What constitutes poverty? How do notions of poverty and, conversely, of wealth become constructed and change through time? And who decides who is poor, and is in the position to suggest remedies? Building on a relatively long tradition of in-depth anthropological and historical work amongst livestock-herding peoples in eastern Africa, this edited volume interrogates these questions for a contemporary context in which pastoralists are viewed by outsiders through a lens of poverty and degradation – as representing ‘problems’ that require intervention and cure. The book repeatedly returns to the theme of working with the perceptions and realities of ‘the Other’ fieldwork, concepts, terms and categories, that are frequently taken as given and easily transferable across contexts, are revealed as minutely relational and constructed.

Following an introductory chapter by the editors, the volume moves through four intertwined sections, organised around different themes. The first two sections are concerned with definitions and perceptions of poverty. Section I, ‘Poverty Past and Present’, takes a perhaps more realist perception of changes in material poverty through time both between and within pastoralist societies, focusing on Maasai (Waller, chapter 2) and Turkana (Broch-Due, chapter 3). Section II, ‘Metaphors and Meaning’, explores the ‘cultural conceptualisations of wealth’ (p. 9) pertaining to eastern Africa’s herders. What emerges from the two sections is a multi-sourced explosion of the category of ‘poverty’ itself. The book’s title – *The Poor Are Not Us* – provides an indication that poverty indeed may be ‘in the eye of the beholder’ rather than resonating with those labelled as poor. Further, and given the diversity of pastoralist peoples inhabiting various areas of eastern Africa, perceptions of who is poor and what constitutes poverty vary both between and within ‘groups’, while historical analyses indicate the ways in which individuals, families and even genders exist in different relationships to ‘poverty’ – material and social – through time. Talle in chapter 5, for example, illustrates the ways that ‘markers’ of poverty may differ according to socio-economic and cultural position. In this case, the smell of sheep fat associated with Maasai signifies their coarseness and roughness to the perfumed urban inhabitants of the Kenya–Tanzania border town of Namanga, whilst this is understood as an indication of indigeneity and therefore of authenticity amongst pastoralists themselves.

While adding an appropriate disclaimer regarding problems associated with the ‘thinness’ of analysis based on quantifiable measures, the book’s third section – ‘Coins and Calories’ – comprises three data-rich chapters to explore assumptions regarding material indicators of poverty. The data presented highlight ways in
which realist engagement with specific research questions can generate ‘findings’
that contradict common perceptions on the part of ‘outsiders’ – primarily, de-
velopment professionals and representatives of governments. In chapter 7, for
example, and using an exhaustive range of measurable indicators, Fratkin, Na-
than and Roth demonstrate that in a drought period in 1992 children of nomadic
Rendille experienced lower levels of malnutrition when compared with sedentary
communities. This is attributed to the availability of camel milk amongst Ren-
dille, and challenges widespread perceptions that pastoralists experience greater
material poverty and hardship when compared with settled communities, and
that settlement is the key to ‘development’.

As indicated throughout the book, and explored in more depth in the final
section – ‘Development Dialogues’ – such demonstrable phenomena run coun-
ter to dominant discourses regarding the existence and causes of poverty amongst
pastoralists. In fact, this section would perhaps have been better framed as ‘De-
velopment Discourses’, given that dominant ideas regarding pastoralist liveli-
hoods, aspirations, and values frequently have been generated with little or no
engagement – and certainly little dialogue – with pastoralists themselves. Having
been peripheralised by processes of colonialism, and notwithstanding the mini-
ority of livestock-keeping individuals and families that have been able to accrue
substantial wealth via processes of commoditisation and monetisation of land
and livestock, it is clear from this volume and other analyses that pastoralists
remain on the receiving end of an encounter with modernity that closes off op-
tions for self-determination. This volume is an important and relevant contri-
bution in the generation of understanding regarding the complex, contingent and
contextual aspects of notions of poverty and wealth, of the multilayered sig-
ificances of material objects, and of the unequal power relationships infusing the
process by which certain discourses attain a dominant and constraining he-
wegony. I am left wondering, however, at the (im)possibilities of extending this
depth of critical engagement with local contexts into policy, governance insti-
tutions and regulated processes of commoditisation that permit self-determination
in livelihood and other practices among those finding themselves, and desiring to
remain, as pastoralists.

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The Charitable Impulse: NGOs and development in east and north-
east Africa edited by Ondine Barrow and Michael Jennings
DOI: 10.1017/S0022278X03224526

This publication comprises ten articles examining the role of NGOs and develop-
ment in east and north-east Africa. Ondine Barrow and Michael Jennings
introduce the chapters with a brief historical overview of relief work and address
the issues regarding the limitations and possibilities of ‘the humanitarian agenda’.
This collection attempts to link the histories of NGOs with the problems and
issues they face today. According to Barrow and Jennings, ‘Many of the questions
current in the contemporary debates have their roots in the experiences of the
past or are repetitions in new forms of older arguments’ (p. 26). The Charitable
Impulse traces the professionalisation of the NGO community from reactive relief charities to the organised development institutions they are today. Throughout the book the concept of accountability and the complex relationship that NGOs have with the state and civil society are explored.

The collection can be broadly split into two parts, the first examines the role of NGOs in complex emergencies and the issues they confronted (and dealt with successfully or unsuccessfully). The second part looks at the development experience of NGOs in east and north-east Africa with reference to the (often) complicated relationship between the NGO and the state. Both national and international NGOs are often regarded as part of the establishment and functioning of effective civil society. The authors confess a degree of scepticism questioning ‘whether forms of political accountability are indeed strengthened by NGO intervention or whether NGOs simply become part of the problem’ (p. 27). The idea that NGOs themselves are contributing to social and political conditions that their very mandate claims to resist and aims to change is currently undergoing significant debate. This collection forms a thorough contribution to this debate. There is not the space here to examine each article so I will mention two. Philip Winter begins the collection drawing on personal experience in Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi and Congo. He provides a glossary of terms used within ‘humanitarian enterprise’ (p. 31), and defines them according to his observations. Winter concludes his chapter with a short list of general principles of practice applicable to most NGOs.

Mark Leopold examines the responses of international NGOs in north-western Uganda (Arua District) to a situation that arose as a consequence of conflicts in (the then) Zaire, Sudan and Uganda. The conflicts resulted in the NGOs beginning a strategy of withdrawal and the effects of this withdrawal are analysed in this chapter. Leopold describes tense relationships between the international NGOs and the local population due to the separatist and the introspective nature of the NGO staff. Leopold also emphasises the need for NGOs to know and appreciate the histories that surround the groups they are working with. This collection draws together the experiences of the NGO community within the region covered and raises key questions concerning the implications and consequences of intervention. The case studies are detailed and engaging, highlighting the need for greater levels of accountability to exist between NGOs and the societies in which they serve.

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A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa by Patrick Chabal et al.
DOI: 10.1017/S0022278X03234522

Here is a useful, long overdue book. Patrick Chabal has brought together a number of competent scholars with noted country expertise to jointly author what is described as ‘a comprehensive history’ of Lusophone Africa since 1975 – the first ever such effort. The book is divided into two parts. The first (of about 130 pages) consists of the editor’s attempt to reflect on the recent path of the five Portuguese-speaking states within a double-edged comparative approach: in
regard to each other and ‘from the perspective of the changes that take place in postcolonial Africa more generally’. The second part of the book is composed of very rewarding country-specific chapters. The authors – rightly dubbed in a back-cover comment as the ‘obvious corps’ for such a task – are Gerhard Seibert (São Tomé and Príncipe), David Birmingham (Angola), Malyn Newitt (Mozambique), Joshua Forrest (Guinea-Bissau), and Maria Elisa Andrade (Cape Verde). Despite the postcolonial focus of the book, all contributors recognise the centrality of ‘pre-colonial and colonial history’ over the mere ‘vagaries of nationalism’, and accord great importance to it.

The first section seems at times to take it for granted that there is such a credible, analytically congruent unit of analysis as ‘Lusophone Africa’ – and this is doubtless a good choice. Chabal quickly outlines the relevance of a common colonial legacy, the experience of armed struggle, late decolonisation and early postcolonial domination by ‘socialist’ party-states, but his interest lies elsewhere, in the ‘range of experiences’ of the Lusophone countries and its relevance for a broader study of present-day Africa. Chabal makes (understated) reference to Francophone and Anglophone academics’ ignorance of Portuguese-speaking Africa, but his strongest lash is aimed at a motley crew of experts (socialists, tiers-mondistes and Portuguese scholars all) for having prolonged the myth of Lusophone exceptionalism. He evidently understands their perspective but, alas, he contends that ‘there was little to distinguish these regimes politically from their counterparts in the rest of the continent’ even at the height of socialist experimentation, let alone after such superficial distinctions were abolished. Overall, Chabal seeks to underline the more conventionally African themes of patrimonialism, state decay and the recent economic woes of structural adjustment and near insolvency. One understands Chabal’s demand that ‘we re-anchor the study of Portuguese-speaking countries into their proper African historical context’: some readers may find that his effort to do so risks underrating the apparent common denominator, but the fresh analytical focus more than compensates for that. Part I could perhaps have been slightly briefer, as a lot of the information Chabal marshals around his argument is available in a different format further on, but it nonetheless succeeds in revamping our understanding of the subject.

The critical slants of the contributions in Part II are commendable in essays that could have been submerged by the task of summarising the last three decades – despite a broadly chronological approach, all manage to address substantive synchronic issues with considerable multidisciplinary prowess. Only the briefest of comments on each chapter is possible here. That on Angola is enjoyably written, encapsulating a staggering amount of information in an ideal short introduction to the country’s postcolonial whirlwind. But there are points that merit clarification. For instance, the author writes that, in the 1940s and 1950s, ‘some persecuted Creoles fled to exile in Portugal to evade the aggression of the new “rednecks”’. But they did not; most went there to study (the first generation able to do so), not infrequently on Church or, later on, Portuguese government scholarships. Subsequently, many decided to stay in Europe, but that is a different matter. Throughout, Birmingham goes the way of a certain literature on the Creoles: he exaggerates their sophistication and diminishes that of the Portuguese, who are broadly dismissed as ‘petit blancs’ – surely a simplification of a society that was a great deal more complex. He also refers to Diamang as
‘De Beers-monitored’, but Anglo-American was only a small shareholder and was not involved in management, despite its prominent role in the marketing of gems. A more important shortcoming is the reference to Nito Alves’s ‘guerrilla heroism’ in the MPLA’s first military zone in Dembos, outside Luanda. This buys into both MPLA wartime mythmaking and the Left’s lore regarding the 1977 coup leader’s valour: it is also unproven and most likely untrue. Dembos was a tale of meek survival, not of gallant resistance; and Nito may never have fired a shot. Overall, these are small nuisances that do not detract from the chapter’s quality (it even manages to include a number of original insights into unresearched topics like that of the Bakongo trading class), but would nonetheless merit revision or substantiation in a future edition.

Gerhard Seibert’s chapter is required reading for anyone trying to understand STP’s current predicament, and a measure of its success lies in that, though written prior to the 2002 petroleum-related upheaval, it provides the reader with the framework to make sense of it. Malyn Newitt’s noteworthy contribution immediately teases out the wider relevance of Mozambique’s experience with war as ‘the first example of what happens when a modern state collapses’, and is particularly on the mark when pointing to the absence of ‘any formal process of legitimation’ by Frelimo as amounting to ‘the seeds of future trouble’. Forrest’s and Andrade’s chapters have an interesting development-related focus. The first tracks Guinea-Bissau’s descent from the liberation war days to serial debt and bottomless destitution. The second looks at Cape Verde’s more successful tale of an aptly managed state fighting desert-creep and inherent economic non-viability, and its genuine (endogenous) transition to multiparty politics. Throughout, not much Victoria Brittain-type support is bestowed upon formerly ‘progressive’ governments, something very fashionable until a decade ago, and the tone is appropriately judicious. The partial exception is Andrade’s marked defence of the 1975–90 PAICV period, which she manages very professionally by illustrating it with some notable policy successes and by generally eschewing partisan language.

There are small imperfections that could have been addressed by careful editing. Birmingham mentions Salazar’s death in 1969, whereas he died in 1970. Chabal refers to the MPLA’s creation in 1956, whereas the real date (which Birmingham gets right) is 1960. Newitt makes reference to the Portuguese-Speaking Countries’ Commission (CPLP), whereas the C stands for ‘Community’. Chabal writes that social bonds in STP politics ‘make it difficult for politicians to plunder the state for their own end’, but Seibert’s chapter – and recent research on the oil contracts imbroglio – seems to utterly disprove this. The absence of blood in the archipelago’s politics must not displace venality’s pivotal role in it. These marginal hindrances apart, the book has been worth the wait, and goes a long way into filling an important gap in the literature. One hopes it will be widely read, discussed, and made available in Portuguese translation. It will age well, as it does not seem particularly obsessed with modish themes (say, democracy or civil society or the African Renaissance or the national conference) that have badly dated so many overview contributions from the 1990s.

RICARDO M. S. SOARES DE OLIVEIRA
University of Cambridge
The seven essays in this volume revolve around diverse topics. Richard Rathbone’s overview of West African history is concerned to show ‘the distinct African personality’ of modernisation and modernity. Although most contributors make a similar effort, no one else joins Rathbone in accepting both ‘modernity’ and ‘modernisation’ as analytical terms. Most contributors follow the mainstream practice in African Studies to weave their accounts around a vague notion of modernity, while ‘modernisation’ is either completely absent from the analytical vocabulary, or firmly rejected as an undesirable remnant of post-war modernisation theory. The rest of the essays also have more specific topics than Rathbone’s. Both John Lonsdale and Liz Gunner highlight salient historical processes through the life and thought of a particular individual, Jomo Kenyatta in Lonsdale’s case and Isiah Shembe in Gunner’s. Heike Behrend examines ‘the construction of an African modernity’ by drawing upon her fieldwork among young photographers in Mombasa, Kenya. The essays by John Comaroff, Simon Gikandi and Wolfgang Knöbl are more theoretical. Comaroff writes about the colonial state and governmentality, Gikandi about the problem of modern reason underlying the African crisis, and Knöbl about modernisation theory.

The essays were presented as lectures in Berlin. As is often the case with attempts to put together separately delivered lectures by senior scholars, the essays neither engage with each other nor surprise those who are familiar with the previous work of these writers. The volume’s highlights are, however, more interesting than its deficiencies. Lonsdale, for example, offers an eloquent account of the personal, religious and political pressures that shaped Kenyatta’s achievement of authority during the making of the Kenyan nation. He identifies a particular ‘political theology’ in Kenyatta’s gradual realisation that a local reputation for ‘morale and courage’ was essential to any attempt to challenge the colonial rule. This insight leads, in the historian’s mind, to an intriguing attempt to reconcile ethnic virtue with nation building, an issue with highly topical undertones in contemporary Africa. Comaroff, in a more theoretical essay, likewise nuances our understanding of the colonial state by replacing abstractions with historical practice. Particularly illuminating in Comaroff’s essay is the critique of ‘paradigmatic perspectives’ on the colonial state, ranging from modernist approaches (including both ‘orthodox’ and ‘Marxist’ variants) to postmodern and Foucauldian ones. Aware of their complexities, Comaroff nevertheless manages to demonstrate considerable flaws in all of them. His emphasis is on the diversity of the colonial state, on the need to be specific, but he is also able to explain why, and with what consequences, a language of legality gained such prominence in colonial governmentality. He elaborates on the predicament in which states had no nations to correspond to them. The accompanying imperative for the expansion of the legal domain facilitated the emergence of two contrasting ideas of rights, one based on individual liberty and the other on group entitlement. As in Lonsdale’s discussion of ethnic virtue and nation building, Comaroff’s historical perspective closes with compelling reflections on contemporary Africa.
If Lonsdale and Comaroff show how the historicity of the African crisis can be convincingly explored with little sustained use of ‘modernity’ as an analytic term, the essays by Gikandi and Knöbl are useful in demonstrating considerable difficulties with this particular notion. By drawing upon his impressive knowledge of literature and philosophy, Gikandi reminds us that Africa has long been modernity’s other, ‘one of the most important conduits through which the dominant Western notions of a rational modernity could be debated and elaborated’. His analysis proceeds to investigate the sense in which modern institutions were politically imposed on Africa while it was theoretically excluded from modernity. A critique of current scholars’ tendency to multiply modernities is implicit in Gikandi’s essay. Yet instead of showing how ‘multiple modernities’ are often theorised as if contemporary life-worlds existed under equal conditions, he chooses to take issue with current African philosophers over modern reason in Africa’s economic and political crisis. His confrontation with Achille Mbembe, who stands accused of ‘primitivism’ and ‘Afro-pessimism’ among other problems, is especially likely to provoke further debate.

The volume ends with an essay by a self-proclaimed outsider to African Studies. Knöbl writes as a sociological theorist who is determined to bring conceptual clarity to Africanists’ occasionally uninformed uses of the notion of modernity. He is particularly sardonic about attempts to discard modernisation theory, claiming that its ideas of progress are ‘the very basis of our consciousness’. Knöbl is not an uncritical advocate of modernisation theory, and the bulk of his essay consists in a careful analysis of the various attempts to theorise modernisation and modernity. His discussion of ‘tradition’, a corollary of ‘modernity’, is equally sophisticated. Yet his call to study the complex dynamic of tradition perhaps merely expresses in a different way what many Africanist historians and anthropologists have been doing all along. I am left to wonder whether, for the theorists of modernity, their end is their beginning.

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The Cross and the River: Ethiopia, Egypt and the Nile by HAGGAI EHRLICH
DOI: 10.1017/S0022278X03254525

The complex world of Ethiopia, Egypt, Sudan and the Nile basin has rarely been historically analysed in its entirety, and has seldom been considered as a common area of research by scholars of the area. Erlich is not new to this field: in 1997 he dedicated a symposium to the topic and edited a collection of articles on the Nile society (see H. Erlich & I. Gershoni eds., The Nile: histories, cultures, myths, Boulder 1999). To discuss the Nile inevitably means discussing Islam, nationalism, and Arabism. It also means looking into two historical and unique societies, on the one hand Egypt and on the other Ethiopia. These are two countries with rich historical identities and with many common historical characteristics, and which represent an exception in the African scene. The Nile basin was a common field of mutual exchange where in the past two different identities were struggling and cooperating with each other.
The aim of the book is clearly explained in the introduction, and the results of this historical research are outlined in the concluding notes. The book deals with Ethiopian/Egyptian relations as seen from the perspective of the Nile. The interrelations between Ethiopia and Egypt have played a crucial part in the histories of the two countries and the future will be the same, as the author is firmly convinced. The history of the Nile has shown a sort of continuity, a complex of relations and a body of collective identities based on firm political relations and economic strategies. The Ethiopian/Egyptian identity and the historical background are outlined in chapter 2, which deals with Christianity and Islam in pre-modern times, and in chapter 3, which covers the legacy of the Solomonians and the Mamluks. The material in these pages is not original, but refers to previous publications and to a well-known complex of historical documentation related to middle-age Ethiopia and Egypt from a historical, social, cultural and religious point of view. We thus have details that historians will already know, and yet the way that Erlich aggregates his data is quite original. The most interesting theme of these chapters is the discussion of ‘blocking the Nile: the myth’, where the author describes that very-well-known theme in Egyptian history, the myth of diverting the Nile, born in eleventh-century Egypt.

The core of the book is found in chapter 5, ‘Nationalism and mutual perceptions’. In modern times up to the first three decades of the twentieth century, the Nile River was a key factor in Ethiopian politics. All of the country’s external relations were – as usual – very dependent on the Nile basin, but the river became an important factor in an internal Ethiopian struggle based on the dynamics between centralisation and regionalism. Erlich constructs his detailed account around the politics of the river. His book is in fact more than a history of the Nile and of Ethiopian-Egyptian connections: it deals with political and diplomatic matters, religious and social affairs and discusses the impact of colonialism on the area. The years 1935–41 were years of crisis and Italian occupation that reinforced the ties between Ethiopia and Egypt, but these years represent too short a period of time to have brought about any significant changes in the politics of the river. The years following the Second World War are without any doubt more interesting from this point of view.

The political developments of the Nasser period are discussed in chapter 7, ‘From compromise to disconnection 1945–1959’, where the results of the politics of separation between Egypt and Ethiopia are analysed concentrating on the construction of the Aswan dam in 1959 and a new policy of direct negotiation over water between Egypt and Sudan. A long period of close relations between the Nile and the Cross was abruptly interrupted following the new Egyptian government’s policies in the area. On the other hand, Ethiopia itself contributed to the politics of separation by declaring the autonomy of the Orthodox church from Egypt – a long-term issue. The end of this Egyptian/Ethiopian connection led to various different political alliances: Egypt turned to the Arab countries, Ethiopia on the contrary strengthened its ties with other African countries; the creation of OAU in 1963 is the main historical development of this new political and diplomatic trend. ‘The Nile valley in practice and in ideology ceased to be the main national theater’, as the author maintains (p. 130). This signals the beginning of the divorce of Egypt from the old concept of Nile unity and marks the end of the identification of the river with Ethiopia. Nasser in fact ignored
Ethiopia as a Nile country by establishing a policy of autonomy and prestige linked to the development of Arab nationalism.

The two last chapters deal with recent political events, the developments after the end of the Nasser and Haile Selassie regimes, international relations, diplomatic issues, the politics of the Horn of Africa and other relevant matters. Erlich’s work aims to be a comprehensive essay on the politics of the area, including the crucial discussion of the relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea – extensively covered in chapter 8 – that reintroduces an issue analysed in his previous work (see The Struggle over Eritrea, 1962–1978, Stanford 1983). Finally, an extensive discussion regarding the revival of concern about the Nile in Egypt during the Sadat and Mubarak governments is included in chapter 9, which deals with the crucial period of famine and drought in the mid 1980s that led to fresh international concern about water politics and river strategies among African and Western countries.

If we look at the volume in general, the main original feature lies in the backbone of the book and the original research surrounding the main issue of Erlich’s work. The overall structure of the book is, in other words, convincing. The Nile is the main protagonist of a political and diplomatic game that occupied the entire history of the area and that continues to be an important theme in the international agenda today. Besides this, the book completes this main topic by providing a reflection on many issues and historical events surrounding a dynamic which focuses on the historical aspects of two countries that shared a long-term original history. An important book not only in Ethiopian and North African historiography, but also an original contribution to an area which, as already stated, has rarely been tackled in a comparative modern historical framework.

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The History of Education Under Apartheid edited by Peter Kallaway
New York: Peter Lang, 2002. Pp. 399. £34.99 (pbk.).
DOI: 10.1017/S0022278X03264521

This edited collection marks the third across three decades that Peter Kallaway has brought us, which together provide the core of our intellectual understanding of the way that Apartheid has shaped South Africa’s educational landscape. In 1984, he edited Apartheid and Education, which provided a range of historical and contemporary reflections on the nature of South African education, written from the perspective of the years after the events of Soweto in 1976. Then, in 1997, he was co-editor of Education after Apartheid, the first critical reading of where South African education was going as it tried to move beyond Apartheid. Finally, in 2002, from the perspective of nearly a decade of the ‘new South Africa’, he brings us another volume of critical reflections on the history of education in the Apartheid era of 1948 to 1994.

The collection is focused on four main themes: policy change and continuity; apartheid education and the various forms of resistance and alternative approaches that it engendered; (auto) biographical and life history approaches to the history of education; and themes of identities and institutions. Across these, the book paints a complex picture of South African education, but one that has
conceptual and methodological salience to the study of both history and education across Africa and in other colonial contexts.

As with most collected works, there is an unevenness in chapter quality and a number of papers that do not move beyond what we already know of their authors’ ideas. Nonetheless, there are important new insights as well as a valuable bringing together of ideas that will be relatively unfamiliar for readers from outside these debates. As a reader, I was particularly drawn to the last two sections, where authors have gone into less traditional areas of educational history methods, drawing on life history, ethnography and photographic analysis as ways of better understanding the responses of communities, learners and teachers to educational policies and practices. In some of these chapters, such as those of Wieder, Soudien and Nekhwevha, and Badroodien, we get a rich sense of the ways in which individuals were touched profoundly by the playing out of multiple forces during the Apartheid era.

There are also two important points to be made about the composition of the group of contributors to this book. First, the contributors are not simply a roll call of the established names, eminent though many of the authors are. Rather, there is a powerful blend of emerging and recognised scholars, which brings a freshness to the analysis that can be lacking in collections. Second, the presence of several leading policy analysts and contributors to contemporary policy processes highlights the role that Kallaway and others have played in ensuring that the history of education is not a backwater but a crucial element of analysing current and future policy paths in South Africa.

Works of history can tell us more about the historical moment in which they are written than about the time to which they are referring. Although there is much talk about resistance to Apartheid throughout the book, there is a far weaker sense of how globalisation and neoliberalism are being resisted and subverted in contemporary South Africa, including by important elements of the state. Of course, the post-1994 period is explicitly excluded from the book’s focus, notwithstanding its appearance at some length in chapters such as that by Motala and Vally. Nonetheless, it is clear across a number of chapters, beginning with the introduction, that the past is being read by a number of authors from a position of disenchantment with the present. This is not to accuse authors of nostalgia for Apartheid but to suggest that much of the analysis is influenced by a strong sense that education since 1994 is not as ‘right’ as it should have been. Such a position may easily be defended but it remains under-analysed. For a book to seek explicitly to bring historical analysis to the service of current educational debates, the tendency to dehistoricise the present is unfortunate.

However, in spite of such concerns, this is a book that is well worth reading, particularly for those interested in South Africa, education and social policy. Peter Kallaway is to be congratulated for continuing to show us the complexities of the South African past and how they impact upon the present.

SIMON McGRATH

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A Modern History of the Somali by I. M. Lewis
DOI: 10.1017/S0022278X03274528

A Modern History of the Somali originated from Lewis’s earlier book entitled The Modern History of Somaliland: from nation to state, first published in 1965. Two subsequent editions followed, both under the title A Modern History of Somalia: nation and state in the Horn of Africa (1980 and 1988). The changes in the book’s title reflect the changing fortunes and reality of the Somali people, and the pressing socio-economic and political upheavals which have shaped their current state of affairs. During nearly forty years between the publication of the first edition (1965) and the fourth (2002), the Somali peoples have endured the war with Ethiopia (1977–78), their own civil war (1981 to date), recurrent droughts, floods and famines, all culminating in state collapse since 1991. Lewis captures these events, not with the eyes of the indifferent observer, but with great sense of respect, empathy and engaging analysis.

Like other editions, this one is also revised, updated and expanded, including the material presented in earlier editions. Also common to all editions is that the Preface introduces the main issues that have engaged the Somali peoples, students of Somali studies, and national as well as global public policy-makers and institutions. Most revised and updated books, with a clear historical sequence, often build on the chapters that appeared in previous editions. This book is no exception. Even the page numbers remain identical to those of the subsequent editions, making it easy for the reader to attest to the quality of updating and revisions.

Three observations come to mind: first, the title A Modern History of the Somali implies Lewis’ passion for the Somali peoples who, despite the odds, have managed without internationally recognised states. The book is a tribute to ordinary Somalis who have managed to survive turbulent and difficult times. Second, the book highlights Lewis’ strong belief in the centrality of the clan system in Somali political culture, which has outlived his Marxist and neo-Marxist critics. On a broader level, it is nonetheless important for political anthropologists to realise that the political fortunes of the people they study are exposed to and at times shaped by global political realities over which they may have no influence. In fact the very collapse of the Somali state could be explained against the backdrop of such a broader picture, rather than solely on the clan system. Lewis has been able to demonstrate this, particularly in chapters 10 and 11. Third, the book fails to provide any accessible and fully developed bibliography; he apologises for this omission, which will however frustrate many of his readers.

Notwithstanding my third observation, A Modern History of the Somali is an excellent account of the political history of the Somali peoples. It should command the respect and interest of the worlds of academia, policy, development workers, and an attentive and curious public. This fourth edition is Lewis’ ultimate commentary on the possibility of reshaping Somali political history.

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Ethiopia since the Derg: a decade of democratic pretension and performance edited by Siegfried Pausewang, Kjetil Tronvoll and Lovise Aalen
DOI: 10.1017/S0022278X03284524

This accessible and well-informed book is an important contribution to contemporary Ethiopian studies. Its title largely encapsulates its content: an inquiry on the democratic record of the governing Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The editors, Norwegian researchers affiliated to the University of Oslo and the Chr. Michelsen Institute, display great familiarity with Ethiopian politics before and after the fall of Mengistu’s Derg. The empirical material emanates from the authors’ observations of the 2000 and 2001 elections which they diligently embed into ‘the continuity of Ethiopian political development since 1991’ (p. 25).

Each chapter represents a vivid testimony of electoral competition rooted in local and national power struggles. Seven contributions cover the May 2000 elections to the regional councils and the House of People’s Representatives. Elections in Addis Ababa are reviewed from a gender perspective (Marta Camilla Wright) and in the context of recent land distribution in Amhara region (James C. McCann). Lovise Aalen documents the combination of fear and loyalty expressed by Tigrayan citizens towards the ruling Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF). Charles Schaefer sheds light on ethno-political tensions composing the background to campaigns and voting in Oromiya region.

Elections in Ethiopia’s Southern Region, inhabited by a multiplicity of diverse ethnic groups and home to some of the stiffest resistance to EPRDF hegemony, figure prominently in this volume. Three chapters describe fierce political confrontations, systematic abuses of administrative power and violent incidents during elections held in Gedeo (Siegfried Pausewang), Sidama (Kjell Solberg) and Hadiya (Kjetil Tronvoll). Finally, two accounts of the February and March 2001 local elections held in the capital and the Southern Region, authored by Aalen and Pausewang, complete the anthology of election observations.

Although formal procedures are at times respected on Election Day, infringement of sound democratic practice is reported to be systematic and deliberate, ranging from subtle forms of voter manipulation to crude intimidation and arrest of opposition candidates. These violations are viewed as symptomatic for a ruling party not willing to relinquish power, and of state structures, from the local kebele to the National Electoral Board, cementing the political status quo. The government controls and represses the rural masses, which heavily depend on public services for their daily survival. The TPLF thus reigns over ‘an obedient and quiescent electorate’ (p. 160) after having ‘established an administration and a power structure that perpetuate its rule’ (p. 242). Opposition parties lack an independent material base to effectively challenge the regime. In the rare cases when they endanger the EPRDF’s dominant position, they usually suffer harsh subjugation.

This thoroughly researched volume amounts to a powerful critique of Ethiopia’s ruling circles. Yet the book spares the reader overly accusatory statements and
simplistic explanations in favour of a differentiated analysis. Except the somewhat disappointing contribution by Wright, all chapters represent first-rate reading. The authors creatively blend participant observation and in-depth interviews with their own expertise into an innovative and persuasive methodology. The fairness and outspokenness exhibited by the editors are to their credit and deserve appreciation. Consequently, *Ethiopia since the Derg* ought to become mandatory reading for everyone seriously concerned with present-day Ethiopian politics and post-cold-war democratisation in Africa in general.

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