The ‘Civil Society’ Problematique: deconstructing civility and southern Nigeria’s ethnic radicalisation by ADEDAVO OLUWAKAYODE ADEKSON
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This book identifies and attempts to transcend ‘four theoretical anomalies’ in the literature on civil society: the ‘myth of civility, narrow conceptualisation of the non-state realm, normative and ethnocentric tendencies evident within certain civil society analyses’. The author’s bold challenge to orthodoxy is anchored on detailed studies of three militant ethnic civil society organisations (CSOs) in Nigeria – the Ijaw (Izon) Youth Congress (IYC), the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), and the Oodua People’s Congress (OPC). The book contains nine chapters including the Introduction and Conclusion. The first three chapters deal with the foundational issues of theoretical and conceptual clarification, and the review of the literature on civil society, respectively. Case-studies of the three militant CSOs are presented respectively in chapters four to six, while chapters seven and eight focus on regime policy and the process of radicalisation.

This is a detailed and lavishly documented study, which contributes impressive theoretical, conceptual and empirical insights to existing knowledge. It successfully challenges what it regards as a false dichotomy between civil societies in the developed and developing worlds, the former being held up as models for the latter. It debunks the normative judgement hitherto made by scholars to the effect that civil society consists of a predominantly civil section and a much lesser uncivil one. The assumption that the state is ‘a monstrous, corrupt and inept leviathan that could only be resisted by a coherent, morally superior and orderly civil society’ is shown to be unfounded. Detailed case studies of the three ethnic militant organisations, which have had a running battle with successive Nigerian governments, are provided to buttress this deviation from the common perception of the civil society in the Global South.

A striking feature of the book is the wealth of data on, and the balanced analysis of, each of the ethnic militant groups studied, with an emphasis on their origins, character and process of radicalisation. Internal dynamics within the organisations – leadership, recruitment, agenda-setting – and the external environment, especially the (generally ham-handed) response of the Nigerian state to the ‘excesses’ of these groups, are shown to have influenced their perception of and reactions to government policies. But while all of them have combated the Nigerian state at various levels, the IYC has opened an additional front by confronting the oil multinationals. Hence, while repressive state policies have been the common target of the groups, the peculiar conditions of the Niger Delta have added a more explosive element to the engagement of the Izon (Ijaw)
with the Nigerian state. Moreover, these militant CSOs have demonstrated disenchantment with the Nigerian state by agitating for the creation of an ethnic homeland or sovereign state for their people. All but MASSOB have raised armed militias and engaged in fatal clashes with the agents of the Nigerian state. The OPC has achieved an odious reputation for unleashing mayhem on defenceless citizens, especially members of other ethnic groups resident in its homeland. Its membership is described as ‘undiscerning’, parochial and ‘despondent’ (p. 188).

Furthermore, Adekson has highlighted the peculiarities of and similarities among these groups. All of them have employed harsh rhetoric and belligerent language, which have a galvanising potential for violence. They have a common goal in self-determination either within or outside Nigeria, with the OPC tending towards the former outcome and the MASSOB and IYC leaning toward the other. The OPC has an incoherent agenda, compared to MASSOB and the IYC. In spite of its focus on a sovereign national conference and clamour for ‘true federalism’, it is confused over the issue of secession (p. 181). The Yoruba nationalist group, unlike the others, has alienated international sympathy because of its propensity for erratic behaviour and unbridled violence. The IYC is likewise ‘thoroughly confused but yet astute’ (p. 188). MASSOB is more disciplined than either the OPC or IYC (p. 196), though it has also been accused of extortion and other unsavoury activities.

In all, this book has achieved its objective of challenging theoretical orthodoxy and providing useful insights into developments in contemporary Nigeria and within these militant CSOs. It provides a balanced critique of the workability of decentralisation as a panacea for the crisis of the modern Nigerian state and of the oft cited grouse of marginalisation. It correctly demonstrates that repression, marginalisation and underdevelopment contributed largely to the radicalisation of these CSOs. In addition to analysing the problem, the author makes appropriate recommendations, such as the need for the Nigerian state to desist from deploying belligerent rhetoric and excessive force against the disaffected groups, but to focus on people-centred development. The author extends the study to the contemporary discourses on terrorism (pp. 215–8) and makes suggestions for future research.

Adekson, however, doubts the possibility of Igbo mass exodus and secession in spite of the exertions of MASSOB, which lacks both elite support and the kind of mass following commanded by the OPC and IYC. In any case, the Igbo are divided between the quest for the Presidency of the Nigerian state and the clamour for Biafra. Adekson’s conclusion that ethnicity is no more than ‘a manipulable and readily available artifact utilized by Nigerian elites’, but which seems to have developed a life of its own among the non-elites, reinforces the position of earlier writers.

That said, the book contains a fair number of omissions and errors. Shehu Musa Yar’Adua was not listed among the high profile victims of the Abacha junta (p. 55); South-South is duplicated on page 60; lied (p. 71) should be lay; Uwazurike’s hometown is Okigwe, not Okwe (p. 88); and there are sizeable Yoruba groups in Kwara and Kogi states, contrary to the impression created by the author (p. 110). A few spelling mistakes also occur in the text: organizations (p. 7); thayt (p. 8); and godbather (p. 156). The author might wish to re-consider
some contentious claims. The assertion that President Obasanjo supported the OPC (p. 97) has to be read against the activities of Mike Okiro, his police chief in Lagos, who carried out Obasanjo’s order to kill OPC militants on sight. This was done indiscriminately and with impunity in 2002. It is also debatable that Obasanjo, unlike his Hausa-Fulani predecessors, ‘permitted’ violent CSOs to operate on the scale described in the book. Second, the bomb blasts in Lagos under the Abacha junta, which the author attributed to the opposition, have now been shown to have been perpetrated by agents of the government, and ceased with Abacha’s death in July 1998! Finally, this book suffers from wrong arrangement of pages 5 to 12, which inconveniences the reader.

All said and done, this is a book that must be read by serious scholars of modern Nigerian politics for its multi-disciplinary approach, and its bold and fresh theoretical reinterpretations. Indeed, its empirical, theoretical and comparative findings have added fresh insights to the discourse on the state and civil society in the Global South and elsewhere.

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Mapping Yoruba Networks: power and agency in the making of transnational communities by K. M. CLARKE

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Since Evans-Pritchard’s 1937 first scholarly analysis of the folk beliefs and practices of any sub-Saharan community, the Azande (Southern Sudan and DR Congo), and N. A. Fadipe’s 1939 Sociology of the Yoruba, the first Ph.D. to be completed by an African, ethnographical studies have been transformed into a multi-faceted and multi-sited phenomenon.

The site of the work under review, Oyotunji village (South Carolina, USA) is an ‘intentional community’, to borrow from the sociological repertoire, which was founded some 33 years ago by HRH Oba Efuntola Adefunmi I (d. 10 February 2005). It is the only African village in North America for the western practitioners of the Yoruba faith and culture. Carl Hunt’s 1999 Oyotunji Village: the Yoruba Movement in America was the first fieldwork-based account of the Yoruba communities in the US, and the present effort by Clarke is a significant follow up. The author’s forte is to contextualise the workings of the orisa practices outside Nigeria, as reflected in the invocation by Yoruba revivalists of the chronotopic reconceptualisations of their ancestors.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part (pp. 51–153) establishes the framework for comprehending the context in which the political economy of ‘traditional’ Yoruba revivalism has emerged globally. The second (pp. 157–278) analyses the institutionalisation of the transnational religious and cultural practices of the Yoruba in terms of their universal legitimacy. The use of magical or religious institutions, rather than constitutional criteria, by Yoruba revivalists as a redemptive tool for the reclassification of their identities (pp. 201–30); the role of divination in establishing relations of membership and ancestral religious affiliation, for example, through ‘root reading’ (pp. 231–66); and the examination of
kinship through the investigation of female gender (pp. 257–78), all constitute the
templates for locating the place of power and agency in the making of Yoruba
transnational networks.

The deterritorialisation of Yoruba indigenous religious practices is indubitably
reflective of globalisation from the late twentieth century. However, we are faced
with an intriguing paradox with regard to Oyotunji village. Whereas other re-

vivalist movements in ‘public religions’ assume radical and political characters,
Yoruba revivalists in Oyotunji do not show any sign of this, although they exhibit
strong evidence of what the sociologist Jose Casanova (Public Religions in Modern
World, 1994) calls the ‘differentiation of social spheres’. This is a development
which the present work has unwittingly treated with a graceful sidestepping.

A significant development in Oyotunji village for which there is a remarkable
antecedent in historic Yorubaland is the king’s reading of the divinatory predic-
tions for the calendar year on the first day of every year. This role came to be
assumed by Muslim clerics in Yorubaland, rather than by ifa priests, as soon
as Islam became an enduring institution (P. J. Ryan, Ìmàlẹ – Òyọrùbà Muslim
Participation in the Muslim Tradition, 1978, p. 169). Whether there is any prospect of
a similar development in Oyotunji may be difficult to say, as there is no insight
into such a probability which the work under review might have been expected
to provide.

There are, however, some factual and conceptual inaccuracies in this book. The Jewish Hanukkah, the Christian Christmas, and the Muslim Ramadan
actually have nothing in common. More importantly, the Muslim Ramadan
feasting comes at the end of a month long fasting exercise throughout the Muslim
world, and is not particularly identified with the American Nation of Islam
(p. 145). The remark that the September 11, 2001 destruction of the World Trade
Centre was carried out by Islamic fundamentalist suicide bombers (p. 19), a
proposition which is by far the most discursive interjection in the work, reflects
the negative stereotypes for which the late Edward Said had always criticised
Western intellectual speculation. Also, the aggregation of 48% to Nigerian
Yoruba Christians against 47% to Muslims is grossly inaccurate; available data
on school enrolment here as well as other social matrices give a comfortable
majority to the Muslims in southwestern Nigeria. But by far the most remarkable
error which deserves more than a passing riposte is the suggestion that prior to
the ‘19th century, neither a unified national identity nor a linguistic identity
known as Yoruba existed under such a name’ (p. 170). In his Mī‘rā al-su‘ud (written
in 1613), Ahmad Baba al-Timbukti (d. 1627) listed the Yoruba as one of the ethnic
groups in existence in the sixteenth century. He added that Yorubaland supplied
slaves who were being funnelled into the Middle Niger valley from as early as the
late sixteenth century. Moreover, what is probably the oldest African woodwork
to be preserved in the West, an ifa divination tray that was acquired by the
German Christoph Weickman, entered a European collection around 1650
(Alisa LaGamma, Art and Oracle, 2000: 36). Yet another inaccurate assumption is
the thesis by Clarke that Yoruba is a derivative of the Hausa word Yaraba,
referring to Oyo people (p. 307, fn. 6). This sounds specious. The most eminently
sensible explanation in this regard is to consider Yaraba as a corrupt form of
Yoruba, a toponym which has some roots in relative antiquity, as our illustrations
above would confirm. The earliest documentary reference to the Yoruba by a
Hausa-Fulani scholar is in a legal responsum by a Katsina scholar Ibn Masanih (d. 1667), namely, his Azhar al-ruba. There is also the notice of the sale of an Arabic manuscript that was copied in 1659 to one Habib bn Hasan al-Malawi al-Yurbawi (R. D. Abubakre, ‘The Contribution of the Yoruba to Arabic Literature’, Ph.D. Thesis, SOAS, 1980: I, 23–4). Furthermore, an Arabic speaking North African trader mentioned Yarba[land] to an agent of the African Association in 1789 as one of the neighbours of Hausaland (P. E. H. Hair, The Early Studies of Nigerian Languages, 1967: 4, fn.3). From the foregoing, the inaccuracy in proposing the nineteenth century for the emergence of the Yoruba country and language, assuming Clarke did not mean ninth century for which evidence anyway is all but lacking, is a fundamental flaw that cannot be ignored.

By and large, the author’s style of presentation is very lucid and systematic, and the glossary is both enlightened and enlightening. However, the Yoruba word ‘pataki’ does not mean ‘story’ (p. 321); it is an adjective meaning ‘important’. The minor glitches and shortcomings noted notwithstanding, this work is a historic tour de force in ethnography and will doubtless serve as a point of departure for similar studies in future.

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Ghana’s New Christianity: pentecostalism in a globalising African economy by PAUL GIFFORD
London: Hurst, 2004. Pp. 216, £45.00; £16.50 (pbk.).
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This is the latest instalment of Paul Gifford’s ongoing research into contemporary expressions of Christianity in Africa. It is a rich and engaging account of the changing nature of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity within Ghana’s capital, Accra. Narrowing his focus to just one case study with which he has had lengthy engagement, Gifford nuances the findings of some of his earlier broad surveys.

We learn that in contemporary Accra Pentecostalism has eclipsed the mainstream Christianity of Catholicism, Methodism and Presbyterianism as well as Christian independency. Its media savvy Pastors-cum-Superstars have filled the airwaves with their preaching and gospel music, and created a new publishing niche for their tracts and manuals on self-improvement. Youthful congregations fill modern air-conditioned tabernacles and chapels for all-night services, as they come in search of the latest blessing and to participate in Christianised popular culture. Gifford stresses that the new Pentecostal upsurge does not constitute a homogenous movement, but is rather the sum of a number of succeeding waves, each of which draws upon and transforms that which has gone before.

In the early 1990s, when Gifford began his research in Ghana, Pentecostal Christianity was characterised by the Faith Gospel of Nicholas Duncan Williams, followed by a teaching phase. It then moved to miracle-healing, in which supplicants checked into prayer camps for lengthy spiritual diagnosis on the demonic forces that were thought to prevent them from receiving the blessings of health and wealth. By 2000, it had metamorphosed into a prophetic Christianity in which individual leaders such Salifu Amaoko discerned the spiritual blockages
preventing social and material advance. Success was now the dominant concern of Ghana’s Pentecostalism. It was apparent in the names of the latest churches: ‘The Triumphant Christian Centre’, ‘Power Chapel’ etc. It was emblazoned on car-bumper stickers: ‘Unstoppable Achievers’, ‘I am a Winner’. It was the theme of the latest conventions: ‘Taking your Possessions’, ‘Winning Ways’. And it was celebrated in song: ‘I am a stranger to failure/born to win’. Pastor David Oyedepo of ‘Winner’s Chapel’ would warn his flock: ‘Success is your birthright … If you won’t succeed go to another church.’ Pentecostalism had come to place more emphasis on personal achievement than moral reformation.

Gifford finds this vital strand of Ghanaian Christianity rather depressing. Although he does not use the term, it amounts to a false consciousness, a misguided response to Ghana’s socio-economic ills that attributes them to demonic forces and spiritual blockages. But it is not all bad news. Mensa Otabil, leader of the International Central Gospel Church, represents a one-man refutation of much of what the Movement now stands for. Otabil stands out as a Pentecostal for his insight into the structural, geo-political causes of Africa’s contemporary crises. Alongside his views on dependency and global inequality, he had more recently developed arguments about the threat to Ghana’s modernisation by the prevailing cultural attitudes of its own citizens. These include a continued deference to the white man, a divisive tribalism, the elevation of culture and heritage over progress, a preference for magical and spiritual solutions over merit and hard work, and a tendency to elect leaders concerned with power and status rather than performance and responsibility. Against these ‘strongholds’ of culture Otabil advocates the liberating power of education and personal responsibility. Otabil is immensely popular and influential in Ghana and beyond, and Gifford raises the possibility that he might reform the whole Pentecostal sector.

Since Gifford began researching African Pentecostalism in the late 1980s, there has been an accumulation of work on the subject by other scholars, some of it in response to his own conclusions. But Gifford is not much interested in debating with his interlocutors. This is unfortunate because some of the criticisms of his earlier work recur in his latest study. Most relevant here is his tendency to focus on the high profile events and the statements of leaders and elites, at the expense of local culture and its existential concerns. Gifford acknowledges, ‘Accra has some middle class suburbs … but most who attend these new churches come from areas where there may be several people sleeping in a single room. In the evening or on Sundays, just to be able to go somewhere different in one’s finery is of enormous importance. Cell groups can often add the intimacy of a close circle of friends’ (p. 30), but he chooses not to research the local expressions of Pentecostalism. The book’s greatest strength is also its greatest weakness. While it offers enormous insight into the mentalities of Ghana’s new religious elites, it tells us nothing about the life world of ordinary adherents: their work, family life, leisure activities or devotional practice. This is a great shame because Gifford has an eye for ethnographic detail. His lively accounts of Mercedes-driving Pentecostals with their mobile phones conspicuously obtruding from their back pockets would have been all the more powerful if contrasted with the lives of those believers who have not found material success.

To be fair, Gifford does engage with the work of Birgit Meyer, Ruth Marshall, Stephen Ellis and Gerrie Ter Haar, and David Martin, but his account of their
The first four scholars have argued that Pentecostalism provides a language or a set of idioms for conceptualising and contesting the unjust and unequal conditions in which adherents live. Martin has pushed the argument even further, arguing that Pentecostalism’s significance lies within cultural reformation. Gifford chides them all for not producing the evidence to substantiate their claims. Yet their work has demonstrated how Pentecostalism creates powerful new sources of legitimacy—a tendency not overlooked by Africa’s born-again rulers. It has also illustrated Pentecostalism’s capacity for individuation, and its ability to transform relations of gender and generation. So far the signs of ‘hope’ are small and localised, but this is where cultural change often begins. Cultural change is also the stuff of the longue durée, the unintended consequences of religious movements that are primarily about prayer and healing, not politics. Ordinary Pentecostals (who sleep several to a single room) rarely prosper, but they stay in these movements because they find personal security.

Gifford rightly avoids generalising his conclusions to the rest of the continent. The strength of his book lies in presentation of fresh empirical data on a rapidly changing strand of African religion. We learn that African Pentecostalism, like other Christian traditions, is a protean phenomenon with an enormous repertoire. It has the capacity to both reinforce the authority of elites and revise power relations in favour of the poor. It is too early to tell where its social and political significance lies.

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The World Bank and Africa: the construction of governance states
by GRAHAM HARRISON
doi:10.1017/S0022278X0524137X

In a well-received book, Robert Biel traced the wide context of political economy regulations imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in the 1980s, whereby states were ‘forced to change their whole economic structures in accordance with a philosophy imposed from outside’ (The New Imperialism: crisis and contradictions in North/South relations, Zed Books, 2000: 231). Graham Harrison’s The World Bank and Africa is an important contribution to this debate, that situates recent interventions by the World Bank in Sub-Saharan Africa within a more diverse context of regional governance structures. Harrison therefore brings up to date the changing dynamic and impetus surrounding governance intervention by the World Bank, linked to the structuring of capitalist institutions and state action in Africa.

In more detail, the focus of the book revolves around introducing the notion of ‘governance states’ as a sub-set of states that have undergone specific processes of World Bank programme lending, administrative reform, and discursive shaping. The key features of governance states include a privileged showcase status, recent economic growth, controlled processes of political transition, and the persistence of a stable and ordered state (pp. 39–42). It is argued throughout
the book that these characteristics, to different degrees, mark the contemporary cases of Mozambique, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Additionally, the form of intervention by the World Bank in the construction of these governance states has involved a new set of post-conditionality relations. Contemporary intervention is less the product of coercive intervention by external actors, and more the result of an internalisation of core features of neoliberalism within governance states. Governance states are historically grounded on the back of a previous period of crisis (e.g. Mozambique, 1980–89; Tanzania, 1979–86; Uganda, 1986–89) and/or conflict and capitulation vis-à-vis the IMF and World Bank (Tanzania, 1980–90; Mozambique, 1984–89). This is the context of First Generation Reform linked to the conditionality of rolling back the state, economic liberalisation, and structural adjustment programmes. By contrast, status as governance states is manifested in a Second Generation Reform agenda of post-conditionality, concerned with the nature of state action, institutional state capacity building, and a normative framing of governance. Whilst the underlying continuity is the furtherance of neo-liberalism, this proceeds through a form of intervention that is much more socially embedded, resulting in the internalisation of social arrangements, class interests, and capitalist social relations. This mode of intervention is presented as operating on a ‘sovereign frontier’, rather than a clearly demarcated internal/external boundary, so that the World Bank is understood to be ‘working within the sovereign frontier to constitute a specific role for governance states as mediators of African societies’ interactions with global forces’ (p. 26).

Throughout the book, Harrison outlines and articulates an extremely clear and highly sophisticated argument embedded both specifically in an analysis of the Mozambican, Tanzanian, and Ugandan cases, and generally in relation to the World Bank, to produce a theory of political action within these African states. In terms of conceptual innovation and empirical contribution, The World Bank and Africa should be required reading across the study of political economy, development, post-colonial African studies, and historical sociology approaches to the modern state in Africa. Several features, though, could have been developed in more detail. A more historical account of the relationship between conflict and capital accumulation shaping colonial and post-colonial statehood would have been welcome, and could have traced the specific set of social relations of production and processes of capital accumulation that have shaped Sub-Saharan Africa. Whilst Harrison does note that ‘the history of capitalism and the related form of modern state structures in Africa have been violent, contradictory and incomplete’ (p. 17), a more detailed survey of this terrain would have been appreciated. Put differently, a thorough periodisation of the historical and contemporary processes of state formation, marked by the history of capitalism and the relation of extra-economic violence to capital accumulation in Mozambique, Tanzania, and Uganda, would have been desirable. This would then have provided an invaluable backdrop to the construction of governance states, and the internalisation of embedded neo-liberalism, as distinct from the earlier conditionality era of post-colonial state-led developmentalism.

Overall, Graham Harrison’s analysis of governance states in Africa – linked to the shaping of a new terrain of intervention by the World Bank – is a winner. His analysis provides nuance in tracing the changing political geography of state
capacity, and the embedding of capitalist social relations in specific state forms in Africa. Although his argument could have been expanded in some areas, his mature account of the processes of internalisation within the construction of governance states associated with World Bank action in Africa is exceptional. It cannot be recommended highly enough.

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God, Oil & Country: changing the logic of war in Sudan by INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP


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The warring parties of the northern Sudanese fundamentalist government in Khartoum and its non-Islamic southern Sudanese counterpart have recently signed a peace pact in Kenya, ending one of the world’s longest civil wars. This book, published before the recent signing of this historically important peace treaty, was published two years earlier to guide and energise this long-awaited emerging peace process. The book is authored by the International Crisis Group, a private, multinational organisation committed to strengthening the capacity of the international community to prevent and contain conflict. Notwithstanding the book’s publication date, it still holds much that is important to readers of Sudan’s very recent history. Further, as numerous peace proposals between northern and southern Sudan have historically fallen by the wayside, this volume still provides insight for those in the process of guiding this tenuous peace.

Beginning with a summary of the war to date, the volume suggests that it is the responsibility of external international parties to initiate Sudan’s ultimate lasting peace effort. ICG stresses that peace can only be possible with a major international investment in diplomacy, incentives and pressures. Yet, there has never been a unilateral high-level sustained international effort to build a viable peace process for Sudan. The growing interest in this war-torn land, for both oil and human rights reasons, coupled with the change in the international landscape created by the terror attacks of September 11th, 2001, have now made these troubles more internationally urgent.

Ultimately, this volume urges that democracy must be restored, slavery and its trade must be stemmed, and grassroots efforts towards unity and reconciliation strongly supported. Further, the international community should also promote southern unity, which has been highly problematic in recent years.

Structurally, the volume contains eight chapters. After an extensive introduction, it begins by explaining the causes and long history of the war, an explanation of the key players, the terrorist connection, and the consequences of the war. It then follows with the innumerable peace initiatives and lastly, ICG’s recommendations for the construction of a comprehensive peace.

The strength of the book lies in the number of oral interviews conducted by ICS personnel (although neither the interviewer/s nor interviewees are identified except occasionally, thus, the same person could have been interviewed on numerous occasions). More importantly, interviews have been conducted in both
northern and southern Sudan. The chapter on ‘Understanding the Players’ is excellent in its explanation and perceptions of the members of the National Islamic Front. So too the chapter on ‘The Traffic Jam of Peace Initiatives’.

The weakness of the volume is that ICG has consulted virtually no professional scholarly works by historians of Sudan. This is seriously problematic, as the volume reaches back far into the past to explain the conflicts of the modern day. This factor weakens ICG’s suggested proposals for a future peace in Sudan, for without a deep and intimate understanding of the region’s long history, particularly of the south, how can ICG make cogent future recommendations for the international community for this troubled country? ICG for example is unaware that the Dinka, the main supporters of southern Sudan’s long civil war, have been the region’s most recent immigrants; as late as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they were still fleeing out of their older homelands in the Gezira (northern Sudan), and warring and displacing other southerners as they resettled in their new homelands. For historians of southern Sudan, this reviewer included, this factor has muddied intra-southern and north/south relations for decades, if not centuries. Nor, therefore is the north/south divide in Sudan quite so clear cut. Nevertheless, this volume is worthwhile reading for laymen and scholars alike and comes well recommended.

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Criminology in Africa edited by TIBAMANGA MWENE MUSHANGA
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Attempts to study crime in Africa in a scientific manner date only from the 1960s or thereabouts, according to Adewale Rotimi and Olufunmilayo Oloruntimehin in a useful overview of criminology in Africa published at the end of this generally interesting and helpful volume, a new edition of a collection first published in 1992 by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute in Rome. It was a good idea of Fountain Publishers to bring this to a wider audience, even though some of the 14 essays (four of which are in French), having been written over 13 years ago, are now rather dated, the more so as one of the weaker contributions – by Manga Bekombo – builds part of its argument on material from the 1960s.

Nevertheless, many of the arguments marshalled in this volume are of the greatest contemporary interest. The editor, Tibamanya Mwene Mushanga, argues in his preface to this latest edition that crime in Africa occurs in a context where several African states use violence for their own political ends (he quotes Rwanda, Burundi and Sudan), as do opposition groups (Uganda, Sierra Leone, Congo-Kinshasa). Mushanga was prophetic in his preface to the first edition, written in September 1992, when he noted that multi-party movements were threatening a new wave of violence, as destructive in its own way as that of the dictatorships that they were attempting to replace (p. xii). Elsewhere, Mushanga notes the growth of armed robbery, in some cases perpetrated by members of the armed forces, and the importance of corruption, as the ‘most devastating and
crippling of all crimes in Africa south of the Sahara’. As the editor further notes, the chapter on corruption by Adedokun Adeyemi, although it concerns Nigeria, applies to other countries, too.

In short, many of the best chapters are interesting precisely because they consider the particular historical, social and cultural context of the crimes they analyse, such as Adeyemi on corruption, Tolani Asuni on drug trafficking and drug abuse, and Muctaru Kabba on ritual homicide in Sierra Leone. This supports Rotimi and Oloruntimiléhin’s remarks on the importance for criminologists of developing theoretical insights that are rooted in observation of the local reality, rather than relying exclusively on theories of American or European origin. In practice, this requires an interdisciplinary approach to crime. The least satisfactory chapters here are generally those that attempt an approach drawn from orthodox criminological theory.

Leonard Shaidi, noting that colonial states introduced their own notions of crime and justice, makes some pertinent remarks on the nature of justice in pre-colonial Africa, quoting approvingly the sociological insight that law (as opposed to custom) arrived simultaneously with the emergence of a state. The more fragile African states become, the more important it is for political analysts to consider the sometimes unexpected fields in which activities of political significance occur, while the relatively small band of criminologists working on African data are ever more urgently required to look outside the field of delinquency that is the staple of their discipline, especially in American universities.

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The Quest for Peace in Africa: transformations, democracy and public policy edited by A. G. Nhema
doi:10.1017/S0022278X05271379

‘Without enduring peace there can be no meaningful development in Africa’ is Alfred Nhema’s keynote (p. 12) for this collection of seventeen papers originally presented in December 2002 at the Seventh Congress of the Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), held appropriately in Khartoum.

For too long global understanding of the dynamics of Africa’s deadly conflicts has been constrained by the lack of local scholarship, particularly on the politically sensitive issues of human rights abuse and failures of governance within countries saddled with the legacies of colonial rule and still vulnerable to foreign exploitation. It is therefore significant and refreshing that this volume was produced by African academics who generally share the editor’s concern that the core cause of conflicts in this troubled region is that: ‘most African countries have yet to succeed in creating a relationship between the state and society that subordinates politics to law and provides legal safeguards for rights and liberties consistent with a sustainable democratic order’ (p. 13).

The common thread tying these essays together is the need for greater respect for human rights and civil liberties as the essential pathway to peace; but
this is only a loose thread, given the region’s vast and varied nature as well as the diverse and country specific interests of most of the authors. Chapters have been grouped under three headings. Part I, Conflicts: Sources, Management, Resolution and Prevention, includes chapters on Ethiopia; efforts to resolve the Eritrea–Ethiopia border dispute; the role of international actors in the region; SADC’s conflict resolution mechanism; small arms proliferation in East Africa; post-war rehabilitation and integration of child soldiers; post-conflict agricultural development environmental management in the Great Lakes Region; IGAD’s early warning and response mechanism; Truth Commissions in peace building; and the role of women in Mozambique’s peace process (1992–2002). Part II, Democracy and Democratization Process, includes case studies of Ethiopia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. The final section, Public Policy, offers assessments of social policy in Tanzania, the impact of HIV/AIDS on subsistence agriculture in Swaziland, and environmental conflicts in Rwanda.

These African authors show ample awareness of the difficulties in developing the regional norms, institutions and political will to deal with the abuses of power within states, while maintaining a semblance of sovereign rights and order among states. Yet to have showcased their concerns in war-torn autocratic Sudan is a hopeful sign. And the willingness of several authors to be openly critical of governmental shortcomings in their home countries is courageous and constructive. Although the essays were composed three or more years ago, they remain very timely, within a changing political context of Africa’s international relations. Governments now committed to upholding standards of good political and economic governance within the new frameworks of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) might well consult the contributors to this volume for a reality check.

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Africa Since Independence: a comparative history by PAUL NUGENT
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History, simply explained as a series of events, does not make much sense unless one gives a structure or some order to those events – with all of the risks that such an approach entails. Historical facts have a meaning, and can describe or mirror a ‘problem’ (be that social, economic or political). Thus, a historian has a useful role to play, not just towards his academic colleagues, but also towards those who work as administrators in the field, who are charged with resolving or at least dealing with everyday problems. This vision of the role of a historian is not in fact dissimilar to that espoused by Eric Hobsbawm (even though the author does not make any express comparison in this regard), who on the one hand praises the seriousness of post-modern historians, while on the other criticising the sectoralism and the over-intellectualism which has the effect of distancing them from the real world.
In adopting this approach to his history of post-independent Sub-Saharan Africa, Nugent has had to synthesise a vast amount of information and material, and in using a comparative method of analysis, he has also had to make certain choices as to the case studies he introduces. It is inevitable that such an approach will occasion certain criticism and controversy, but it is also undeniable that it represents a vibrant and immediate way of apprehending and conveying historical truths. In the introduction to the book, Nugent himself refers to the unavoidable elements of subjectivity and generalisation inherent in such a non-linear historical approach, and acknowledges that it can create problems from a strictly academic/scientific point of view. This reviewer believes that it is precisely through the conflict between objective science and subjective interpretation of events that the book gains its primary strength, because it is both healthy and right that a scholar should offer his or her insights, while accepting that an element of subjectivity is thereby unavoidable.

Broadly speaking, the historical phases have been grouped into three categories: the advent of independence; the post-colonial state; and the phase of structural adjustment and political liberalisation. First, Nugent juxtaposes the ideal which drove the independence movements and the parties which emerged as a result with the politics carried out by these same parties. Not all African leaders have shown themselves to be great ideologues and/or great administrators. Often good administrators have been terrible ideologues (like Houphouët-Boigny, Kenyatta and even Mbeki), and strong intellectuals have been bad administrators (Nyerere, Nkrumah and Touré). In almost all of Africa, the idealistic enthusiasm which inspired the independence movements has been eclipsed by the realities of African life since that goal was achieved.

Secondly, Nugent tackles a number of political movements such as Pan-Africanism, secessionism, military rule, socialism and capitalism. In the case of Pan-Africanism, he again compares the ideology to the reality, and notes how the ideal – though valid on a theoretical plane – failed to take into account the diversity of African cultural realities, which were simply not suited to the application of such a model. Nugent also suggests that the politics of the post-colonial period never managed to grow from a grassroots level up, but rather were always imposed from above, and that this created a disparity between the people and the political elite. The political elite in turn lost legitimacy, as a result of which various types of irredentist and secessionist movements sprang up (from Somalia and Sudan, to Nigeria and Chad). In this vacuum, corruption flourished and certain military regimes came to power, sometimes for justifiable reasons – as in the case of ‘caretaker’ or ‘reformer’ military regimes. Nugent also points to the limitations of the socialist model of government which often failed to deliver (for example in Tanzania and in Ghana), and to the limitations of capitalism, which in the long term did not create stable societies (see for example the military, economic and political crises in Ivory Coast and Kenya). It is perhaps only in the period of the ‘second liberation’, characterised by the military struggle (in Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Zimbabwe), and by the movements of organised political resistance (in South Africa), that there has been a palpable unity between political elite and population.

In the third historical phase, Africa has found itself ‘invaded by acronyms’, and international or private organisations seeking to establish democracy – which in
The past had only been part of the agenda of individual political parties. It is questionable whether the disenchanted reality of everyday life can be turned around by NGOs flailing about in an institutional (and social) wasteland created by structural adjustment programmes. In some cases the evils of poverty and illness (as in Uganda) have found a cure, but in most cases this has not occurred. This is because the work of recovery has been almost exclusively left to the West with its cooperation agencies and to international organisations, which have often lacked the requisite in depth knowledge of that continent.

In his book, Nugent quotes from a number of authoritative authors and experts on African issues or countries (including from African literature, music and cinema), and in so doing has provided a welcome selection of high-calibre commentators in the context of the massive amount of academic literature on Africa. With regard to the public who would most benefit from this book, it is probably of more interest to those who already have a general understanding of the history of Africa. For those working as administrators in the field, this book could also represent a guide offering comprehension and a certain rationalisation of the major issues in play in contemporary African history. In conclusion, this work by Paul Nugent, which is original and thought-provoking, deserves great respect and should occupy a space in every library used by scholars and those interested in Africa. This reviewer believes that *Africa Since Independence* will be a key work in the study of African affairs for a long time to come.

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**Designing West Africa: prelude to 21st century calamity** by Peter Schwab

The argument of this book is strange. A region that many consider a rather arbitrary slab of Africa ought to be ‘designed’. The opportunity occurred at independence, and the leaders entrusted with the task (by whom?) messed up. So fifty years later the region is chaotic and lacking a future. This might make intuitive sense to someone brought up upon American constitutional history. Wise founding fathers draft a Constitution, and the country thrives ever after. The problem is that West Africa is not a nation. The ECOWAS states might eventually become a functional trans-national entity comparable to the European Union, but Schwab says little about regional institutions (except for some remarks about peace-keeping), and nothing at all concerning recent progress towards a regional common currency. Instead, he recites basic facts about a number of long-departed leaders (Tubman, Nkrumah, Toure, Senghor, Houphouet-Boigny) and their Cold War choices in the 1960s and 70s.

Schwab served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Liberia in the 1960s, and seems shaky on developments since. Of about 120 items (discounting newspaper accounts, web sites and military handbooks), only 14 books and articles cited in the bibliography date from the last 15 years. His most substantial chapter (on Liberia) omits any mention of Stephen Ellis’s history of the war, or the work
of William Reno on warlords. Much of the analysis is dubious. Surely, poor leadership and Cold War meddling played a part in setting the stage for more recent developments, but recent literature also stresses the role of resource extraction, youth politics, the excesses of one-party patrimonial rule, the crumbling of neo-traditional institutions, the regional small-arms trade, and the self-perpetuating logic of guerrilla violence and war economy (to mention but a few factors known to have played a part in fuelling the current instability). Facts get badly garbled in places. Schwab seems not to realise that Nigerian military involvement was only a minor factor in UN peace keeping operations in Sierra Leone from 2000, that the fragile peace in Liberia is maintained by a multinational UN force (UNMIL) including Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Irish contingents, and that the Special Court in Sierra Leone tries crimes against humanity, not genocide (no one has ever established an ethnic or racial component to the conflict).

In fact, it is a distinct puzzle that a book apparently published on 7 May 2003 deals with events subsequent to the signing of the Liberian peace agreement on 18 August 2003! Given the distinct whiff of publisher opportunism about this book, it is perhaps not surprising that the conclusions tend not to gel. Schwab tells us (p. 144) that it would be foolhardy to expect the USA ‘with almost no strategic interests remaining’ to spend a lot of time, effort and money in Africa, and promptly quotes George W. Bush to the effect that the USA does ‘have an interest in making sure that West Africa doesn’t simply come apart’ (p. 148). Nigerian leadership is dealt with in a perfunctory manner earlier in the book, but in the final peroration Schwab decides ‘Nigeria really is the key’ (p. 148). Meanwhile ‘it is incumbent upon Africa to first produce representational [sic.] leadership’ (so it was about draughtsmanship after all?). We can all agree, I am sure, that ‘the era of supporting only political henchmen should end completely’ (p. 147), but surely the birth-pangs of a new era in Africa deserve better than this warmed-over mish-mash of patchy information and incoherent opinions.

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Living with Colonialism: nationalism and culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan by Heather J. Sharkey

This little book, Living with Colonialism, is a gem. The history, culture, economy, politics and government of the Sudan are set out in compact analytical form. It is up-to-date, and conveys a powerful sense of the dynamic interplay between and amongst them; an interplay which accounts for this vast and various country continuing to hover precariously on the brink of oblivion: a position, lamentably, it has occupied for nearly 50 years, virtually since first gaining Independence. The research that has gone into this study is thorough, deep and balanced. Sharkey has made excellent use of principal documentary archives in Khartoum and at the University of Durham (which holds the Sudan Political Service papers), along with the UK Public Record Office and a variety of other holdings.
For those with some knowledge of Sudan, *Living with Colonialism* may prove useful as both test and proof against a large number of substantive and theoretical issues. In particular, this test/proof may be applied to the issue of ‘selective education’, and its deployment by the British Colonial Authority. Sharkey brilliantly constructs the context, and provides the content to demonstrate its importance, indeed determining influence. For very simply, just as the British discovered to their cost in most of their other African Colonies, so too in Sudan: you cannot hope for long to advantage one group – Northern, Arabic high-status, Arabic-speaking, Muslim (p. 126) – without generating a severe back-lash amongst those other groups which are disadvantaged, or excluded. To do so creates a time-bomb, and the length of the fuse is determined by the length of the period during which the ‘outsider’ Colonial Authority remains in control.

Thus, for new African states, inheritors of disparate territories cobbled together for colonial administrative convenience from myriad ethnic, linguistic and regional groups, the seeds of crisis, and from the very outset of independent rule, had been sown. There was to be no escape. Sudan provides a prime, and most sobering, example.

Potentially, of course, within the context of ‘selective education’, there were opportunities for evolving common ideologies over a cross-section of Sudan’s many peoples. Sharkey notes the efforts of M. A. Mahjub, ‘engineer, litterateur’ and later Sudanese prime minister (p. 129). The instrumental possibilities and parameters were indeed broad. But when one group has dominated from the start, this sets a pattern in place. In the end, no matter the efforts made even by such influential and powerful persons as Mahjub, the ‘dominant taint’ of Northern culture, religion and politics, as perceived by most non-Northern peoples, remains. Sharkey then ably demonstrates how this ‘most-favoured’ factor is the basic dynamic which informs socio-ethnic relations, the economy and development, along with the structures, personnel, policies and priorities of government.

The espoused underlying purpose of this book is to clarify the link between colonialism and nationalism, but there is little new in what Sharkey has to say. The moment a territory is colonised, is, of course, the moment that nationalism commences. To focus, as Sharkey does, on the ‘intimate enemies’ (p. 1) the indigenous petty officials trained up by the British, may be innovative. It is however hardly ‘news’. The role of such officials and bureaucrats in advancing nationalist causes is well recognised and documented in the relevant literature of the past 45 years.

Nevertheless, in the Sudanese case, what Sharkey does usefully achieve is to set out the colonialism-nationalism link with laudable simplicity and great clarity. And few will dispute her concluding contention that ‘colonialism had a transformative, not a transitory, impact, and left enduring legacies, among them fixed borders, centralised states and sharp inequalities in social and regional power’ (pp. 139–40).

What hope then for the modern Sudan? Can it continue to survive in its existing unified, centralised form? Can the deaths of nearly 2 million citizens (1983–98 alone), and the internal displacement of nearly 5 million others, serve to strengthen support amongst Southern, North-East, and indeed Western (including Darfur) peoples for a government based in Khartoum? Can such a
government that, as Sharkey points out, appears intent on securing assimilation of all ethnic, regional and religious elements on the basis of principles, structures and policies which these non-Northern-Riverain peoples still vigorously reject, really hope to succeed? As Sharkey puts it: ‘The colony and the early nationalists bequeathed two incompatible legacies to the Sudan: fixed borders and the premise of mono-cultural national identity. In the absence of sufficient power to erase local diversity, one or the other must give way’ (p. 136).

Currently (March 2005), substantial efforts are being made which may assist in moving the peoples of Sudan ‘towards reaching some consensus on what the nation should be, and how it should live with its colonial past’ (p. 141). One can but hope that these efforts may mark the start of a new, and this time, more realistic and achievable beginning.

As a modern undergraduate text on the politics and problems of the Sudan, it would be difficult for this book to be bettered. And certainly, as a key reference for those concerned with wider issues of colonialism, de-colonisation, nationalism and development in the new states of the old empires, Living with Colonialism will serve as a most fruitful source, and altogether most stimulating and valuable guide.

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