorify Africa but instead offers an objective and coherent history of its people, institutions, economic conditions and political systems. For instance, chapter 13, "Industrial development and urban growth, 1935-80", acknowledges the causes and existence of squatter settlements in such areas as Lagos, Nairobi, and Algiers.

The wealth of relevant tables, statistics, plates, photographs, charts and maps add luster to the study of Africa's recent past. Undoubtedly, the book's diversity of information will appeal to persons in a broad range of fields including agriculture, economics, sociology, history, politics and geography. This stems from a multifaceted approach and multidisciplinary method which is based on a variety of sources as evident in the comprehensive bibliography.

In the 21st century, with the encompassing globalization, certain chapters such as "Pan-Africanism and Regional Integration" and "Nation-building and Changing Political Structures," will be extremely relevant for Africa in the future. There are some interesting topics such as that pertaining to the African diaspora. Joseph Harris in "Africa and its Diaspora Since 1935" must be lauded for mentioning the contributions of the African diaspora in Latin America and South America. Previous scholars have tended to overwhelmingly focus on the African diaspora, in the United States or Caribbean.

There was need for more information on the horrendous impact of AIDS on the African continent. Apart from a brief mention, this volume remained surprisingly silent on diseases and health. Such an omission is unforgivable and the editor should have sensed the gravity of the issue and included a chapter on AIDS and diseases facing Africans, which could have examined strategies to curb the spread of these diseases as well as addressing the humanitarian efforts of international organizations.

On a daily basis, the glaring challenges such as desertification, poverty, diseases, deforestation and lack of political unity threaten millions of Africans. Undoubtedly, Africa has to solve its problems and be prepared for the technological revolution and globalization. The creativity and resilience of the Africans are assets which will serve them well in coping with an uncertain future. This volume allows us to appreciate not only Africa's burdens but the North-South divide and the schism between developing and underdeveloping countries. Despite minor shortcomings, the final volume in the series on the history of Africa is a testimony that Africa has a proud tradition of intellectual, cultural and political skills and achievements.

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