

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Mandela's World: The International Dimension of South Africa's Political Revolution, 1990-99.** James Barber. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004. 256 pp.

**Thabo Mbeki's World: The Politics and Ideology of the South African President.** Sean Jacobs and Richard Calland, eds. New York: Zed Books, 2003. 304 pp.

These two books share similar titles. That is about all that they share. James Barber's *Mandela's World* is a monograph that explores South Africa's foreign policy in the context of the peaceful transition from apartheid rule to multiracial democracy. *Thabo Mbeki's World* is a collection of essays assessing the politics and ideology of Nelson Mandela's successor as South Africa's president. Barber explores the outside world in the context of Mandela; Calland and Jacobs and their contributors explore Mbeki as a sun around which South Africa orbits.

In addition to thematic differences, these two books deviate strikingly in tone and approach. Where Barber provides a scholars' thorough and detached (as much as detachment is possible) view of South Africa's relations with the rest of the world in the 1990s, the contributors to Calland and Jacobs are polemicists who are anything but detached. Where Barber operates with clear if workmanlike prose, the essayists making their *j'accuse* against Mbeki (and almost all of them have come to their topics as prosecutors, and not defenders) are oftentimes not as successful. Several are clear and well written, but a number are turgid.

James Barber might be the most respected historian of sub-Saharan African foreign policy and diplomatic relations. *Mandela's World* can best be seen as the logical continuation of his work on South Africa's foreign policy since World War II. In 1972, he published *South Africa's Foreign Policy 1945-1970* and in 1990, he and John Barratt co-authored *South Africa's Foreign Policy: The Search For Status and Security*. This volume explores South Africa's remarkable transition in the 1990s through the lens of foreign relations.

Initially it is somewhat difficult to ascertain where Barber is going. He spends the first quarter of the book exploring the by now well-trodden ground of the negotiated settlement that led to the epochal 1994 elections that brought Nelson Mandela and the long *verboden* African National Congress to power. Barber surely could have truncated this first section in order to move into his exploration of the settlement in the international context in which De Klerk, Mandela and their underlings and allies jockey for international support, which occupies section two: "Negotiations and Competitions for International Support."

The book hits its stride in the last two sections in which Barber assesses the foreign policy challenges, achievements, and shortcomings of the Mandela years. After the initial euphoria about the country's transition to democratic rule, reality set in. Mandela miracle or no, South Africa's neighbors tended to fear it as both a potential threat and as the likely recipient of the

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v9/v9i1-2reviews.pdf>

bulk of the precious investment coming in from the outside world. South Africa's economy and military made it a potential leviathan, and neighboring states felt that they needed to eye the "Rainbow Nation of God" warily.

The rest of the world, particularly the western powers, tend to have short attention spans. Once the self-congratulations were done, and Mandela's inauguration passed, the expected wave of aid that most expected would be forthcoming fell short of expectations. South Africa struggled somewhat to find its place in the region and on the continent, and did not always succeed in accomplishing its foreign policy goals. Nonetheless, as Mandela prepared to step down from office, he handed to new president Thabo Mbeki a country that, in international affairs, was able to "punch above its weight."

Barber of necessity has provided an overview that scholars in future years will supplant as new information and historical distance from events change our understanding of South Africa's role in the region, continent, and the world. Nonetheless, *Mandela's World* provides a model for contemporary history and offers a useful primer for understanding South Africa's role in the international community in its first years of freedom.

If Barber provides a model for scholarship on contemporary issues, Jacobs and Calland show some of the difficulties of making spot assessments *in medias res*. The two initially proposed the book in 2000 – Mbeki only entered office in 1999 – and published the final product in 2002. Many of the essays feel temporal, rushed, and not especially insightful in 2006, just four years after publication, when Mbeki still sits in office.

Given the staunch anti-Mbeki approach of the vast majority of the contributors, it might have been useful for the editors to have branched out to find someone who could have brought a perspective more sympathetic to the ANC to have tempered the opposition. In the wake of the publication of this book, after all, the ANC with Mbeki at its head did win another overwhelming election victory, and indeed the 2004 results gave stronger support to the party and its leader than they had received in 1994 or 1999. One need not believe that Mbeki has been an especially great leader, or even a particularly good one, to wonder if he could possibly be (or have been) as bad as this book makes him out to be. As it is, this book is the written equivalent of an echo chamber.

The main critiques essentially argue that Mbeki has been too willing to embrace "neocolonialism," or "global capitalism," or "western style capitalism" (none of which are especially clearly defined). This, according to the contributors, is bad. The respected Africanist John Saul, in the first essay after the editors' introduction, goes so far as to posit, "the phrase 'socialism or barbarism' has rarely had more meaning than in contemporary South Africa under Mbeki." This is a flabbergasting assertion. South Africa needs many things. Socialism in the year 2002 (or 2006, or I daresay 2016) is almost assuredly not one of them. Whatever criticisms one might have of the modern capitalist system, it would seem foolhardy for South Africa to withdraw from that system. Free markets are certainly no panacea in and of themselves, but rejecting free markets, or some semblance thereof, has universally led to disaster in Africa and elsewhere on the globe. One need not be a retrograde apologist for right wing politics to believe as much.

Jacobs and Calland divide the book into two sections, "Ideology" and "Politics." Perhaps because the section on "Politics" is driven somewhat less by ideology than the section on

“Ideology,” it is more successful. The six contributions to this section earnestly try to grapple with the political questions South Africa faced in the first years of Mbeki’s presidency, and while they do not always succeed, these essays may be of more use to future scholars trying to understand the transition from Mandela to Mbeki.

Nonetheless, on the whole, *Thabo Mbeki’s World* does not succeed in capturing Thabo Mbeki’s world. The contributors to this volume are almost universally respected, as well they should be, but because of the unbalanced tone of the book and the lack of historical perspective on the subject, this is probably not the book to which most of us will go to as a guide to South Africa at the turn of the 21st century.

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**Talk Left Walk Right: South Africa’s Frustrated Global Reforms. Patrick Bond. Scottsville, South Africa: University of Kwazulu Natal Press, 2004. 266 pp.**

Patrick Bond is one of the most prolific and insightful political economists writing on Africa today. In this book he sets out the ways in which the South African government has attempted to reform the global political-economic system towards greater fairness for the developing world. The chapters cover an extensive range of topics from the World Trade Organization to reparations for slavery; the New Partnership for African Development to water privatisation. The book is written in an accessible style and illustrated with many excellent cartoons by Zapiro, who humorously reflects on the South African condition. The text also includes many useful figures on debt repayments and corporate profits amongst other indicators.

In the era of globalization the power of the nation state to formulate and steer economic and social policy is commonly thought to have deteriorated. Consequently the South African state has sought to reshape the global context through institutional reform. However, Bond concludes this is a “great scam.” Over eleven chapters and in elaborate detail he goes through the ways in which the South African government has at times undermined collective African bargaining positions at the World Trade Organization and criticized the Iraq war, while selling arms to the U.S. and British governments. In this way he sees the state elite as having their cake and eating it too – talking left and walking right as a way to reconcile the demands of their electoral constituency with demands of the holders of global and national economic and political power. The implication from this is that the South African state elites are “corporate sell-outs” or, as Bond puts it, managers of the equivalent of a “global Bantustan.” However, while some of the South African state’s positions have been reprehensible, an alternative reading is also possible – that is that they have made a judgement on the balance of global class and state power and have concluded that an outright anti-system challenge is destined to fail. Bond talks of Thabo Mbeki’s lack of support from domestic social movements which

delegitimate him, but surely it is national elections which determine this, which the ANC continues to win convincingly?

Bond details shocking statistics such as the fact that from 1995-2000 average black incomes fell 19% contributing to mass evictions and water disconnections, whereas incomes for whites rose by 15%. However, the achievements of the post-apartheid era, such as new house construction, are perhaps underplayed. The extension of the social security system is not mentioned in the book.

This book offers an informed, fast paced and passionate snapshot of South Africa's current history. However, its analysis could be stronger in places. Bond relies on underconsumptionist theory to inform his analysis. That is that there is a contradiction between the productive capacity of capitalism and the immiseration of workers which it generates, who cannot afford to buy its products thereby leading to systemic crisis. While this approach has merit, it underplays the ability of the capitalist system to regenerate itself through the production of new products – supply creating its own demand. Consequently economic crisis tendencies tend to be regionally, rather than globally, manifested.

In places the argument appears contradictory, as when Bond argues that South Africa “benefited” from the US African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) much more strongly than other African countries through enhanced trade, while decrying the neoliberal approach on which AGOA is founded.

The decommodification of basic human rights such as “lifeline” water and electricity supplies and access to anti-retrovirals that Bond advocates are eminently sensible and just. However economic growth could facilitate such expenditures, whereas ineffective economic delinking *a la* Zimbabwe would bring the worst of both worlds – a contracting economy and worsening social conditions. Bond argues that controls over capital are just as applicable in Zimbabwe as in Malaysia. However, the empirical evidence would suggest otherwise. Issues of state capacity and state-society linkages are of critical importance in managing a more interventionist economic regime.

Part of the global social justice movement's problem is that it hops from place to place, meeting to meeting rather than creating alternative infrastructures of politico-economic power. Consequently Bond seems to favor a more localist turn; not overthrowing the capitalist mode of production, but the scale at which it operates. However, South Africa's economy is now growing strongly and there was substantial employment creation in 2005/6. As Alan Hirsh argues in an important book, *Season of Hope*, also published by University of Kwa-Zulu Natal press, the South African government has combined a variety of policy approaches, rather than just adopting a straightforward neoliberal one, which may be partially responsible for this turnaround. However, much of this growth is driven by Chinese and American deficit financed demand, and its sustainability is open to question.

This book deals with some of the most important issues facing South Africa. It is engaging, and packed with information and insight. It draws on both journalistic reporting and heavy hitting academic analysis, combined in a way which perhaps only Patrick Bond can, having straddled both of these worlds. As such it represents another valuable contribution to the literature on South Africa, although covering some of the same ground as Bond's other books

on South Africa. His most recent book on *Looting Africa* deals more explicitly with continental issues and is itself an excellent read.

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**Is Violence Inevitable in Africa? Theories of Conflict and Approaches to Conflict Prevention.** Patrick Chabal, Ulf Engel, and Annamaria Gentili (eds). Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill Academic Publishers, 2005. 245 pp.

*Is Violence Inevitable in Africa* offers a survey of perspectives on collective violence and conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. The volume covers many subjects, such as ethnic conflict, decentralization, power-sharing, and peacebuilding. Political science is the primary disciplinary touchstone, but the chapters include anthropological, economic, and sociological perspectives. In the preface, the editors note that they asked the contributors to explicitly address the topical focus. The result, a multiplicity of literature reviews, can be a useful resource for scholars. However, the array of theoretical overviews could be bewildering for some readers, and it underlines a key problem, namely the need for more synthesis of the material.

In the introduction, Chabal uses the lens of political action to argue that African conflicts should be viewed in terms of embedded rationality rooted in precolonial neo-patrimonialism. Foregrounding African social patterns of the *longue durée*, Chabal parallels the recent trend of emphasizing African agency. His focus on scarcity, rationality, and neo-patrimonialism deserves serious consideration, but it leaves out major themes in the literature and the ensuing chapters. His piece would therefore be more appropriate either as a chapter or an introduction to a more focused body of work that clearly elucidated his thesis.

The book has many strong points. The chapters by de Bruijn, van Dijk, and Hesseling provide insightful anthropological analyses that nicely complement prevailing political and econometric perspectives. The literature reviews in many of the chapters are good references for readers seeking surveys of the theories in this subject area. Gentili's chapter, for example, offers a good discussion of the ethnic conflict literature. Another strength is the inclusion of an applied view in the piece by Idriss from the organization Search for Common Ground. In addition, Engel's conclusion provides an admirable overview of the policy-oriented literature. There has been insufficient cross-pollination between practitioners, policy-makers, and academics. One does wish that such a dialogue could have been included here and that the conflict resolution literature could have been addressed, but perhaps other works can take up these issues. Hopefully, they will include African authors.

Although typical of edited volumes, the lack of a synthetic analysis of the chapters does lessen the potential contribution of this valuable body of work. The title suggests what is promised in the introduction: a "systematic discussion of some of the root causes of violence" supplemented by case studies that also address resolution efforts. That goal would have been

furthered by posing central questions in the introduction and addressing them in the conclusion. The book's organization could also have been reworked. It has two parts; one concentrates on violence and conflict prevention and the second on conflict resolution. The volume could have been enhanced by dividing it between chapters on conflict causation and those on prevention and resolution. Each section could have an introduction and a conclusion that sums up the similarities and differences in the chapters and their significance in relation to the existing literature. Additionally, Chabal's introduction poses the key question of whether there is something unique to the African context which makes the continent particularly conflict-prone. That question should have been explicitly addressed in the conclusion.

Given the time demands on academic writers and the pressure to produce numerous publications, it may be unrealistic to expect that edited volumes will be either tightly focused or reasonably comprehensive. The fact that the volume leaves this reader eager to answer key questions may have its positive side. One might consider, for example, the hypothesis that scarcity (or abundance) produces widespread violence. The many empirical counter-examples demonstrate that the answer is "not necessarily." In the first chapter, Cramer alludes to a dynamic overlooked in Chabal's introduction, namely that abundance can be as significant as scarcity in conflict situations, as Collier and others have pointed out. However, although scarcity (and abundance) can increase the potential for violence, ultimately, it is social relations that matter the most. Several of the chapters underline this idea, which can be paraphrased as conflict and violence are fundamentally about meaning.

Cognitive or interpretive frameworks emerge out of a dialectical interaction of socially transmitted worldviews and lived experience. The symbolic, normative realm of conflict includes political, sociocultural, psychological, and economic dimensions. Cramer's excellent literature review implies what this anthropologist considers a vital point, namely that the causality of intergroup conflict cannot be reduced to a single variable or even a set combination of them. Econometric approaches and concepts such as relative deprivation and collective action have varying explanatory power, yet while certain situations may be more or less likely to produce violent conflict, there is no equation that can accurately predict widespread violence. The reason for this is deceptively simple; violence is produced by actors and not by situations or structures. Consequently, a nuanced ethnographic and sociohistorical perspective is essential for understanding conflict dynamics.

In summation, the volume would benefit greatly from a more robust framing of the material that explicitly addressed the questions implied in the title. However, this critique applies to most edited volumes. The breadth and depth of the literature reviews make this a worthy purchase. The book would not be an easy read for the uninitiated; however, due to the range of theoretical overviews and array of topics, it is a worthy addition to the collections of budding and seasoned Africanists interested in conflict and peacebuilding. The volume may also be useful for North American readers who are unfamiliar with prevailing themes in the European literature. Hopefully, this work can serve as a platform for sustained interdisciplinary efforts to enrich theory and practice.

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**The French Imperial Nation-State: Negritude and Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars. Gary Wilder. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. 386 pp.**

Here's a fresh exploration of colonial overrule through the prism of social theory and literature: how did fervent minds, exercising their insightfulness and their hopes within the artifices of imperial political reason, ponder their world, in France, in West Africa, and in the French Caribbean space, in the 1930s? And what conclusions can we draw from their exertions, most notably in Africa? These are among the key questions which drive Gary Wilder's penetrating and meticulous account of colonial humanism and Negritude through the interwar period in the French West African empire.

Wilder studies two different but related "cohorts" of colonial intellectuals: French social and political theorists striving to infuse colonial political rationality with paternalist humanism, and Black writers proposing transformative projects of the French colonial empire which would be grounded in egalitarian humanism. Wilder demonstrates that although the two currents were inextricably interrelated at various levels, conceptual as well as personal, and were both contingent on the specific context of the colonial empire, their projects were distinct and converged only in the imagination of an ultimately unrealized political construct—the French imperial nation-state.

The French colonial humanists, most prominent among them such administrators-ethnographers as Maurice Delafosse, Jules Brévié, Robert Delavignette, Henri Labouret and Georges Hardy, articulated an epistemic formation derived from ethnological research and their administrative work to a vision of Greater France in which the cohabitation between metropolitan citizens and African national subjects would bolster France's international stature, serve its economic interests, and improve the economic conditions of the Africans while preserving their culture. In the context of the postliberal, Welfarist orientations of the 1930s, the colonial humanists associated France's greatness (economic and political) to the welfare of its colonial subjects, in ways, however, which revealed the inherent contradictions of the colonial project. A liberal democracy founded on republican values of active civism, liberty and equality, France developed in its colonial empire laws and policies predicated on political quiescence, subordination and racial/cultural hierarchy. Rather than asserting, as does much of the historiography on the subject, that these two aspects of the imperial French polity were distinct and mutually exclusive, Wilder posits that they were in fact two faces of the same coin, and mutually reinforcing in the making of a racialized imperial nation-state. At the same time that the equal human worth of Africans is proclaimed by republican universalism, their apparently obdurate cultural particularism is highlighted and denigrated by the associated notions of French cultural modernity or civilization. Colonial subjects are thus captured in a double bind which justifies their subservience through the task of their intrinsically delayed emancipation. As French nationals, they are dispossessed of a nationality that would be articulated to their own cultures, and as colonial subjects, they are deprived of the political rights associated with French citizenship.

While colonial humanism was being deployed within the instrumentalities of imperial government, Black students from Africa, the Antilles and Guiana confronted the ambiguity of republican racism in metropolitan France. Wilder traces the itinerary of a number of young

Black students from their tropical homes to Paris where both the dynamism and the oppressions of an exclusive cosmopolitan culture creates the climate of crisis that would lead to the birth of the Negritude movement. Léon Gontran Damas from Guiana, Aimé Césaire from Martinique and Léopold Sédar Senghor (Wilder calls him Leopold Senghor) from Senegal are the focus of Wilder's analysis. He shows how their intellectual evolution was shaped by the consciousness of the colonized, the contact with African American writing and radical outlook, and a tutelary dialogue with colonial humanists. By studying Negritude at its living sources, as it were, Wilder offers a fresh approach to a stale and, as he says, "calcified" idea. He conveys to us the sense of urgency which led these young Black intellectuals to invent the poetic forms and the theoretical *démarches* of a radical critique of colonization in an effort to break the double bind which defined their condition. Nonetheless, the aspiration to an egalitarian humanism and the celebration of African and Black particularity, which are emblematic of the Negritude movement, were overdetermined by the idiom of colonial humanism and French republicanism. The Negritude authors effectively recreated colonial humanism's discourse of incompatibilities between African and French cultures, while however asserting that modernity and French citizenship could transcend such deep-seated incompatibilities. On another level, Wilder's complex commentary on Damas, Césaire and Senghor's poetic oeuvre shows how these literary expressions worked both as corrosives revealing the bare, oppressive structures of colonial rationality and as the portent of an "alternative universalism, African humanism" which would have renovated Greater France. Yet Wilder leaves us also with the impression that Negritude's radicalism was indeed literary and that, politically and socially, it was ultimately an accommodation to colonial overrule. In that sense and although he rejects using the word "failure" regarding such projects and ideas, latter day, "calcified" Negritude at least can be considered a failure, as it ends up propping French neo-colonialist policies and its authoritarian African clients, as exemplified by the case of Togo's Eyadéma, which is discussed at the end of the volume. While not completely unwarranted, this assessment somewhat undervalues the key differences between the Negritude writers, and by insisting on the imminence of the movement to the French colonial enterprise, it underplays its alternative sense of African autonomy. For instance, it is clear that the appeal of Negritude writings has outlasted the French colonial empire (which cannot be said of the works of the colonial humanists) and it is poised to survive the declining French neo-colonial power as well.

Wilder's study is a serious and successful attempt at combining a macro level analysis of historical evolutions with political theory. He succeeds in this endeavor by adapting to his research the set of concepts and theoretical/methodological approaches derived from Foucault's work on political reason and governmentality. Wilder displays indeed the very Foucauldian suspicions against references to ideologies and pronouncements about success and failure based on the material achievements of programs and agendas. The liberating French imperial republic dreamed in different but related ways by colonial humanists and the Negritude authors failed to materialize, but the ways in which it was fought for, and in a sense, fought against, make for an enlightening tale. A substantial gain from reading this book is well summarized by Wilder when he writes that "inquiry into what might have been based on what actually existed may open possibilities for pursuing what might be beyond what is."

Wilder's writing style is crisply attuned to the complexity of the historical situations and the textual artifacts in which he weaves his argument. It can be occasionally dense, especially since his analytical narrative lacks colors and is deprived of impressions of the concrete and of the living context. Texts and theories dominate over facts and people. The reference to Marxist analysis invoked in introductory theorizations did not yield an exploration of the material basis of the world in which those texts and theories were produced. The important point however is that Wilder renews the historiography on the French colonial empire by compellingly arguing the identity between republican politics and colonial overrule, and by bringing to bear on his analysis a fertile and promising conceptual framework. We should look forward to new works from this historian.

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**Famine that Kills: Darfur, Sudan (Revised Edition). Alex De Waal. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. 258 pp.**

'It is deeply sad that Darfur should not only be a textbook study of famine, but of genocide as well.' (Alex De Waal)

From this deep concern over Darfur, Alex De Waal felt the need to assess and understand what has changed in a region currently considered to represent the world's worst humanitarian disaster. Almost twenty years after the first edition of *Famine that Kills*, and despite the author's recognition of some of the methodological limitations of the book and the evolution of humanitarian studies, the relevance of the book remains unquestioned. With an unchanged version of *Famine that Kills*, this new edition remains challenging for academics, practitioners and everyone concerned with the effectiveness of humanitarian relief. When it was first published and drawing significantly from the author's experience in the field, the book was a study of the famine which struck Darfur during 1984-85, focusing mainly on the tension between conflicting understandings of famine. It was, and to a certain extent still is, essentially a critical analysis of dominant literature and practice on famine relief and an attempt to change the way in which the affluent world understands and addresses famine crises in poor countries.

Refusing to be part of a new orthodoxy imposed on poor societies, De Waal assumes a rather critical stance, manifestly against a sterile agenda of relief to respond to famines and in favour of a redefined one, focused on the voiced concerns of rural people and the principles that underlie their actions. In 1989, the book aimed to start a fundamental dialogue between 'outsiders' and the rural people victims of famines. Today, this goal remains largely unchanged, as well as the book's main challenges, i.e. the need to problematize the concept of famine and challenge the assumption that outsiders naturally know what famine is and what is the best way to put an end to it. In a particularly interesting and acute new preface, De Waal seeks to understand what has changed since then and what lessons have been learned by the

international community in its responses to famine and crises of massacres and displacement. Despite an increased knowledge base about famines and the strategies to respond to them, as well as the adoption of codes of conduct and professional standards, the author argues that there are still important limitations, since there has not been a full translation of such increased expertise into more effective relief operations. The dialogue that Alex De Waal attempted to initiate between relief agencies and the people they serve remains tenuous, because the necessary preconditions— effective self-scrutiny, willingness to be patient and listen hard by those involved with famine relief— are still largely absent. Lamenting the lack of real progress in the analysis of the reality of rural people and also the continued neglect of the need to support their survival strategies, De Waal notes that most international writing and practice on the current famine in Darfur continues to mistakenly assume that relief food will make the biggest difference to the survival of these populations. In fact, to appreciate De Waal's critique of this ineffectiveness of international agencies' interventions, it is essential to understand and acknowledge that the impact of external relief programs may often be modest when compared to the far greater contribution to survival of traditional strategies and livelihoods maintained by people's own efforts.

In this new preface, and faced with the current tragic circumstances of the people in Darfur, De Waal also tries to understand the roots of current violence in the region and the origins of the massacres occurring ever since 2003. Acknowledging the existence of complex and overlapping identities in Darfur he thus examines, among other things, questions related to the roles of land, settlement disputes, national politics and ideology, which are key issues if one is to understand Darfur and the conflicts therein, and which must be addressed when responding to what is happening in the region. Recognizing an ongoing 'genocide' in Darfur, which fits the definition contained in the 1948 Genocide Convention, i.e. campaigns against ethnic groups with the intention of eliminating them in part or in a whole, as a consequence of a deliberate governmental military strategy, the author alerts us however to the mistakes of seeing it as a 'genocide' in the sense of absolute extermination of a population, and to the dangers of a refusal to respond appropriately.

But despite an unmasked scepticism, this revised edition ends with a note of hope: the hope that if the people of Darfur are provided with security, human rights, political representation, and the opportunity to pursue their livelihoods and develop their region, they will surely use their energy and determination to good effect. As De Waal so correctly observes, "outsiders should be humble in the face of the lived experience of surviving genocide. The people of Darfur have shown resilience in surviving famine: let us hope they have the same skills when faced with genocidal massacres."

*Famine that Kills* keeps on reminding us, then, that there is no universally applicable panacea to end famine or war, and that it is mainly people's own efforts, made possible by security in rural areas, effective health services and real international commitment that will help do that.

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**The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media and International Activism. Clifford Bob. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 237 pp.**

In *The Marketing of Rebellion*, Clifford Bob poses a set of questions likely to find a broad audience among both scholars and practitioners. “How and why do a handful of local challengers become global *causes célèbres* while scores of others remain isolated and obscure? What inspires powerful transnational networks to spring up around particular movements? Most basically, which of the world’s myriad oppressed groups benefit from contemporary globalization?” (2).

Bob approaches these questions from the literature on social movements, to which he applies the concept of “exchange” to explain interactions between local movements and the external allies whose support they solicit—namely, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and transnational advocacy networks (TANs). A “market for transnational support” is created through the mutuality of interest between NGOs and TANS, on the one side, and domestic challengers, on the other— but the market is one where supply outstrips demand. Thus, the relative power of each party to the exchange almost invariably favors the NGO, as “their support has great significance for hard-pressed movements, yet NGOs have little reason to back any particular challenger” (20).

Indeed, Bob’s marketing perspective specifically omits the moral aspects of the insurgent-NGO transaction in favor of strategic elements in order to understand the success and failure of particular appeals for support. There is no “meritocracy of suffering” in this competitive global marketplace, where the degree of oppression rarely corresponds to the level of external acclaim. This marketing perspective is contrasted, awkwardly at times, with a “global civil society approach” celebrating the emergence of so-called principled forces arrayed against myriad injustices. In contrast, Bob underscores the elements of competition over cooperation, interest over principle, and strategic and structural advantage over the justice of a group’s cause.

To demonstrate the utility of marketing theory, Bob compares two cases of successful marketing in the Niger Delta and Chiapas—the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People and the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*—with similarly-situated counterparts who failed to gain support, the Ijaw in Nigeria and the *Ejército Popular Revolucionario* in Mexico. “The transnational success of the Zapatistas and Ogoni were... complex, eminently political processes marked by strategic maneuvers and resonant framing on the part of insurgents and by careful assessment of mutual interests on the part of NGOs” (179).

The book’s account of MOSOP’s success in soliciting external allies illustrates these processes. Ken Saro-Wiwa, as with Subcomandante Marcos in the Zapatista case, emerges as a key figure in the story. Saro-Wiwa’s wealth and contacts facilitated MOSOP’s overseas activity and provided contacts with environmental and human rights groups that acted as “gatekeeper” NGOs. Their decision to back MOSOP activated other organizations to do the same (in addition to gatekeepers, Bob’s typology of NGOs includes, “followers” that rely on the recommendations of gatekeepers, and “matchmakers,” such as the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, that promote challengers to more powerful NGOs). Bob vividly describes MOSOP’s efforts to frame its goals to match supporter characteristics. Thus did the initial ethnonationalist agenda of political autonomy for the Ogoni translate into issues of human

rights and environmental destruction highlighting Shell's corporate malfeasance. Through a similar framing process, the Zapatistas went from defenders of Mexico's marginalized poor to a movement of indigenous resistance to all forms of "neo-liberalism". "These framings were not cynical inventions by power-hungry movements; instead, they corresponded to real though secondary elements of the underlying conflicts. For overseas audiences, however, these became the primary aspects, evoking feelings of familiarity, sympathy, and responsibility" (180).

The excellent conclusion examines the consequences of gaining transnational support. Here, Bob shifts from a focus on becoming a *cause célèbre*, the book's problématique, to more important questions about the consequences of outside support for the conflicts of local groups. His evaluation is pessimistic. Though the Ogoni campaign probably had some impact on Nigerian policy toward the Delta, the political marginality of the Ogoni and other minorities in Nigeria persists.

This leads to a series of recommendations on how to "tame the market," beginning with advice to insurgents to reconsider the prudence of internationalizing the struggle by seeking external aid. "Once gained, NGO assistance may promote unrealistic expectations both about an insurgency's prospects and its patrons' power to help achieve them" (116). This can leave insurgents even more vulnerable to domestic repression, whereupon they will find outsiders unable to help them at their moments of greatest peril. Such was certainly the case during the bloody crackdown against the Ogoni in 1995—at this moment, "the gravest crisis that MOSOP faced" its network of transnational support could not avert the disastrous execution of the Ogoni Nine, in spite of the networks successful lobbying of powerful governments and even Shell itself to place pressure on the Nigerian government.

With this book, Bob has provided a detailed portrait of how transnational support networks develop around local conflicts. No doubt his book will inspire passionate criticism from NGO and TAN practitioners who insist on the primary role of principle and morality in their work and perhaps they are correct. But Bob makes a strong argument that from the perspective of the group's soliciting outside aid, groups such as the Uyghurs, West Papuans, or India's Dalits (untouchables), hard-nosed calculations of costs and benefits in the competitive marketplace for recognition and aid appear to outweigh sympathy and emotion.

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**Practicing History in Central Tanzania: Writing, Memory, and Performance. Gregory H. Maddox with Ernest M. Kongola. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2006. 178 pp.**

Gregory Maddox's book, *Practicing History in Central Tanzania*, is good example of a new genre of African history that takes as its subject African public (popular, amateur or local) historians, sometimes called ethnohistorians, who write the histories of their own people for a family, local community and/or national audience. This inquiry is more interested in why and how people write history rather than the historical content itself. It seeks to historicize the

practice of history in Africa by demonstrating how the post-colonial African context influences the relationship of the present to the past. With books like Maddox's, Africanist scholars are now beginning to construct an African historiography that honors historians not trained in the academy.

In the not too distant past, public historians like Ernest Kongola, Maddox's subject, would have been disparaged by academics as someone whose writing of history was neither authentic oral tradition nor scholarly research. Furthermore, these popular historians were the bane of researchers collecting oral tradition, who found their informants "contaminated" by written histories, a process known as "feedback" in the methodology. Yet this book ably demonstrates that "giving voice to the voiceless" might also include these encyclopedic informants. Maddox's analysis of Kongola's historical practice as a way to "explore the production and meaning of history in 20<sup>th</sup> century Africa" is a wonderful addition to this growing body of literature.

Maddox argues that the seven volume historical corpus of Gogo public historian, teacher, and political officer Ernest M. Kongola, contributes to the construction of both a post-colonial social order and his own social personality. Although Kongola himself represents an elite class of educated Christian Tanzanians, he does not make a radical break with the traditional Gogo past, but rather acts as a culture broker or mediator to integrate clan oral traditions with a progressive nationalism and salvation history. In doing so, Kongola establishes a synthetic vision of the past that emphasizes continuity with, rather than opposition to, modernization and national development. Kongola's work can be understood as both hegemonic, in that its' Swahili language discourse legitimizes the authority of the nation, and counter hegemonic, in that it preserves the distinctly local and intimate.

Kongola, like others of his class who have gained power in post-colonial Tanzania, creates order by "domesticating" Christianity and smoothing over the generational and gendered struggles that resulted from colonialism. In Kongola's autobiography, which is reproduced in full, one sees the dominance of the mission, school and career in structuring his life. Kongola's autobiography is told as a moral exhortation for discipline and perseverance. Maddox describes Kongola's written work as performance to reinforce the notion that the stories are told in social space and time. Kongola, of course, does not perceive of his work as creating a new social order, rather he sees himself as searching for the truth about the past and recording it for future generations. In spite of this disjuncture, Maddox ably uses Kongola's work to demonstrate the creative intellectual work of literate Tanzanians to make sense of their place in the world.

The sources for this book are primarily Kongola's historical works (clan histories, his autobiography and the biographies of his wife, mother and father) and Maddox's interviews. Kongola's writings are based on a genre of clan histories that he performs orally at funerals and which he prepares through his own research. The book includes maps drawn by Kongola to accompany both clan and biographical writing that illustrate the space of social relationships. Maddox also puts this material into dialogue with colonial and mission archival records, academic work on the Gogo and Dodoma, the work of other popular historians like Mathias Mnyampala and the performance of culture through dance troupes and cultural artifacts at the Village Museum.

The literature of post-colonial discourse (Chatterjee and Mamdani) provides a theoretical base for the analysis Kongola's work but is also critiqued by Kongola's practice. Maddox uses

Kongola's writing to transcend the orality-literacy divide, treating both as a performance within a social context. Although Kongola researches and writes history in a literary idiom he does so using the structure of clan narratives, producing a hybrid form. This book is useful to scholars interested in the production of history in Africa and post-colonial popular culture. The book, however, assumes knowledge of the theoretical literature of post-colonial discourse and the construction of ethnicity in Africa, making it difficult to use in an undergraduate course without careful preparation.

One of the most striking things about the book is the extent to which it is intensely personal and self-reflective, highlighting the uneasy relationship between popular and academic historians. The book is billed as a "collaborative work" between Maddox and Kongola, who read and commented on each chapter. The two began developing a mutually influential intellectual relationship in 1986 when Maddox appeared in Dodoma to begin his dissertation research and Kongola began writing history. Through his financial sponsorship of Kongola's project in Dodoma Maddox hopes to support a dialogue about the past that will destabilize unequal power relations in the academy. Yet the book reflects his ongoing anxiety about the power dynamics inherent in the relationship and his own sense of moral obligation to Kongola. Maddox ends the book by contrasting his fairly esoteric goal of analyzing social change in post-colonial Africa to Kongola's more practical goal of bringing together the past and the present for a community experiencing rapid change. It is fitting that this new genre of African history makes us all squirm as it brings our own practice of history under scrutiny.

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**Engendering Human Rights: Cultural and Socio-Economic Realities in Africa. Obioma Nnaemeka and Joy Ezeilo, eds. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 320 pp.**

Nnaemeka and Ezeilo provide a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary overview of how context shapes the definition, interpretation, and enforcement of human rights in Africa. The focus of the book is on "engendering" or "developing and producing" human rights in Africa at a time when the universal notion of human rights presents an attractive solution to the problems plaguing postcolonial African states. While the focus of others working in this area, such as Bunch (1990) and Uvin (2004), has been on transforming theory and practice to incorporate feminist, rights-based approaches to development, this text moves the conversation forward by making the argument that the indivisibility of rights demands that attention be directed to cultural rights, socio-economic rights, and policy implementation in order to achieve universal human rights. While all citizens are entitled to human rights, all citizens do not have access to this entitlement. Nor is it always an appropriate goal as the series editor, Chandra Mohanty, suggests. The authors emphasize the understated reality that the lack of access to human rights proportionately impacts women. Despite attempts to regulate human rights with international law, violations abound.

The five sections of the book question the relevance of focusing on the universality versus the indivisibility of human rights. In general, the sources referenced were consistent with the objective of bringing light to core legal documents as well as academic work from a variety of disciplines and regions. However, this edited volume suffers from some common problems. The volume maintains the thread of argument, but the chapters range widely in effectiveness. The diversity of disciplines represented confounds the internal consistency. The concept of human rights is not well defined, nor is it adequately critiqued. For example, the authors do not address the issue of the boundaries or limits of freedom when universal concepts such as human rights are applied to particular cultural contexts. Despite the weaknesses, the book is successful overall. The cogent introduction and impressive collection of articles by scholars and practitioners in fields including law, public health, education, politics, and psychology make the book relevant to a similarly diverse audience.

The core argument about the indivisibility of cultural, socioeconomic, and human rights is clearly defined in the introduction and reinforced through sections III, IV, and V. Section II offers important historical and cultural context for Egypt. The chapter by renowned activist El Saadawi is a celebration of one of the many women who have prevailed despite major obstacles, in the spirit of what the volume sets out to do. She interrogates how neo-colonialism and religious fundamentalism conspire to oppress women in Egypt. After a personal and poetic exploration of her experiences with religious fundamentalism, she concludes hopefully with a note about harbingers of women's empowerment in Egypt.

Section III keeps with the theme of historicism and how historical context influences the structure and efficacy of the health sector in sub-Saharan Africa. de Gruchy and Baldwin-Ragaven, a medical doctor and public health professor, focus on the implementation of human rights, how rights are defined, and by whom in South Africa. Nzenza-Shand interrogates the corollary issue of how "participation, access and information" relate to "culture, justice, and empowerment" and how this relationship is constructed and active outside and inside of Africa based on her public health research work in rural villages in Zimbabwe (63). She is one of the few authors to take the core argument of cultural relativism to its logical conclusion by discussing global sisterhood as a system of hierarchical dominance and by advocating for the incorporation of traditional beliefs in the health sector. By the same token, she maintains that an effective local health care system must incorporate traditional beliefs in order to meet its intended aims and be sustainable. Rassinguié, a professor in women's and gender studies, underscores the critical importance of community organizations as institutional vessels of cultural relevance, participation, and empowerment.

Section IV expands the core argument about contextualizing rather than universalizing human rights to the girl child. The articles in this section oscillate between the development and implementation of legal apparatus for protecting the rights of girls and female adolescents (Ewelukwa, a law professor, and Osakwe & Nwodo, both English professors) and case studies of child labor and school-related gender-based violence (Babalola & Nwashili, academic activists, and Webster, a teacher). The fifth and final section differs from Parts III and IV because it focuses on a violation of human rights—gender violence. This section would benefit from a section introduction. The first and last chapters of the section address female circumcision from different perspectives and to different ends on issues ranging from language

(‘female circumcision’ versus ‘female genital mutilation’) to interventions (‘intervening in phases taking account of lived reality’ versus ‘global campaigns to end the practice’). The middle two chapters on domestic violence both talk about how a private human rights violation can be addressed in a public and state-regulated sphere. I finished the section wanting a chapter that integrates the two perspectives and allows the chapters to be in dialogue with one another.

The final chapter began with a personal reflection on activist work in Germany, and ended with a conclusion which was better suited to the book as a whole rather than to the chapter alone. In her conclusion, Levin raises the concept of ‘nego-feminism,’ or the politics of negotiation, compromise, and shared values indigenous to African communities, a concept, which if raised earlier, would have been an apropos framework for the entire volume (297). Nego-feminism, a concept popularized by Nnameka, a professor of French, women’s studies, and African Diaspora studies, supports the argument that if communalism rather than individualism prevails, the natural balance of African society will allow women to change cultural norms in conversation with men.

The organizational critique does not, however, undermine the important points raised by the edited volume. Nor does it negate the central point that in Africa, the engendering of human rights requires specific attention to history, gender, race and context. The book will fill conceptual lacunas and bridge the human rights and development discourses in the classroom and beyond with case studies, which include lessons which can be applied to other contexts. *Engendering Human Rights* is an important book because it provides a broader framework for human rights and development. It raises issues such as cultural relativism, the universality of problems, and relates the human rights discourse to women and the girl child explicitly. This book shows that if we do not pay attention to the socioeconomic and cultural context of women, the girl child, and socially excluded groups when defining human rights, the entitlement is bankrupt.

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