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AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF
AUSTRALASIA AND THE PACIFIC

REVIEW AND NEWSLETTER

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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of The Review and Newsletter includes a variety of contributions, all of which I am sure will be of interest. I would draw attention particularly to the number of references, one way or another, to the present “state” of African Studies, overseas as well as in Australia. David Dorward’s review of Gwyer’s book on African Studies in the United States, for example, points out (p35) that the concerns of Africanists in the United States are concerns that we in Australia must also confront. Donald Denoon’s review of Africa Today, the Proceedings of our 1995 conference (pp22-23) also has some observations on African Studies in Australia which will give food for thought. I have also reproduced, (pp15-21) with an explanatory note, the recommendations of the Parliamentary Report on Australia’s relations with Southern Africa, which will undoubtedly be of interest not least because they provide the basis for a fresh dialogue on Australia’s relations with Africa. The linkages between the two continents today, as other contributions to this issue make clear, are more far-reaching, increasingly reciprocal and based on the exchange of experience, as the list of recent visitors from Africa to Australia suggest (p60-62). Finally, thinking about the recent review of Australia’s overseas development assistance, the Simons Report, observations on which have been invited by the Minister, and are due by July 31st, I draw your attention to the note (p55) on a recent Workshop held in South Africa on the role of donors in post-conflict Southern Africa.

This issue of the Review and Newsletter (pp2) carries the details of the forthcoming annual AFSAAP conference which it is unnecessary to repeat here. I would nevertheless like to draw your attention to the information on the Second Postgraduates’ Workshop, and would especially ask those of you who are in touch with postgraduates to ensure that this information is passed on to them. Everyone present last year agreed that the inaugural Workshop, which was entirely a postgraduate initiative, was a lively and stimulating occasion, and an opportunity for postgraduates to exchange notes on research and field work that has in the past all too rarely been available. Several postgraduates have indeed been away in Africa on field work since last year, and I would like to thank those who have sent in their comments and observations for this issue. (pp46-50)

Two final points about this Review and Newsletter. First, as from the next issue, I am hoping to include a regular section on useful Internet sites, and items of information. Your ideas about this will be welcome, send them to The Editor, email address gortzel@speculum.curtin.edu.au or Peter Limb, email plimb@library.unsw.edu.au. Second, I am still looking for reviewers, so if you would be willing to do an occasional book review please let me know, with an indication as to which areas you would wish to cover. Also contributions please for the News and Notes section. And finally, thank you to all those who have contributed to this issue.

Cherry Gortzel
June 1997
1997 AFSAAP CONFERENCE

The 1997 African Studies Conference will be held at the Australian National University, in the Coombs Building, from 25th to 27th September. The annual African Studies conference organised by AFSAAP is the one occasion of the year when Africanists in Australia meet together, present papers, exchange ideas and information, and generally maintain their contacts with each other. There is a registration form enclosed with this Review and Newsletter, so do send it in and come.

There will be a number of themes including Population and Health; Australia in Africa: aid and investment; Education; and the Environment and Mining. Papers on gender, history, contemporary politics, multinationals, HIV/AIDS and nutrition have also already been accepted, so the conference promises to be full and lively. Three plenary sessions have also been planned this year, including one for Heads of African diplomatic missions in Canberra, one for donors and one on the future of African Studies in Australia.

If you have not yet offered a paper, but would like to do so, it is not too late. Contact David Lucas, 1997 African Studies Conference, C/- Graduate Studies in Demography, 20 Balmain Crescent, Australian National University, Canberra ACT 0200; Fax (06) 249 4408; Phone (06) 249 4701; E-mail: david.lucas@anu.edu.au. Closing date for papers and abstracts (250 words) August 25th 1997.

The Second Annual Conference of Postgraduate and Honours Students in African Studies: A Multidisciplinary Forum. Wednesday 24 September, 1997, Room E, Coombs Building, ANU, 9.00am to 5.00pm.

The aim of this one day conference will be to provide a forum for honours students and postgraduates to share and develop their ideas: to get feedback on work in progress; in order to provide students with an opportunity to present their ideas in a supportive environment amongst interested colleagues. We encourage input from fields as diverse as literature, politics, sociology, history, anthropology, visual arts, drama, film, development studies, women's studies and others. It is not too late to offer a paper.

AFSAAP Postgraduates wish to promote greater awareness and interest in African Studies, while encouraging postgraduates to participate in the African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific annual conference which will be held in the following two days. Conference participants will also be invited to enjoy local Eritrean food after the workshop (Cost $16, BYOOG). The Workshop Committee is Tanja Lyons, David Lucas and Sarah Romney. Please forward all enquiries and abstracts by August 29th to: Tanja Lyons, Department of Politics, University of Adelaide, South Australia 5005; Tel. (08) 8303 3206(W) or (08) 8341 7117(H); e-mail: tlyons@arts.adelaide.edu.au.

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

There are a number of issues I would like to canvass in this edition of the Newsletter. Most importantly, remember that the Annual Conference of the AFSAAP will be held in Canberra, 25-27 September this year, in the Coombs Building of the ANU. Conference organisers, David Lucas and Chris McMurray called for offers of papers some time ago, but there is still room for more participants. Get in touch with David or Chris as soon as possible. Papers on any topic related to Africa are welcome, as the notices in this issue make clear. The Postgraduate Workshop, so successful last year, will be held on the Wednesday.

I would like to draw your attention to the support from the recent Parliamentary Report on Australian Relations with Southern Africa for new links between the African Studies community and Government departments. This is very encouraging and we should do all in our power to help create the suggested links.

There are a few housekeeping matters. I would remind you that membership subscriptions for 1997 are now due. The subscription form is in this Newsletter. Note that the subscription form is combined with an order form for an updated and improved Directory of Africanists in Australia, containing 200 entries. I am delighted to see the appearance of this work. I extend my own and the Association's thanks and congratulations to Liz Dimock for the enormous amount of work that has gone into preparation of the Directory. We are all indebted to her for her enthusiasm and dedication.

Pal Ahluwalia and I have recently completed the task of editing for publication, a selection of the papers presented at last year's Conference in Adelaide. Two volumes will result, to be published by Nova Publishers, New York. The first is entitled Post-Colonialism and Africa: The Search for Identity, the second The Post-Colonial Condition: Politics in Contemporary Africa. We hope that the first volume will be available at this year's Conference.

As members will know, I recently invited expressions of approval or concern with respect to the proposal to launch a journal that was discussed at last year's AGM. While there was enthusiastic support in some quarters, the general tenor of the responses was against the proposal. In view of this, Pal Ahluwalia and I felt that it would be best not to proceed with the journal at this time.

Paul Nurse-Bray
THE POLITICS OF THE CLITORIS: CONTAMINATED SPEECH, FEMINISM AND FEMALE CIRCUMCISION
Penelope Hetherington

Female circumcision is a problematic subject for the historian, not only because it lies at the intersection of a number of Western discourses which have become very powerful in the late 20th century, but also because the consideration of the issue by Westerners often revives memories of the kind of cultural arrogance which underpinned some missionary activity during the colonial period, leading in at least one case to the retention of the practice to the present time. It is the purpose of this paper to examine the modern Western construction of female circumcision, a subject which first took hold of the feminist imagination in the 1980s, in order to situate the current literature in its historical context, to point to the representations in the polemical literature on female circumcision and to explore the ways in which polemical works might be differentiated from history. There is no possibility of writing objective history which will be considered a permanent and unassailable account for all time. To use the terminology of post-structuralism, there is, in other words, no pure or uncontaminated speech. But our language employs categories in all fields of so-called ‘knowledge’ to make distinctions between things, including the separate categories of ‘polemic’ and ‘history’. It is arguable that the term ‘polemic’ is generally used to refer to written or spoken language which is designed to achieve a political outcome. Its very success may depend on emotive language, distortion, even an element of exaggeration. Professional historical writing conventionally eschews such excesses. While there may be no agreement on the exact boundary between polemic and history, this is not a reason to abandon the categories which, in the social sciences, are notoriously fluid.

The first issue concerns the subject matter itself and the naming of that subject. The practices of female circumcision include a simple operation to remove the prepuce over the clitoris, the complete excision of the clitoris, the removal of all or most of the outer genitalia, including the labia minora or the labia majora and, in the case of phallic circumcision, the stitching up of the remaining flesh around the opening into the vagina to leave only a small aperture. These practices are still widespread, mainly in various parts of Africa and the Middle East. Their variety is not always clearly identified in their naming in Western languages. While the terms ‘female circumcision’ and/or ‘clitoridectomy’ are used for any or all of these practices, the preferred term of feminist writers is ‘genital mutilation’. The word ‘infibulation’ is used to refer to the most extreme process involving excision and subsequent restitching.

For example, the attempt by several missions among the Kikuyu in Kenya in the late 1920s to force church members to abandon female circumcision led to the creation of the Independent Church which still approves the practice even though it has otherwise been almost entirely abandoned in the Central Province.

The second preliminary issue concerns authorship, and an identification, where possible, of the fields of writing to which this literature belongs. The considerable literature on female circumcision in Africa and the Middle East includes critical monographs written by Western educated women from those circumscribing societies, polemical tracts written by Westerners as propaganda against the practice, and stories and interviews published by Western women, some of them Afro-Americans, with a view to outlawing these practices. There are also numerous articles belonging broadly in the field of medicine which describe the outcome of female circumcision in terms of women’s general health and their likely experiences in childbirth. The literature also includes a number of studies which originated in various university disciplines which try to examine the current state of knowledge about these practices.

Some writers who have written about the possible origins of female circumcision quite often assert that the reader to the existence of an extensive collection of earlier ethnography on the subject but there is no satisfactory account of the origins of these practices. Nor is there any real evidence of the longevity of the practice in any particular society. Historians have found evidence of female circumcision in various parts of the Middle East for long periods but it is so far only possible to conjecture about the possibility of its diffusion into various parts of Africa, as opposed to the possibility of its frequent reinvention. In the absence of real evidence of its origins, most writers resort to explanations of the origins of female circumcision in functional terms as serving some social purpose. This kind of explanation, so familiar from the work of anthropologists, who explained all sorts of social practices as ‘designed’ to provide social cohesion, has become, in the work of feminist writers, a stick to beat the patriarchy. These functionalist accounts explain that the practice was introduced by men to control women’s sexuality, by reducing or removing the possibility of sexual pleasure, and thereby increasing patriarchal control over the behavior of women, while also securing some degree of certainty about the real parentage of children. Such accounts seem entirely satisfactory to some readers, yet an explanation of origins in terms of outcome cannot be seriously considered as historically satisfying since it assumes that the practice was invented by men acting in conspiratorial fashion and with the same beliefs about the power of the clitoris as are held by modern feminists.


conquered and exploited by European nations because of their inferior military technology and the small scale of their political organizations, were described in polite parlance as 'savage', as 'uncivilized', and as 'backward'. Some thirty years after most African states achieved independence, the early optimism of the so-called modernizing school has all but evaporated and Africa is once again being generally denigrated and reviled as the home of all kinds of savagery and maladministration, as well as the original home of the Aids virus. Many terms used in academia help construct these perceptions. There are studies of underdevelopment, over-population and famine, of the Third World and of the so-called periphery of the developed nations, of fragile political systems and apparently helpless economies tied irrevocably to the capitalist West. The Western press does not deal in such niceties but constructs Africans generally as violent or savage, as ignorant, backward and helpless. All of this invites a new version of the West's civilizing mission, this time in the free enterprise spirit of modern Western capitalism. Now, while those with capital to invest explore the resources, both natural and human, of so-called backward societies, all kinds of organizations feel compelled to save the Africans from themselves. The attack on female circumcision falls into this time frame and is implicated in this neo-imperialism.

My first objection to this polemic is about the way in which it constructs African women. This writing generally claims that the reasons given for circumcision are, for the most part, based on myths, an ignorance of biological and medical facts, and on 'primitive' religious beliefs. These authors often provide an inventory of mistaken beliefs and explain the continuation of female circumcision as due to the inscrutability of people in traditional societies. Fundamental to these interventionist texts are the Western notions of the biological body and body-mind dualism. Since these concepts are believed to represent the truth, rather than one possible way out of many of constructing reality, other notions which might inform African behavior are believed to be mistaken. It is therefore possible to ignore the agency of African women and construct them as illiterate, ignorant and conforming. It is the goal of these interventionists that African women cease to be victims and negotiate their identities through the grids of Western knowledge, particularly medical knowledge. This interventionist discourse provides a rationale for new neo-colonialist enterprises, by encouraging readers to work through the private foundations, government agencies and international development programs which have already infiltrated the African continent.

My second criticism is that the literature refines African and European societies as opposites. The essential point here is that there are a great many different societies in Africa, some practicing female circumcision, some not, and even the important identification of them as separate states would not do justice to either their complexity or, in some fields, their sophistication. At the same time there are also great differences within so-called Western

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ewear are particularly keen to women in the feminist movement who know that many of the old constraints on individual freedom were constructed in institutions dominated by men in order to control women. Those who examine the practice of female circumcision are almost invariably constrained to point to the political powerlessness of women in these societies, and to assume that the continuation of the practice depends on the power of the patriarchy. Yet there is disturbing evidence that the women themselves promote the continuation of the practice as well as carrying out the actual operation.

The third discursive field which had fostered an interest in female circumcision is that which constructs the relationship between the so-called 'developed' West and the 'undeveloped' world. In the late 19th and early 20th century the people of the colonized areas, who could be
culture, not least in the area of responses to Western capitalism and imperialism which have always had outspoken critics. Just as our society now has within it a small minority who wish to practice female circumcision, leading to political conflict, so there has been a climate of disagreement in many African states over this issue for many years. While many African women are embracing Western notions about the inviolability of the body, many Western women have begun to examine various forms of mutilation of the female body which are commonly practiced in Western societies, even including what has been represented as a mild form of female circumcision.\textsuperscript{10} Historians have already outlined the way in which female circumcision was practiced in Britain and America from the mid 19th century until well into the 20th century, ostensibly to control the evils of masturbation.\textsuperscript{11} While the obvious recent fascination of Westerners with this practice in Africa almost always implies claims about the superiority of Western culture, recent historical studies of mutilating practices tend to close this divide.

My third point is that African women will inevitably confront these issues for themselves as their societies are transformed and are likely to resist Western intervention. Many African women who come from a society that once regularly practiced female circumcision have now rejected the practice, while many of them are vehement in their opposition. In theoretical terms, this may be explained as a result of the individual confronting contradictions in the discourses and cultural narratives available to them. The process is explained by Chris Weedon in this way.

As we acquire language, we learn to give voice-meaning to our experience and to understand it according to particular ways of thinking, particular discourses, which produce our entry into language. These ways of thinking constitute our consciousness, and the positions within which we identify ourselves as our subjectivities. Having grown up within a particular system of meanings and values, which may be contradictory, we may find ourselves existing alternatives. Or, we may move out of familiar circles, through education or politics, for example; we may be exposed to alternative ways of understanding our experience which seem to address our interest more directly.\textsuperscript{12}

Small scale and pre-capitalist societies are slowly being transformed in Africa because of historical connections with Western Europe and America, the home of capitalist systems which, ironically, first accumulated the necessary capital out of the African slave trade. Now the process has gone full circle and the so-called first world seeks to find ways of investing capital in Africa (and elsewhere) at a profit. It would be inappropriate to regret the passing of African communal societies, because historians know that they have always been in a process of change and were, in any case, never the ideal worlds which some people imagine. The processes of change in the late 20th century are as corrosive of pre-capitalist social structures in Africa as were those which transformed Western Europe in the 19th century. Now Africa, in turn, is experiencing a population explosion, periods of famine and what the special language of the capitalist world calls a massive over-supply of labour.

There is some subtle dialectic, always impossible to trace in detail, between changes in the material base of society, and the beliefs, ideas and practices which belong in the superstructure. As the modes of production change in Africa, the part played by female circumcision in the construction and control of marriage, for example, is being rendered obsolete by the demands of the modern state, and the claims of a universalizing Christianity which, to use Weedon's terms, provides new ways for people to constitute their consciousness. The changes in Islamic societies are less apparent, perhaps because people construct this practice as an essential part of their faith. Changes in the ideas of people in these societies about the central importance of female circumcision may therefore be slow to occur, even when there are considerable changes at the economic level. It is perhaps worth observing, however, that the attachment to female circumcision may also be causally connected to the amount of bridewealth which can be extracted for a circumcised woman. Female circumcision might cease to be defended if the processes of economic change made these transactions unimportant. These considerations are spelt out very briefly in order to suggest to those people who believe that the women in these societies are victims of the patriarchy that Western intervention on this issue may be at best irrelevant, at worst, counter productive.

There are now a number of serious historical studies which consider the issue of female circumcision in the broader context of the history of particular states. There are, for example, several accounts of various aspects of the so-called circumcision crisis in Kenya in the late 1920's.\textsuperscript{13} While these historians recognise the importance of this issue in the consciousness of the Kikuyu people at that time, and assume that the African participants in these events were behaving perfectly rationally according to their perceived interests, they are also able to reveal the nature of the patriarchal social structures which gave all the decision-making powers at a political level to both African and European men. Oral evidence from women who were circumcised at

\textsuperscript{10} See Tim Schultz and Robert Feldman, 'New Moves in Sex Surgery', Creo, No. 71, March, 1979, pp50-59. This article claims that some American surgeons are 'circumcising' women by removing the prepuce of the clitoris, in order to help women achieve orgasm.


LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEW ZAIRE. INTERVIEW WITH PARISA DIAMAMANZA

Stuart Russell

(Editors note: Readers who have followed the breathtaking changes in Zaire that have swept the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaïre under Laurent Kabila’s leadership into power in Kinshasa, will be interested to read Stuart Russell’s interview last April with Parisa Diamambanza, spokesperson for the Coalition of Democratic Organisations of the Zaïrean Diaspora (CODEZAD) which represents the Alliance in France. Dr Russell, Lecturer in Law at Marquart University interviewed Parisa Diamambanza for the Green Left Weekly. I am grateful for permission to reproduce the interview here.)

What are the latest developments in your struggle?
A few days ago there was a summit in Lomé, initiated by the president of Togo. The real goal of the summit was to derail the advance of patriotic forces in Zaire, and to put the alliance in a situation where it would refuse to negotiate with the Mobutu regime, to justify international intervention.

French and Belgian troops are already in Brazzaville. Since 1960, the French and Belgians have intervened many times militarily, always to protect the Mobutu dictatorship.

The Lomé summit has no authority because Mobutu sent people who had no constitutional authority to negotiate. The alliance sent qualified people, including its commissioner of foreign affairs, while Mobutu sent a foreign affairs minister of a non-existent government since he had resigned, and his daughter, who has no constitutional authority, as well as the president of his parliament, but it isn’t the parliament which can negotiate. Only the executive can negotiate. Mobutu only wants to buy time and set the stage for foreign military intervention.

Where does the alliance come from? What are its roots?
The alliance is composed of four political parties, the most important of which is the Party of the Popular Revolution (PRP), which is led by Laurent Kabila. There are also three other small parties, including one which has substantial roots in the south of Kivu, the Popular Democratic Party.

Could you explain how the alliance is organising people in the liberated areas?
We are trying to do everything democratically in organising the people. We don’t have many resources, but each time an area is liberated we bring together the people, neighbourhood by neighbourhood, so that the people can choose their own leaders.

It’s a form of emergency democracy. First we need to replace Mobutu’s administrative personnel, who are fleeing, but the alliance doesn’t replace them with its leaders. It’s much more democratic for the population to choose their own representatives. But since it’s done very quickly, there is no secret ballot, rather the people vote publicly with a raised hand.

The re-education program is not obligatory. We acknowledge that the Mobutu regime instilled anti-social behaviour, particularly corruption and violence. So we have organised political programs, and the population is invited to participate, but there is no coercion.
Aside from these elections, what are the structures in the liberated areas?
The alliance is already functioning as a government, dealing with a number of responsibilities, including foreign affairs, economic management and administration. But it's a provisional government, because the alliance is open to any opposition party and individual who want to join it.

In the Western press, we don't hear much about the program of the alliance. What are its main features?
The program emphasizes two main points. On the political level, the alliance wants to continue the process of democratisation which was interrupted on September 14, 1960. At that time Patrice Lumumba was the prime minister, and Mobutu organised a coup d'état to stop the democratisation process. The alliance believes that legitimacy and legality in the country were interrupted in September 1960.

On the economic level, there are many urgent matters to attend to, for instance sanitation and social services, because the health of the Zairean people is truly in a catastrophic condition. At a more leisurely pace, we'll be putting in place different economic programs.

But until there are new national elections, the program of the government of national unity led by the alliance won't be able to take a position on different economic models, such as communism and capitalism. The alliance's economic vision is a social one based on an equilibrium between the market and the urgent needs of the people.

It has been reported that in the liberated areas the alliance presents two contradictory messages: a socialist discourse as well as a free market discourse. What is the alliance's position on the free market?
Many expressions are used because the alliance isn't a unified political party, but rather a platform which regroups a number of political parties. The current program, which was decided in January, is a minimalist program, based on social needs and the market. Therefore the alliance accepts the principles of the market, but it also has a major social obligation. The Marxist-Leninist message comes from one or two parties in the alliance, but it doesn't represent the majority view.

Is the Alliance for multipartyism?
Of course. The alliance insists on the need to resurrect the democratisation process broken in 1960, because at that time we had democracy and a bicameral parliamentary system. But in the liberated areas, to prevent disruption to the war effort, the alliance has demanded the suspension of political parties while the war is on. So it's an exceptional measure, valid only during the war.

Corruption is one of the great tragedies of the Mobutu regime, and of all Africa. How is the alliance going to rid Zaire of corruption?
The journalists who have been in the liberated areas have stated that the mentality has changed very quickly. There's almost no corruption there, in the popular army, at the barricades on the roads, to get a visa or to get an administrative job. All the symbols and the attitudes of the Mobutu regime have been swept away.

The people are aware that they were in an impossible situation. So it's by the creation of a new system based on good faith that we are fighting against corruption. We're not building an ideal society, but each time an individual breaks the law he or she must be dealt with. It was the culture of impunity, fostered by Mobutu, that allowed corruption to flourish.

You've stated that there are certain disagreements within the alliance concerning whether its program should promote socialist or a capitalist vision. Kabila strongly supported Lumumba in the 1960s. What is the alliance's thinking about socialism?
There was an international campaign to misrepresent Lumumba's thinking. For those of us who knew his life and his thinking, Lumumba was not a Marxist, strictly speaking. Lumumba fundamentally believed in political and economic independence, and unit of the Congo. At the time the Belgian press labelled him a communist, to promote the Cold War and rally the west against him.

Kabila, who is one of the political heirs of Lumumba since he was in Lumumba youth movement in 1960, also believes in political and economic independence as well as national unit. As for the various options promoted by Kabila's party, the emphasis now is on sovereignty. Kabila does not claim to be a Marxist.

The alliance has stated that planning for the future will be a priority only after the end of the war. Why is that?
In the disastrous state that Mobutu leaves Zaire, if we demand, for example, an accelerated program of privatisation, some people will seize certain assets, which will only create more corruption and be against the interests of the community. If we leave the door open to all the major western powers, the people won't be able to survive.

So during this transitional period the priority in terms of planning is on urgent social matters. But this period will last for at least another year or two. After that period and once elections are held, the party which wins the elections will then implement its program.

Are there other elements to alliance's program?
Last November Kabila issued a statement which placed great emphasis on human rights. The new Congo of tomorrow must be a Congo which respects human rights. That's fundamental. Kabila also hopes that relations with the west will be beneficial. So democracy is our underlying condition, as well as protection of human rights.

In order to complete the task of ridding Zaire of Mobutu, you may need international solidarity. How can we support your struggle?
Aid can be sent directly to the alliance in Goma, Zaire, but also to the coalition in Paris, which works with similar groups in different European countries. We can be contacted at CODEZAD, BP 175, 94005-Cedex Paris, France, Fax (33) 1 48 58 28 26. Right now we're collecting contributions for medical assistance, which is urgently needed in Zaire. Also,
we're circulating information about the struggle, particularly because our liberation struggle has been misrepresented in the media.

PARLIAMENTARY REPORT ON AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONS WITH SOUTHERN AFRICA

Cherry Geitzel

The Report of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Australia’s Relations with Southern Africa was published in November 1996. The inquiry itself was set up by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade in the former Labour government on 30 March 1995; and, following the 1996 elections and change of government, re-established on 21 August 1996 by the present Minister of Foreign Affairs. It is the first inquiry conducted by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade since that on the Horn of Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe in the early 1980s. Although there have been inquiries relevant to Africa since then for example on peace-keeping and human rights, this is therefore the first occasion for nearly fifteen years that the Joint Parliamentary Committee has focused specifically on Africa. Given the enormous changes that have occurred at global level as well as across Africa in that time, and especially since the end of the Cold War and the establishment of the post-apartheid democratic South Africa, the publication of the Committee’s report is thus an important occasion on which to reflect on Australia’s relations with this changed Africa. The report is thus important and welcome.

What gives the Report its particular salience at this stage of Australia’s relations with Africa is the extent to which the Committee in its inquiry (and notwithstanding their somewhat restricted terms of reference) went beyond the narrow confines of trade and commerce that have in recent years all too often characterised the Australian focus on Africa. Concern for Australian interests in this respect is certainly an important part of the report. (See especially Chapters 6 and 7 on Australian trade and investment in Southern Africa). Nevertheless there is also an obvious attempt to look at Australia’s relations with Africa in broader terms and to reflect also on some of the other interests, commitments and emerging social movements that link Australia to Africa, and especially Southern Africa, in the late 1990s. The importance of the ties established during the long years of support for the anti-apartheid campaign are acknowledged; including the links of Australian trade unions with the anti-apartheid movement and the non-racial based Trade Unions in South Africa during the struggle, and the contribution of APHEDA to training programs in South Africa, Zambia and Tanzania over the years. There is a recommendation that assistance to that body should be continued (pp.137-138). Recognition is given also to more recent, newer linkages for example with the work of the Southern Africa Legal Education Assistance Foundation (SALAF) (4.44, p37).

The Committee also clearly had a basic sympathy for Africa’s own needs. They recognise both that the African region was the hardest hit by the global recession as well as the external causes of African indebtedness (5.10, p52 and Chapter 8) and the need for continued international support if Africa’s economic crises of the past twenty years are to be overcome. Moreover (and in contrast to the more recent Simons review of overseas development (One Clear Objective, poverty reduction through sustainable development Report of the Committee of Review 1997)) they urge Australia to reaffirm its commitment to the target of 0.7% of GNP. The Committee also favoured increased diplomatic representation in Africa (2.24, p14).

AFSAAAP members and especially those who are engaged in teaching African studies will be especially interested in the Report’s concern to counter the stereotypes and negative images of
Africa that prevail amongst so many Australians; and the Committee's belief that "it is important that knowledge of Africa and particularly Southern Africa be available as widely as possible" (10.11, p.149). On the one hand they were quite shocked it seems (10.7, p.48) to learn that the A.B.C. is the only Australian broadcaster with a fulltime correspondent in Southern Africa. On the other they acknowledged the imbalance in the resources available to African Studies in Australia as compared with those available to Asia and the Pacific. (10.22, p.151). Of still greater interest given the AFSAAP submissions to the Committee, (see The Review and Newsletter Vol XVII Number 2, December 1995) is the Report's suggestion that "it would be beneficial if government departments such as DFAT might establish some formal liaison links with the Association, to make full use of the information available through that association". (10.11, p.149) The Committee also saw "merit in some sort of exchange program developing involving such associations as the AFSAAP".

Recommendation 41 goes further to suggest that the Commonwealth Government should be prepared to consider a feasibility study for a centre for African studies in Western Australia if they should receive such a proposal.

Implicitly as well as explicitly the report raises important questions about future Australian relations with Africa. First, the Committee was concerned essentially with South Africa. They suggested in their Report that this was indeed inevitable, in view of the dominant Australian perceptions of and interests in that state rather than the larger region. "...the Committee found that submissions largely focused on South Africa and to a lesser extent Zimbabwe and Mozambique" (p.151). One wonders whether this heralds a return to the pre-1970s days. Second, anyone who has followed the considerable debate about Structural Adjustment programs and their impact on Africa and the poor will be concerned at the apparent failure of the report to look more closely at those issues. Third, the lack of an historical perspective (the time frame is determined by the end of apartheid and starts therefore with 1991-92) is disappointing, not least because it undoubtedly leads the Committee to underestimate the continuing political significance of South Africa's historical role as regional hegemon in the politics of regional cooperation and the circumstances of resource scarcity in the late 1990s. This raises important reservations about their discussion of regional issues and cooperation. There is no evidence for example that the Committee appreciated the fundamental issues raised by the accord signed between South Africa and Mozambique that provides for the movement of white South African farmers into Mozambique to take up fifty year land concessions (4.49, p.38); or of the regional implications of the reduction of tariffs and the return of South African manufacturing exports in full flood into former regional markets.

Nevertheless the Committee was clearly concerned to move beyond the stereotypes of Africa that have dominated the public mind as well as the narrow official focus on issues of trade, commerce and security. While they may not have succeeded altogether, they have in fact provided a most useful Report which, read in conjunction with the more recently released Simons Report, provides food for thought and the opportunity for a new dialogue about Australia's relations with Africa. It is up to those concerned with Africa to ensure that this takes place.

For this reason it seems appropriate to reproduce the Report's Recommendations with this note, which we do with acknowledgment. It is worth pointing out that the Government's response to the Report will be in the form of a detailed recommendation to each of the Committee's recommendations. This will be tabled in Parliament, and there is usually time for debate on that response. This will possibly take place during the August session. Also it should be added that for those of you who would like to read the Report itself, and are unable to find a copy, there are still stocks available, and a copy may be obtained by writing to the Secretary, Parliament House, Canberra. Fax No. is (06) 277 2221.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS*

The Committee recommends that:

1. the Australian Parliament and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, explore ways in which appropriate assistance might be provided to the SADC Parliamentary Forum. (Para 2.21)

2. Australia respond positively to future requests from SADC for assistance, particularly institutional strengthening. (Para 2.25)

3. Australia review its diplomatic coverage of Southern Africa with a view to:
   a. establishing other forms of diplomatic representation (eg. sharing facilities with another country, mini-embassies, or creating Honorary Consul positions);
   b. providing additional staffing to the Australian High Commission in Harare; and
   c. in the longer term, opening an additional post, to be located in one of the smaller Southern African nations eg. Angola. (Para 2.35)

4. Australia offer encouragement and further practical help to the OAU, if requested to assist in the development of good governance in Africa, particularly Southern Africa, through exploring alternative conflict resolution strategies. (Para 3.9)

5. Australia explore with other participants mechanisms to include the hinterland countries relevant on access to the Indian Ocean in future IOR dialogues. (Para 3.36)

6. Australia offer increased expert assistance to the fledgling democracies in the Southern African region in such fields as constitutional drafting and electoral law. (Para 4.29)

7. the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, AusAID and the Australian Electoral Commission develop an ongoing program of assistance in the area of electoral reform and development. (Para 4.29)

8. AusAID, in conjunction with Southern African authorities, consider including provision of some legal education and training, and assistance to establish legal resource centres, as part of the official development assistance program. (Para 4.45)

9. Australia encourage an increased regional dialogue through support in the institutional strengthening of organisations such as SADC. (Para 4.53)

10. the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade monitor the development of ASAS and offer assistance as appropriate. (Para 4.57)

11. Australia explore through the International Forum on the Indian Ocean Rim greater cultural exchanges and trade links. (Para 4.95)

12. Australia, as part of its assistance to South Africa, include training for small and medium businesses. (Para 6.33)

13. Australia mount a public information campaign in Southern Africa aimed at highlighting the opportunities for business and other contact such as tourism with Australia. (Para 6.67)

14. (i) Australia bring forward the timetable for conclusion of a Double Taxation Treaty and an Investment Protection Agreement with South Africa; and

(ii) Australia encourage normalisation of currency and exchange agreements and Harmonisation of regulatory and other requirements within SADC countries. (Para 6.80)

15. Australia review its current staffing allocation to Southern Africa with a view to appointing an A-based officer to have responsibility for those countries covered by the Australian post in Zimbabwe. (Para 6.85)

16. Australia conduct a study on the publicising and implementation of EMDG with special reference to Australian companies trading with Southern Africa. (Para 6.93)

17. Australia produce a brochure for Australian companies interested in trading with Southern Africa, setting out basic information about the market, and assistance available to potential exporters. (Para 6.93)

18. Australia participate in the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair in 1997 and 1998, and review the degree of business interest after that period. (Para 6.98)

19. Australia encourage an increase in the number of study exchanges between SADC and Australian educational institutions. (Para 7.49).

20. Australia establish a formal exchange program between employees of the public and corporate sectors of SADC countries and Australia, with an emphasis on the industry specialist areas of infrastructure, education and agriculture. (Para 7.49)

21. Australia fund a small investigative team representing nationwide Technical and Further Education and training institutions, to undertake a feasibility study of SADC countries with the view to setting up vocational education and training programs supported by Australia. (Para 7.49)

22. Australia facilitate a thorough assessment and analysis of potential business and management training programs and services for prospective or present indigenous national business owners and managers. (Para 7.56)

23. the Australian Tourist Commission review its location, staffing and promotional activities in Southern Africa with a view to raising its visibility. (Para 7.56)

24. the Department of Industry, Science and Tourism and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade explore with the South African and Zimbabwean governments a Memorandum of Understanding on tourism cooperation. (Para 7.67)

25. Australia reaffirm its commitment to the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for official development purposes. (Para 8.12)

26. Australia consider in conjunction with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade examine the new aid policy for Africa, announced in August 1995, with a view to determining its effectiveness and scope. (Para 8.31)

27. Australia in international fora, explore ways in which the indebtedness of Southern African countries could be alleviated. (Para 8.38)

28. health issues continue to be addressed by AusAID and relevant NGOs with an emphasis on the provision of sanitation, water supply and basic health services. (Para 9.17)

29. Australia continue to fund HIV/AIDS education programs aimed, in particular, at adolescents and young adults in urban areas where infection rates are higher than those in rural communities. (Para 9.19)

30. Australia ensure funding is allocated through AusAID and NGOs for the establishment and continuation of hospices and orphanages for infant and children affected by HIV/AIDS and those orphaned as a result of the disease. (Para 9.21)

32. any Australian Government funding for NGO family planning programs in SADC countries should ensure that these are culturally sensitive, fully in conformity with our legal principles of informed consent, free from any coercive policies or practices which prevent couples exercising true freedom of choice in determining family size, have regard to the human rights records of the countries concerned, and not involve abortion or abortion drugs. (Para 9.43)
33. AusAID continue to include a focus on education and training in its programs, with an increased emphasis in the areas of basic education and vocational and technical education. (Para 9.60)

34. Australian universities and TAFEs collectively promote the opportunities for education (both in-country and in Australia) to Southern African countries. (Para 9.60)

35. AusAID provide funding for SADC for the establishment of a ‘micro-enterprise program’ for the women of Southern Africa, enabling them to borrow capital to establish livelihood projects. (Para 9.76)

36. the issue of women’s health continue to be addressed by AusAID and relevant NGOs, with an emphasis on the provision of sanitation and water, maternal and infant health services, family planning services, and health education particularly relevant to HIV/AIDS. (Para 9.78)

37. funding and aid support continue to be provided through AusAID and NGOs to provide access to education for all children, regardless of gender. (Para 9.78)

38. Australia continue to work for a total ban on landmines. (Para 9.106)

39. Australia continue to provide assistance through government and NGO agencies to SADC countries for demining activities. Such assistance should encompass:
   (a) medical and rehabilitation assistance to landmine victims, including the supply of prostheses to victims;
   (b) community education on the dangers of landmines; and
   (c) training for local people in demining methods. (Para 9.109)

40. Australia establish a mechanism to assist associations such as the African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific, but more broadly NGOs, develop an interchange program with the countries of Southern Africa. (Para 10.14)

41. the Commonwealth Government be prepared to consider any feasibility study submitted by the Western Australian Government and the University of Western Australia and Curtin University on establishing a Centre for African Studies in Western Australia. (Para 10.26)

42. Australia support cultural exchanges with Southern Africa and set up a liaison with the Australia Southern Africa Business Council (Inc) through which requests for assistance can be channelled. (Para 10.31)

**BOOK REVIEWS**


ANU’s Humanities Research Office organised three major conferences during ‘Africa Year’, 1995. Africa Today presents the proceedings of the third conference. This volume is handsomely and professionally presented and illustrated, and, to the light remarkably soon after its conception. It is strangely not possible to do justice to 28 papers, ranging through history, politics, literature, film, gender, health and environmental issues. Predictably, their quality is uneven and the connections between the papers little developed. Few could counter the broad sweep of Anthony Low’s keynote review of ‘Independence and Tropical Africa’s Political Trauma’, although Patrick Chabal rises to the occasion in his analysis of the post-colonial political order, Saul Dubow’s exploration of Raymond Dart and the evolution of race topologies is continent-wide in its implications, Cherry Gerzeli develops a general theory by examining the wars in Rwanda and Somalia, and the discussions of gender also aspire to continental judgements. The more closely-focused papers are perfectly appropriate for a conference, but difficult to read sequentially in print. Predictably again, ten papers investigate South African topics, four of them in the History section. Together with three papers on ‘the New South Africa’ (by Herbert Adams, Jonathan Hyslop and Bernard Leeman) these come closest to an interactive series.

One of the more remarkable is Bernard Leeman’s very personal account of the ‘Pan Africanist Congress of Azania’, to which he has devoted much of his adult life. The ‘much’ perspective on South African politics is cogent, even if the institution’s policies have developed in a convoluted and sometimes opportunistic fashion. Membership of the PAC and its affiliates often seems to reflect a radical temperament rather than a commitment to specific strategies, tactics or outcomes. Given the many organisational and tactical failings of the African National Congress, when it and its allies were the only rivals of the PAC, the decline of the latter deserves the serious attention which Leeman gives to it. The intimate connections with Lesotho politics, and the painful personality clashes among the leaders, are described in detail, as in the PAC’s calamitous performance in South Africa’s first democratic elections. Throughout its forty years the PAC has settled into the role of critic of the ANC, a function which seems certain to persist.

Jonathan Hyslop’s analysis of the South African ‘white right’ and its ultimate failure either to coalesce or to prevent the democratic transition, suggests some of the reasons why the PAC’s role may again become important. To avoid the risk of bloodshed, the ANC was bound not only to seek an accommodation with the ruling National Party, but also to offer a role to Constand Viljoen’s Freedom Front; yet any conciliatory gesture laid open to PAC and other radical criticism. Had the PAC been as powerful as its 1980s rhetoric promised, that conciliatory strategy might have been politically impossible - and the consequences of a direct confrontation are too alarming to contemplate.

Another paper which caught my attention because it addresses my earlier research interest and analysis and is a highly topical issue, is Pal Ahluwalia’s analysis of ‘The Rwandan Crisis’. Events have rather overtaken this analysis, with tens of thousands of Rwandese refugees being driven on death marches through eastern Zaire, and a Rwandan-backed insurgency
entering Kinshasa as I write this review. The 'rapid solution' which Ahluwalia seeks is even more urgent now than in 1995, but perhaps even further from realisation. It is doubtless true that Tutsi and Hutu 'need to discover or recognise that, despite recent history, their differences are imagined, invented and/or constructed'. The tendency to see caste divisions as merely a projection of colonial racism, however, brings us dangerously close to the old and unhelpful notion of 'false consciousness'. The prospects of Tutsi and Hutu both imagining a 'common community' - a new Rwanda' have been diminished rather than enhanced by a super-abundance of fresh atrocities, each reinforcing the plausibility of caste stereotypes.

The volume offers not only 'a snapshot of the continent', but also a showcase of African studies in Australia. Of 34 contributors, only 14 are employed in or retired at Australian universities, while 5 are students, and 15 overseas visitors. The number and quality of overseas scholars speaks eloquently of the organizers' ability to raise funds, the Humanities Research Centre's magnetic reputation among scholars, and their collective ability to attract stars. When all the stops are pulled out, it is still possible to organize informative and worthwhile discussions, leading to useful publications.

On the other side of that coin, however, this reader gains a disconcerting insight into the state of African scholarship in Australia. Our golden age was the 1960s and 1970s, when Australian universities were expanding, and when apartheid in South Africa, civil war in most of southern Africa, and localization in tropical Africa created a pool of formidable applicants for new positions in pioneering fields. When Australian universities stabilised in the 1980s, however, and especially as they began to contract and 'rationalise', African studies became highly vulnerable. It may not be fanciful to read this background into this selection of papers. Some of the most incisive speakers are on the verge of formal (though not intellectual) retirement. The passage of time draws people into research interests more easily and inexpensively addressed (not to mention the debilitating effect of administrative chores). Several who were active in conferences in the 1970s have drifted to other research interests, and have not been replaced. Only a small proportion of these papers rest on recent, extensive, fish/stock or similar exposure. The application of post-structuralist tools of analysis, and a post-colonial sensibility, are admirable, and are especially useful in the hands of Kogila Moodley, Pan Stavropoulos, Tanya Lyons and David Moore in analyzing gender issues. In its analytical apparatus, Australian scholarship is clearly up-to-date. A sense of immediacy, however - even perhaps some of the confusion of raw contingency - is less striking.

Africanists in Australia seem to be increasingly isolated from scholars in tropical Africa. Understandably, the centre of our African gravity is closer to the Cape than to Cairo. If we add Zimbabwe and Mozambique to the ten South African papers, at least half of the chapters deal with southern Africa. Little attention remains for tropical Africa (except by the resolute Paul Nursey-Bray and Paul Ahluwalia), Francophone Africa, West or North Africa; and it is easier to relate to active scholars in South African and Northern Hemisphere universities, than in the impoverished academias of tropical Africa. Australian Africanists are also alarmingly isolated from other African scholars in Australia: Adelaide and New South Wales are the only universities represented here, where a department boasts more than one Africanist.

African Studies confronts a host of unhappy circumstances in Australia in the 1990s; along with other minority enthusiasts. Despite these discouragements, the organizers of 'Africa Year', the hosts of the conference, and the editors of this volume command this reader's utmost admiration. The contributions offer us a heartening example of scholarly endeavour and creativity, a triumph of will and intelligence as well as an engrossing survey of a continent in much deeper trouble than our own.

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This is a long awaited book. Kole Omotoso is one of Nigeria's foremost writers, whose work ranges across a number of genres and forms; however, it is as a critic that he has been particularly interesting. In the best tradition of Nigerian (and, I dare say, African) scholarship, his work has been particularly engaged in the broadest sense of that much maligned term, asking important questions as to the place of literature within its social and political context. He is therefore uniquely placed to comment on two of the most celebrated and influential of Nigeria's so-called 'first generation' of writers: Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe. This is even more the case when one remembers Omotoso's own problematic and productive relationship with Soyinka.

Omotoso, with Femi Ososfan and Biodun Jeyifo, was among the group of radical critics Soyinka dubbed the 'leftocratic' School. In the 'seventies, these critics, whilst professing admiration for Soyinka's obvious achievements and talent, all took him to task for what they saw as his elitism and ultimately reactionary politics. I do not want to simplify their often perceptively critical for ignoring the important differences between these critics, but it is certainly true that as a group they were responsible for beginning an important debate within Nigerian literary criticism on issues such as the role of political responsibility of the writer, and on the relationship between a writer and his/her audience. In a sense, this book continues that debate, with the critic again raising vital contemporary issues concerning the politics of writing.

The writer's argument is that both writers, despite their obvious differences, have played a role in the failure of the Nigerian nation to rise above its ethnic divisions in order to create a workable nation-state. Omotoso uses the notion of 'community of sensibilities' to describe what a working national imagination might look like for Nigeria. Appropriating the term from Raymond Williams, Omotoso argues that

A community of sensibilities implies a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-religious community. The expression of the common sensibility would thus be the totality of the ideals of the various languages, ethnicities and religions which make up community.

However, rather than create what he elsewhere calls the "soul" of the nation, Omotoso argues that Achebe and Soyinka (and others) have fallen between the stools of two projects, neither of which has helped ensure the survival of the nation. Either they have argued for an idealized Pan-African vision; or they have presented themselves as primarily "ethnic" writers, engaged in an exploration of Yoruba aesthetics (Soyinka) or in representing a complex historical vision of Igbo traditional society (Achebe). While arguing that, especially in the
case of Achebe’s most recent work, there has been a movement by both writers in the direction that he sees as crucial for the future of Nigeria, Omotoso sees their earlier work as reinforcing the very centrifugal tendencies which were so personally tragic for both writers during the Civil War: “Neither Achebe nor Soyinka has found the right formula for linking the ethic to the national in order to bring about the successful establishment of a Nigerian nation-state”. It must be said that this is asking a little too much of writers, and Omotoso is kind enough to point out quickly that “African politicians have not been able to resolve the issue either.”

What Omotoso achieves, for the most part, is a detailed investigation of how the two writers have approached these issues through their work as playwrights, novelists, poets and critics, as well as through their own considerable contribution as activists and “public” intellectuals. On the whole, his case is convincing and perspective, although at times (such as the above) over-stated. Nor does he dispense the strategic importance of their work in challenging colonial stereotypes and championing what Soyinka has called African “self-apprehension”. Rather, he argues that the very success of this vital mission has tended to undermine another related, but not identical, kind of vision of political identity: that of a modern, diverse yet unified, nation-state.

It is at the level of textual analysis that the work occasionally falls down and becomes simplistic. This is especially the case with regard to the discussion of Achebe’s fiction, where Omotoso seems often to flatten out the complex, ironic texture of Achebe’s writing. Often he seems to read this work as simple “anthropological” apology, when the writer’s relationship with his past is actually much more problematic and contradictory than this; a point that in other places Omotoso makes forcibly (as in his discussion of the often noted “missing” novel of the projected trilogy). For example, he argues that in seemingly always making the character on the side of tradition “dignified”, and those interested in colonisation as cloven-knee, Achebe is implicitly lauding the ethnic past against any possibility of the modern nation. However, Things Fall Apart is at the last ambivalent towards Okonkwo, and Esu”s relationship to tradition in Arrow of God is contradictory to say the least. To see these works as favouring one side or another is to miss much of their complexity and power.

Omotoso is always on surer ground in discussing Soyinka, which in part reflects his long relationship with that writer’s work. However, he is also more convincing when discussing Yoruba cultural history than that of the Igbo. He tends to characterize the Yoruba as great modernizers, embracing colonialism with a healthy sense of greatness of their own cultural tradition. However, while this is probably true, he then down-plays the Igbo’s own embrace of the advantages of education and modernity. Indeed, it could be argued that it was the very success of both the Igbo and the Yoruba in appropriating the mixed blessings of colonialism that fed the resentment of the North against the South (and vice versa) in both pre- and post-colonial Nigerian politics.

This book raises difficult and complex questions. Is the perpetual crisis of the Nigerian body politic a failure of the society (or societies, as Omotoso would - I think correctly - claim) to adapt itself to a “Western” model of the nation-state? Or is there something wrong with the model itself (were the Nigerian nationalist sold a proverbial “lemon”)? Is there another model which might work for the multi-ethnic African state; one which is more culturally appropriate? And, once again, what role does a writer, or any creative artist, have in a post-colonial (Neo-colonial?) nation.

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This volume is a collection of papers presented at a conference, ‘Southern Spaces: Land, Representation and Identity in South African and Australian Literatures’, organised by SOAS and the Sir Robert Menzies Centre in London in June 1993. That opening sentence might be enough to put most readers off looking at this book: conference volumes are notoriously grab-bags of material so disparate as to defy easy definition or organization, and a title as vague as Text, Theory, Space might reinforce the doubts.

But this volume is different: it is not only focussed, but in the context of Australia’s current debates over Mabo and Wik, it is largely and surprisingly topical. The London conference, in fact, was inspired by the Mabo decision of 1992, and the book makes an important intervention in the current debate, and in addition suggests how Africa provides fruitful and illuminating parallels to the Australian discussion.

The book is organised into three sections: ‘Defining the South’, ‘Claiming Lands, Creating Identities, Making Nations’, and ‘Borders, Boundaries, Open Spaces’. The opening section serves as introduction to the colonial south, linking Australia and South Africa by examining the colonial psyche, the liminality of the emigrant position, and the formation of what the editors term ‘settler sites’ in the field of empire. This section begins the analysis of the way Europeans saw ‘the south’ as the site of the exotic, the empty, the other, and a place of liberation, where they themselves might be transformed and enriched; one of the most illuminating essays is Kerryn Goldsworthy’s examination of the symbolic importance European immigrants attached to crossing the Equator, and the ritualized carnivalesque ceremonies enacted in doing so.

The second section examines a range of means by which the colonizers imaginatively claimed the colonized areas as their own, following physical conquest. From the way in which Victorian women travellers approached and appropriated the new space, and achieved a degree of self-liberation in the process, to an examination of captivity narratives, to the cultural aggression signified by the re-arranging of physical features of the landscape (from the Matopos to Uluru) and the all-encompassing negation of indigenous claims through the concept of terra nullius, the essays in this part of the book repay close reading and offer many unexpected illuminations.
Finally section three brings the cultural appropriation of space up to the present, with essays on such diverse but linked subjects as an examination of recent texts from South Africa and Australia, an analysis of the plans for accommodating cultural diversity in Western Sydney, and investigation of spatial configurations of gender in Drum magazine, which as Dorothy Driver shows, provided unparalleled opportunities for publication to black men, but virtually excluded women. In this volume, notions of dispossession, usurpation, counterclaim and repossession are viewed and revealed as a constant struggle for dominance, geographic, cultural, sexual and psychological.

Several of the contributors also go a long way towards conclusively undermining the polarities still underlying much post-Colonial theory: the divisions between possessors of power and victims of it, colonisers and colonized, settlers and indigenes, conquerors and conquered. The black male writers who suffered the stultifying and silencing effects of apartheid, but who were less likely to try to silence or exclude black women, come to seem emblematic. Tereance Ranger points out, in an important essay, that Robert Mugabe's plans to seize more land from white farmers for 'his original owners' was answered by a tongue-in-cheek letter from a San correspondent to the Zimbabwe Herald, who wrote to say that he was glad to hear his people were soon to get their hunting grounds back from Shona and Ndebele usurpers. All countries are elaborate palimpsests of conquest and reconquest. This is no less true of Australia than of Africa or Europe, and the concept of the 'indigenous' (meaning little more than the first occupiers we know of) can slide too easily into racism if we are not watchful.

Ranger himself was excluded from the Njelele shrine in the Maopon in Zimbabwe by a traditional 'guardian' who first objected to his carrying 'hard shiny objects' such as his watch and camera, and when he offered to leave these behind, told him all whites had hard shiny minds and were excluded for that reason. Ranger's anecdote has similarities to the experience of the painter Sarah Raphael, who was rebuked for painting the Olgas, or (to introduce a personal note) the manner in which I was refused access to the Yatsurumi shrine in Tokyo, on the grounds that I was not Japanese. Racism comes in all colours.

It is one of the strengths of this book that it raises a number of such uncomfortable and awkward issues. And while it doesn't always come up with answers, it is an important contribution to the questions of culture, power and possession that seem ever more keenly contested in both Australia and Africa.

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This is an important addition to the historiography of Ethiopia, which is characteristic only concerned with the politics and history of Ethiopia as a nation of both great longevity and great turmoil. Historians have so far neglected analyses from the political economy point of view, or from straight economics, which are readily available for almost every other state in Africa. An understanding of the reasons for Ethiopia's position as one of the world's poorest nations cannot be arrived at without this kind of economic analysis.

The difficulties which have faced modern Ethiopia are discussed in the introductory chapter, in which the author, Shiferaw Jammoo, identified the feudal mode of production, the rivalry between warlords, the lack of infrastructure, the backward technology and high levels of illiteracy, ill-health and malnutrition as the central problems facing the state. The second chapter by Shiferaw Bekele could have been improved with some editing but, none the less, it is an ambitious attempt to explain the complexities of the land holding system which has impeded the development of a modern economy. The author raises the question of whether this landlordism has been entirely responsible for the level of poverty in Ethiopia or whether it must also be seen as partly due to overpopulation and land degradation.

Chapter 3, written by Desalegn Rahmato, explores the 5 year plan which were made the basis for change during the period before 1974 and, in the process, reveals the weaknesses of the theories of 'modernization' as understood by organizations like the World Bank. The author is critical of attempts to achieve the transformation of Ethiopia through capitalist farming, which underl alls exacerbates the degradation of the land, and recommends greater support for the peasantry to transform itself. The following chapter dealing with the attempted development of industry is equally disheartening. Esteban Chele explains that most of the developed industries are foreign owned and the process has apparently bogged down at the level of import substitution of consumer goods. As elsewhere in Africa, while there is too little domestic capital available for industrial development, the presence of foreign capital creates its own problems, including the export of profits which ought to be ploughed back into local investment.

The two final chapters are equally absorbing. In chapter 5, Befekadu Degefe outlines the ambitions of Britain in Ethiopia after the Second World War and provides factual material about the history of the development of the banking structures, as the Ethiopians tried to avoid a British stranglehold on their economy. The last chapter by Alula Abate provides the only account I have found which explains in detail the history of attempts to enumerate the population, thus providing valuable information for the demographer concerned with possible source material. This chapter deals with population growth, fertility levels, the distribution of population, migration patterns and projections for future population levels. The author uses his material creatively for conjectures about earlier population levels and considers the kinds of political problems likely to be created by the continued increase in the total number of people in Ethiopia.

Both because of its accumulation of basic material, and for the sophistication of the analysis offered by these six writers, this book should be in the possession of every student of Ethiopia.

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Post-independence historians of Kenya provided us with a radical critique of the activities of settlers in Kenya and also a rational socio-economic explanation for the phenomenon of Mau Mau. They could do this, it seemed, because they had the advantage of hindsight and because they were not apologists for colonial rule. What many of us did not know was that Tom Askwith, caught up in the contemporary politics of the period and very closely committed to the colonial enterprise, foreshadowed many aspects of these later interpretations in several reports to the Colonial Government in Nairobi which are published here.

In 1950, fearful of the rising level of lawlessness, Askwith wrote a report analysing the growing unrest in terms of the problem of landlessness, due to the removal of squatters from the land of white settlers, and the rapid increase in population. He pointed to the lack of employment, the low wages paid to employees who could not maintain their families, and the absence of all forms of social assistance. His report provided details of how the situation could be remedied at relatively little expense to the Government. He believed later that if Kenyans had been given land, and if various forms of cooperative enterprise had been developed, Mau Mau would not have happened.

But the Mau Mau emergency did occur and the second half of the book provides an account of all the community development programs designed to wean people away from the movement and to prepare them for a return to civilian life. These programs were not just a response to the political crisis but the preferred activity of many administrators in the field, who had a particular ideology about how to bring about the social and economic transformation of Kenyan society.

Askwith was the mentor of many of the people who administered these programs and was almost certainly sidelined by the Government for his objections to the use of force against the Mau Mau. He was a supporter of all those limited educational programs which were set up to provide particular skills needed in the modern sector of the economy. He also believed in small scale programs of development in the traditional economy which were democratic and egalitarian. These programs, which cost almost nothing in up-front capital, involved the participation of whole communities in the transformation of their housing, their farming methods or their health care.

It is commonplace to see these colonial experiments as conservative in their intentions, serving European purposes rather than the needs of Africans. Yet the accounts of the actual experiences of community development open up a world of speculation about the historical interpretation of these programs, and suggest a much greater imputus from Africans themselves than this interpretation might allow. They wanted to improve their economic circumstances, they wanted enough resources to educate their children, they wanted clean water and better health.

Historians are increasingly shifting their focus from the activities and self-interested policies of the settlers in Kenya, and moving towards the history of the responses of the Kenyan people themselves to new situations. Tom Askwith was committed to his own kind of civilizing mission which now seems something of an anachronism. Yet he, and others like him, should not be written off as mindless tools of a heartless administration. The local administrators of Kenya have a long history of speaking their minds and expressing their divided loyalties. Historians should now be delighting in the exploration of these contradictions.

This is a useful addition to a growing body of literature which is gradually providing the impetus for a new view of the colonial service in Kenya. It is regrettable that the editor did not spend more time on the mundane tasks of editing. Although the typeface is clear and easy to read, the book is full of printing errors, missing commas and full stops, and clumsy paragraphing. The author should also have been encouraged by the editor to restructure the first two chapters which are likely to persuade the reader to put the book down. It is a pity that the Cambridge African Studies Centre cannot be proud of the appearance of this publication.

Penelope Hetherington
University of Western Australia
History Department


Perhaps the major success of this reader-friendly book is that it can be reviewed by a non-historian with only minimal twinges of guilt. Indeed, room for academics may enjoy most of its painless absorption of important information and interpretations. For academics, its referencing of difficult-to-obtain sources, many spirited out of the country, is an important guide to a privatized and globally-dispersed archive of considerable significance.

Inevitably, 'modern' historians can claim no monopoly on interpretation: too many others 'recall' differently; there are journalists out there as well (including Godwin, who wears many hats) and any modern social history is particularly vulnerable to disciplinary dissatisfaction among academics. This history cannot hope to cover the politics of its period, both within and beyond Rhodesia, in the same detailed depth as accounts with a narrow politico-military focus, although it does add new material to the corpus. Nor, probably, will it fully satisfy sociologists, although the authors probe the divisions among whites and provide salutary corrective to the view (especially in comparison to western societies) that they were exceptionally wealthy. However, what is deliberately sacrificed in detailed focus, is more than recouped in both breadth and the weaving together of all the diverse strands covered - including a repeated attempt to include women's perspectives (though not all feminists will applaud either).

Some readers, especially those given to political correctness, will probably misunderstand its racy style and humour, which in part reflect Godwin's upbringing in a country with its own brand of humour 'at once defiant, bitter, irreverent, and self-deprecating' (p.310), to which might also be added 'direct', 'backhanding' and 'brutally frank', allowing very little deference to our defence of that self so central to most westemers' concerns. (Hancock's Australian humour may be similarly heavy-handed.) On page 170, for example, sensitive
The subtitle of this volume "Racism and the End of Anthropology" denotes the broad theme of the volume. He explains his aims in the preface as,

I attempt a brief anthropological, or, if you like, ethnographic study of a prominent group of Western (Euro-American) scientists and intellectuals. While it would be most desirable for such a project to be based on first-hand fieldwork among these selected academics in the classical anthropological tradition, my particular interests and somewhat radical approach to the social sciences, as well as the exigencies of an academic career, have precluded my obtaining the time, opportunity, or funding as part of my motive. I feel I am fully justified in turning a critical anthropological (theoretical and political) gaze upon these (selected) writings (pp.viii-xix).

The above statement highlights not only the aim but the problems of the volume. The aim I would argue is both laudable and necessary at this time. However, at times Rigby becomes trapped in one of the disciplinary boxes he is trying to attack. Rather than locate his work within a sociology of knowledge tradition he wants to "appear" anthropological in attacking some anthropological assumptions. Because of this approach the attack at times becomes disjointed while the language often becomes convoluted and unnecessarily obtuse.

The book then becomes a number of discrete short essays, rather than the sustained analysis of the racist assumptions hidden in significant anthropological and other writing on Africa. It is divided into three parts. The third part entitled "Theoretical Coda", is a kind of theoretical postscript containing two small chapters: Marxism and Anthropology I: "Objectivity, Relativism and the World Economic System and, Marxism and Anthropology II: Fieldwork and Language in History and the Context of Knowledge Production. The discussion is probably useful in raising issues but in the context of this volume is too condensed and incomplete to be useful. I feel it will provide many readers with an escape from the core argument rather than confronting them with some of the key methodological problems of anthropological field work.

Part II is the heart of the volume for this reviewer. It represents Peter Rigby at his combative best. Here there are seven review essays critically examining the ideological role of colonial myths in the analysis of African social structure with an assessment of their political and policy roles in many contemporary events. One could add to these seven essays the two short essays reproduced in an Appendix that Rigby sent to the Philadelphia Inquirer in the USA in 1993 and 1994. The first was entitled "Soundia, the U.S. and the Forgetting of History" and the second on "Rwanda, Africa and the Western Press".

Rigby concludes in Part Two, that:

Certain forms of contemporary anthropological work and discourse, far from subverting the misrepresentation of Africa and African societies, contribute to the myths about, and distortions of, African cultures in literature as in the popular media.
As such anthropology appears as just another form of colonialist discourse/effect, falling neatly in its aims and responsibilities.

But furthermore, let me reiterate that the burden of this book has also been to demonstrate a direct analogy between distortions in anthropological knowledge on the one hand, and the massive assault on people of African descent in the Western world by well-funded racist groups of white, Western, predominantly male intellectuals on the other. Only alienated forms of analytical thought can produce perverted knowledge of this kind. (pp 84-85).

Roger Woods
Darlington, WA


African Studies in the United States is once more under threat; facing cuts of federal funding, an aging academic establishment and a continuing shift away from 'context sensitive' multidisciplinary field research and training toward more narrowly defined 'applied' disciplines, especially economics and political science. Janey Sier provides a cogent overview of the huge, multifaceted and highly fragmented complex that is African Studies, outlining the transformations that have shaped current structures and the looming challenges. Sier's slim volume is part of the lobby process, clearly written for American academics, civil servants, politicians and foundation directors. Despite the numerous problems, it seeks to put a positive spin on change.

While the sheer number of scholars, programs, institutional involvement and resources dwarfs the entire Australasia territory sector, there is much that colleagues will find familiar. Her prognosis for the future are worthy of reflection. Unfortunately, it presupposes a familiarity with U.S. federal funding agencies and tertiary structures that many readers of this journal may find daunting. Thus, it is perhaps worth summarizing the development of African Studies in America and its degree of politicization in response to changing American strategic concerns.

American African Studies had its genesis in the euphoria of post-World War II internationalism, decolonization, and the Cold War. The influential 'Title VI' African Studies Centres were established within a broader system of National Resource Centres with long-term Federal government funding, initially under the National Defense Education Act of 1958. It was a period of rapid expansion and plentiful access to funding for African fieldwork. This remarkable infusion of state and corporate support derived from a perceived strategic requirement for an informed body of expertise.

The inter-disciplinary approach to Area Studies and exotica of African fieldwork captured the imagination of many of America's brightest scholars. Peace Corps and the increasingly common American institution of a semester or summer-school abroad, generated a steady stream of postgraduates. In the absence of major 'communist' threats, Africanists were given a remarkable free hand in defining the nature and focus of research.

The collapse of the Bretton Woods agreement, the oil shocks and African famines from the mid-1970s placed increasing emphasis on 'development' as a focus of research, funding and employment. This found expression within universities in the bifurcation of 'African Studies', with its strength in humanities and the social science, and the 'Study of Africa', with emphases on technical disciplines; economics, agriculture, education and health. Increasingly state and corporate support was channelled into the 'applied' disciplines at the expense of Arts subjects. Dissertations in African history peaked in the mid-1970s and were almost halved by the mid-1980s.

At a time when the newer American universities were still expanding, funds for African Studies in America, and one might add Britain, were shrinking. In the increasingly competitive academic employment market of the 1980s, many scholars sought to reposition themselves more clearly within their particular discipline. As in Australia, the inability of multidisciplinary area studies to influence faculty appointments, control being vested in disciplinary departments, contributed to gradual staff attrition in African Studies.

Surprisingly few students are admitted to specifically Africa-focused programs, exceptions being 'African Studies at Howard University and African History at Wisconsin-Madison. Most take their degrees with specific disciplines. While the number of doctoral theses in African Studies continued to grow through the 1980s, an increasing percentage were African students supported by USAID and other scholarship programs, with donor emphasis on 'applied' disciplines and constituency-oriented research. At the same time, there was an increasing dispersal of African students over a widening range of institutions. Despite long-term massive federal funding, only 30 percent of all African related PhD dissertations in 1986-1994 were from well-known Title VI African Studies Centres.

American academic recruitment is based on a 'user' system and high profile African Studies programs have been sustained by the infusion of internationally-renowned African scholars. Poor salary and conditions within African universities have exacerbated the brain drain. However federal funding for international exchange programs with Africa, as well as scholarships for Africans, a great strength of American African Studies programs, have fallen dramatically since the end of the Cold War.

Africa is rapidly becoming marginalized in American policy debate. However, unlike in Australasia African Studies in the United States has a potential constituency in the African-American population. Institutions have been slow to mobilize this constituency, having relied for so many years on networking with prominent white bureaucracies and foundations.

Postgraduate training in the humanities and social sciences, the core of African Studies, is increasingly criticized for being too long, arduous and costly, with little relevance to career opportunities and employment outside academia. It is an important aspect of longer-term issues relating to how and where academic agendas will be set. For AFSAAP as an organization committed to African Studies in Australasia, Sier's slim volume raises concerns we too must confront.

David Deward
La Trobe University
African Research Institute
Bundoora, Victoria
This work fills a niche in bibliographic coverage of African “performance” - defined by the author very broadly to include not only African dance, music and drama, but also ritual, oral tradition, storytelling, carnivals, pageantry, folklore, athletic performance, ethnographic studies, women’s studies, child care and children’s videos. This definition accords with Africa-centric interpretations of the performing arts. By “African” is meant Africa and the African diaspora, and there is a healthy representation of African-American, Caribbean and black European films, including selections on jazz, gospel, reggae, rap and related themes. There are 1,396 entries, many from recent years, from 48 countries, in a range of languages. French-language African films, a genre increasingly shown on SBS-TV, are well represented, as are English-language films. Some ethnographic and historical videos are included. Only videos still on the market are included; films not available on video, or cut-of-print videos are not. Also excluded are some feature films and documentaries dealing with Africa that do not, in the compiler’s opinion, feature performance.

The book is easy to use. There are cross-references (including series), a user guide, and indexes for names, subjects and distributors. The name index is somewhat limited for, as the author warns, the main focus is on subject or title rather than individual artists. A language index also would have been useful. A “video formats chart” explains the complex world of video standards and formats.

Entries annotations are informative, though chiefly quotations from publishers’ blurbs, and hence largely uncritical. On the other hand, the author has added original notes to the entries for the considerable number of videos she was able to view. One can quibble with the extent of a few of these - the entry for the Zimbabwean Jit lacks reference to a lead actor and musician, and some German ethnographic films lack subject notes. The notes cover subject, date format/standard, series, accompanying guides, intended audience, distributor/rental details, but unfortunately not prices. This, and the American focus (some videos listed as NTSC also are available in PAL format but this is not always indicated) somewhat lessens the book’s value as an acquisitions tool for Australian librarians. One error is that the obsolete term “South West Africa” is used (p.xv) - the country became “Namibia” in 1990.

This is the only work of its kind. Not only is it a bibliography but also a useful tool for locating and ordering videos on the subjects covered. It is a worthy companion to the author’s earlier book, African Music: a Pan-African Annotated Bibliography (London: Zell, 1991). Interested users will be concerned with the performing and fine arts and, to a lesser extent, social sciences. The broad coverage, and the increasing popularity in Australia of black music and film increase its relevance for Australian readers: it thus may profitably grace the reference shelves of public, school and tertiary libraries alike.

Peter Limb
University of Western Australia
Reid Library
Nedlands, W.A.
On the basis of these volumes one would be led to believe that the students of Cheikh Anta Diop University, where most of the Senegalese contributors are based, receive an education vastly more challenging than those of the University of Ibadan.

John Ballard
Australian National University
Canberra


This is a very important book. It is set in Kamwokya, a densely populated area on the outskirts of Kampala in 1994.

The literature now on AIDS and HIV infection in Africa is considerable with a wide variation in quality and relevance. At first glance this book seems yet another collection of articles by various authors from a variety of disciplines with little but location to provide the unifying thread. It is only after reading the whole book that the picture it paints, the analysis it presents, really comes together. Indeed it is only after reading the book a second time that the full significance of Sandra Wallman's intentions and enterprise are fully evident, where she presents not just a case study in the medical anthropology of health, but implicitly raises a number of real questions about appropriate methodologies for generating understanding and insight into disease, wellbeing with respect to space and place.

The foundation of the book rests with its overall method of approaching the topic.

This study is about the management of health and illness, and two of its authors are medical doctors. A good proportion of its contents is concerned with diagnosis of symptoms, the prescription of materia medica, and the treatment choices for particular diseases (p6).

The strength of the work is the variety of methods used to explore the issues and to present results. This means that the book can be read at many levels: that of a contemporary, on life in contemporary urban Kampala in the context of the current politics; as an insight into contemporary domestic life and in particular the position of women and children; as an environmental health overview of illness and health, particularly maternal and child health in an urban locality; and finally as a description of the epidemiological dimensions of STDS and AIDS in such an urban setting.

Valdo Pons provides a chapter which gives a basic demographic description of the urban setting. This is then followed by what may be called a dynamic overview of Kamwokya through a series of vignettes on observers' view of community life. This is then followed by presenting the survey results of an inquiry into ethnographic variables and women's interests.

A number of chapters then deal with in turn, "Treatment Options", "Home Treatment", "Children's Illnesses", and the very significant Chapter 9 on "Private Disease: Perception and Management of STD" by Frank Kahanura and others. This is an excellent overview of the medical and social dimensions of the African AIDS crisis, but presented honestly and unselfconsciously in a very helpful and constructive way.

One of the most telling chapters in the book is Chapter 10, "Six Women: Individual women's accounts of treatment seeking" where Grace Bantebya-Kyengondho and Jessica Owen explore case studies of women seeking help for their children or themselves. The great value of this chapter is that it sensitizes the reader to both the general and the particular factors that make medical settings so complex, yet understandable to those who take the time to listen.

One unique aspect of the research project behind this book was the decision to produce a video film which showed the local community's view of itself. The penultimate chapter by Solveig Freudenthal describes and analyses this process. I can do no better than quote the chapter's own introductory overview.

First, in documenting the production of a video film of, by, and for the people of Kamwokya (as well as for the health research project), this piece also shows the community decising which image of itself is best suited to which audience - demonstrating both its familiarity with "development rhetoric", and the double bind of aid supplicants who must show the right balance of need and independence to be "worthy of aid."

This chapter on the ethnography of the video production is a classic act which deserves dissemination to a wider audience than those who are likely to read this book.

Sandra Wallman concludes the book with a Summary and Conclusions chapter which is brief and to the point. Indeed the book would have perhaps been improved in terms of readability if the Summary and conclusions had been an introduction. This is an important book in both medical anthropology and social science methodology. It deserves careful reading by a wide audience.

Roger Woods
Darlington, WA


The rights of the child in Ghana - Perspectives, is an edited collection of papers presented at a workshop of the same name in October 1992. The workshop was organised by the Ghana branch of the African Society of Comparative and International Law and the Faculty of Law of the University of Ghana. The participants were representatives of institutions and organisations involved in the promotion of children's rights and the papers were presented by academics in the areas of law, sociology and psychology. The main objective of the workshop was to identify issues in the Ghanaian Constitution and the International Convention on the rights of the Child that would ensure the promotion of children's rights in Ghana.
The book is divided into two parts. Part one addresses the definition of a child, the prevalence of child abuse, neglect and delinquency and places the discussion within the socio-cultural and economic context of Ghana and the role of welfare agencies. The authors explore some of the social and cultural attitudes and practices which violate the rights of children. Although Ghanaian society places a high value on child-bearing, children are considered the property of their parents rather than individuals with special needs and rights which must be given priority. This is clearly demonstrated by the practices performed on children ranging from infanticide to various mutilations and infant betrothals. It is also clear that children and their rights suffer at the hands of poverty, political instability and social degradation and this is illustrated by the findings of the research on "street children".

The brevity of the essays coupled with the serious nature of the issues raised suggests that what has been written is just the tip of the iceberg. The papers raise questions without offering any real practical solutions, short of mass education for a change in traditional attitudes to child-rearing.

Part two deals with the legal framework for realising the rights of the child and topics discussed include the common legal problems of children, constitutional provisions, civil rights and the protection of children through criminal legislation. The law does not have a single definition of a child and the age limit varies with the state in question so that a child is under 17 years for the purposes of juvenile crime but under 12 (female) or 14 years (male) for marriage. There are also problems with issues such as custody and maintenance where traditional law clashes with the constitution in the determination of legitimacy. The constitution of the Fourth Republic in 1992 introduced a requirement for parents to ensure that their children are guaranteed protection from "cruel punishment, work that is injurious to the child's health and development, and is ensured education, health and the right to other social and economic benefits necessary for development". However it is acknowledged that this would only be possible if other social, cultural and economic issues are addressed as well. In addition, extra-judicial institutions and social welfare agencies are mentioned as having an important role, supplementing legislation, in ensuring the welfare of children.

In general, the papers are largely limited to official, organisational and institutional policy issues and are therefore heavily laden with legal language and all the trappings of institutional constraint. This is not to suggest that courts of law, ministries and social service groups do not have a place in any application of the convention of the rights of the child. It is indeed impressive that there is a growing awareness of the importance of children's rights and that the matter has come up to date. It is also noteworthy that as a group, the legal profession were self-critical in addressing their capabilities in this area. However it is our opinion that if the convention is approached exclusively as a legal or policy document, then it will fall short of fulfilling the aspirations of its drafters.

Finally, there was a notable absence in the essays of the views of the children. Much of the Convention is about the agency and participation of children, no longer passive recipients but active beings enabled to grow and develop into responsible citizens, parents and adult. Are the editors and writers, academics and policy formulators, thinkers and changers, ready to forge into their own and into Ghanaian society's perceptions of children and childhood and really give children a voice?

Pascale A Allotey, Susan Bissell
Australian Centre for International & Tropical Health & Nutrition
University of Queensland Medical School
St Lucia, Queensland


Humanitarian catastrophes such as famine seem to be with us every day. A couple of years ago it was Rwanda. Today it is Zaire and Albania which are on people's minds as the places where there might be another human disaster. Their regularity and intensity makes us question the human condition that can result in such carnage and tragedy which is always the result of war and conflict. In the most extreme cases there is genocide - the systematic killing of a whole population or ethnic groups and sadly this is not a new phenomenon, the killings of Rwanda in 1994 are repeats of pogroms which have occurred over time immemorial.

Some of these catastrophes are the result of direct violence such as that in Rwanda, or in Cambodia during Pol Pot. The worst extreme manifestations being the targeting of civilians during war such as the fire bombing of Europe and the nuclear holocausts in Japan in WWII and more recently the attacks on civilians by Russia in Chechnya. In other cases it is more insidious political violence which results in famine and genocide. The 19th century potato famine in Ireland, and Stalin's politically induced famine of the Ukraine of the 1930s were far more catastrophic than any bloody purge. The denial of food as a weapon of war occurred in Ethiopia the mid 1980s and is being used currently in Southern Sudan.

The numbers of conflict related crises is on the increase with now over 50 million people displaced as a result. The difference now is a greater public awareness thanks to the all pervasive CNN and the evening news. There is also the presence of international humanitarian organisations such as Community Aid Abroad, Oxfam, and Medecins Sans Frontieres the subject of this review who themselves are playing an increasing role.

"World In Crisis - The Politics of Survival at the end of the 20th Century" is an annual publication of Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) in which the difficulties, challenges and dilemmas of providing humanitarian aid to civilians in conflict are examined. The 1997 Report covers the situation in Liberia, Bosnia, Chechnya, Rwanda and the Sudan. In all of these cases there are humanitarian organisations working against the odds not only with an unfolding tragedy, but also against being used as political pawns in a bigger game.

The Report looks at the moral and ethical issues surrounding humanitarian interventions, as well as contemporary issues of marginalised populations in Western countries, and the
The role of humanitarian organisations has grown very much as the role of Governments has declined. Certainly humanitarian organisations in places such as Somalia, Rwanda, and Liberia are becoming actors in their own right in the peace process. The report questions this role, noting that as these organisations have taken on the role of Government "that of casting the collective safety of its people they have gone from an ethical responsibility to a legal responsibility" something for which they may not have had a mandate.

At the same time Governments are becoming increasingly reluctant to be involved in peace keeping at all and putting their side demands. With this there is a disturbing trend with the role beginning to shift to private military forces such as the deceptively named Executive Outcomes which provides armed forces in return for gold and diamond mines as in the case of Sierra Leone, Angola and very nearly in PNG.

The role of humanitarian organisations in these conflicts is vexed when there is a lack of international political will for a solution. In the case of Rwanda the camps over the border in Goma, Zaire not only housed hundreds of thousands of desperate refugees but also the Hutu killers responsible for the genocide. This is not new, it was also the case with the border camps in Thailand in the 1960s which shielded the murderous Khmer Rouge. In these and similar situations international organisations have had to work in the environment in which they find themselves and face the profound dilemma of exacerbating the conflict as they provide essential assistance.

The Report not only looks at the ethics involved at the larger level, but also the ethics of providing specific types of aid. Mike Toole's chapter on health interventions highlights the dilemmas agencies face. These range from keeping combatants on side when providing health services to the ethics of triage, which focuses on helping those who can be saved; and also the ethics of doing what is best for the population rather than the individual. Toole gives the example of a cholera outbreak that means all resources should go to combating that outbreak even at the expense of treating critically ill individuals. This does not easily fit with ethical concepts taught at medical school.

Mike Toole identifies two central ethics in humanitarian medical assistance which could be applied more broadly. The first is - do what is best for the population at risk; and second - do no harm. Making the judgment as to how to meet these ethics in particular situations is among the most difficult an organisation may have to make and the one that brings them the greatest amount of criticism.

"World In Crisis" raises some very important questions but seems to offer rather glib answers based on a moral certainty which is hard to justify. The forward by Rony Braunman, former Chair of MSF France for a decade, attacks agencies for seeming to take sides in conflicts. He is critical of agencies which worked on the Biafran side in the Nigerian civil war in the late 1960s; and in a section entitled Coupes with Communism, he attacks those agencies which worked with the Cambodian Government which replaced the Pol Pot and the genocide, describing it as a 'pitiless' and 'a predatory dictatorship'. This comes as somewhat of a surprise given that the Heng Samrin Government did its best in international isolation

and not only rebuilt a country shattered by the most brutal genocide in recent memory but did it with little external assistance. This type of attack which is all too frequent in the book highlights both an ideological agenda and a self righteous tone which only diminish the complex issues raised in the book.

The Report also fails to meet the aspirations of the people most affected by the conflict as being a factor to be considered. Nor does it recognise the roles and responsibilities of Governments and how humanitarian organisations make judgments whether on balance they should work with a particular Government or administration. Rather the Report seems to take the view that all Governments are bad and organisations are compromising their principles when they work with them.

"World In Crisis" is an important contribution to the debate in the post cold war and the role of private humanitarian organisations in an era when Governments of all kinds are under threat. Perhaps it should have had more to say about the role of Governments in global responsibility which many, including our own Government, are avoiding and which in the long run will only lead to more crises and increased calls for humanitarian responses.

Patrick Kilby*  
Community Aid Abroad  
Melbourne, Victoria  


The Zimbabwean Review fills an ever widening gap in Harare's intellectual discourse, yet at the same time it presents itself as a magazine for the elite, selling at $Z35. Nonetheless, through communal circulation of an increasingly ragged looking newspaper, the sometimes brilliant articles make their way into the public discussion. Tough issues are tackled in depth which other media sources ignore. In Vol. 2 No.4 the editorial lambastes the hypocrisy of ZANU (PF) on the Gays and Lesbians (GALZ) at the International Book Fair debacle, complete with a wonderful photo-caricature of the saga, then Gnormazidzwa Moyo tackles the problem of the pollution of Harare's water supply. Perhaps there is a connection there, but this volume focuses instead on labour and land, the stone sculpture debate (now we know there is one!), Zimbabwe's orphan crisis and the impact of AIDS on children, and multilingual problems in South Africa.

*Patrick Kilby is a Manager with Community Aid Abroad and was directly involved in Famine relief work in Ethiopia in the mid 1980s.
An historical approach is taken for Vol. 3 No.1 with Knox Chitiyo from the University of Zimbabwe examining the role of the Zimbabwe National Army in Mozambique. Followed closely by an excellent examination of feminist theory, Marc Eppele, also from UZ’s department of history, ponders "whatever happened to socialist feminism?" Such a debate in Zimbabwe is fairly rare since "feminism" is generally a dirty word, hence it was a refreshing relief for Zimbabwe’s feminist to sit back and theorise on this debate (yes, there is a debate, not all feminists are the same!). Talking about debates, Martin Mhando (Flinders University) certainly started one here in Harare with his review of the Southern African Film Festival, in particular the film "Flame" made in Zimbabwe.

Vol. 3 No. 2, the latest edition announces that "women have no mouth" as Flora Veit-Wild discusses the connections in "African literature between the representation of the female body and the emergence of a female discourse". Gerald Horne explains the invention of whiteness as a construction of ethnicity and identity. The AIDS topic arises again with Rene Loewenson’s socio-economic impact study, and Elizabeth Laszlovics makes sweeping criticisms of the way medical technology has exploited childbirth, followed by an interesting piece by Athol Desmond on the virtues of honeybees. A piece about appropriate architecture for the culture and climate by Richard Lloyd is unsurprising in The Review, given the praise for Eastgate ("is 1 in Harare?"") designed by Mick Pearce. Susan Webster looks at how to conserve national national monuments, and finally Ingrid Sinclair (the director of "Flame") is able to voice her defence against claims she has imperialist tendencies in the letters to the editor.

The Zimbabwean Review is also a medium for art criticism and book reviews which are useful and timely, at a time when many books are being published on the history of Zimbabwe, but n-one (except for the academics) seems to know too much about them. The articles on children’s books also provide much needed discussion, in a country where education is badly funded by government.

Overall, The Zimbabwean Review offers diverse and interesting reading on topics that are not just Zimbabwean but also international. For Zimbabwean, the high cost of the paper has to be weighed up with the importance of intellectual debate, so for the most part it remains a privilege of the elite. For US$30 a year you can have it mailed to Australia!

Tanya Lyons
University of Adelaide
Politics Department

New Journals
"Mots Pluriels"

"Mots Pluriels" is a new interdisciplinary electronic Journal proposed by the Department of French Studies at the University of Western Australia and available on the Web. This publication welcomes contributions in French or English by literary minded scholars wishing to share their point of view on important contemporary world issues. Each issue addresses a particular theme. Time and Racism were the focus of Issue 1 and 2. The third issue deals with HIV/AIDS and is due out at the end of June 1997. It includes contributions by Dennis Allman, Jean-Pierre Boué, Michelle Coolibaly, David Ndachi Tagnon, Mark Pegrum, Murray Pratt, Veronica Tadjé and Phillip Wimm. African scholars and literary authors are represented in each issue, although the emphasis on the Journal is not restricted to African studies.

For more information, see:
http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/mp.html
Jean-Marie Volet, Editor

New African Journal on Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution

The African Journal on Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution is a quarterly survey of peace, security, peacekeeping and conflict management in contemporary Africa. It is published by the OAU Conflict Management Division, although the articles do not necessarily represent the views of the OAU.

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Ethiopia
The establishment of the *African Sociological Review* is the result of a cooperative effort by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), with headquarters in Dakar, Senegal, and personnel of the South African Sociological Review which is hereby incorporated into this new continent-wide journal sponsored and published by CODESRIA.

The *African Sociological Review* is part and parcel of the overall Pan African vision of CODESRIA. This encompasses the promotion of social science research in Africa and of relevance to the needs of the continent's people. It is an African sociology journal, but not a journal of 'African Studies'. Its aims and objectives are wide-ranging. It seeks to encourage scholarly work in social analysis broadly conceived, without an undue concern with narrow disciplinary and institutional boundaries. It hopes to stimulate a vigorous theoretical debate, in the belief that African social science need not come down to the mere application of metropolitan ideas. By opening its pages to both the standard scholarly article as well as other contributions, it aims to create a more flexible forum for the exchange of ideas and the promotion of wider intra-African contacts.

Write to:

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**ABOUT RESEARCH AND RESEARCH MATTERS**

Environmental degradation in Laikipia District, Kenya and Australia's role in capacity building for sustainable use of land resources

A considerable body of literature exists that highlights the problems of environment and development in Sub-Saharan Africa. Three basic concerns can be identified from this literature viz. rapid population growth, slow agricultural growth and severe environmental degradation. These problems are exacerbated by the limited suitable land resources, the growing need to increase food security and inadequate approaches and technologies to sustainably utilize the fragile ecosystems. This note describes the consequences of rapid population growth rate in Laikipia district, Kenya, the research efforts to address the problems being made by the University of Nairobi and other collaborating institutions and the role of Australia via the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) in capacity building to enhance natural resources monitoring and modeling to generate planning tools for the district.

Since Kenya's Independence in 1963 most of the former large-scale ranches in Laikipia district have been bought and subdivided into smaller units by migrant farmers. Of all the rural districts in Kenya, only Laikipia has a population growth rate that is close to that of Nairobi city, viz. 8% per year. This means that land sub-division is continuing at a very rapid rate. The situation has led over the last decade to rapid land use changes in the area with new farming systems evolving, giving rise to appreciable degradation of soil, water and vegetation. This in turn has led amongst other problems, to low agricultural output, serious conflicts in resource use particularly water, and loss of biodiversity.

For the last ten years, the Laikipia Research Program (funded by the Swiss Development Cooperation) and the University of Nairobi (with financial assistance from Sweden and the Rockefeller Foundation) have been monitoring the biophysical (and social) characteristics of the district mainly through MSc and PhD research. Examples of projects that have been carried out (or are being carried out) include: soil and vegetation surveys, hydroclimatological characteristics of the Ewaso Ng'iro river and its major tributaries; crop water use and primary production; water use efficiency, accounting and allocation; rainwater harvesting, and crop yield response to water. All these have so far been carried out at the site level but there is need to scale upwards to the catchment and basin level. This calls for the development of simulation models that will enable us to develop management tools to assist in the planning process.

To enhance Kenyan scientists' capability in hydrological measurement and modeling of water flows in catchments, and to promote research collaboration between Kenya and Australia, the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research in 1996 provided a Special Purpose Grant to the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) to enable a comparative examination of the competitive interaction of trees, crops and pasture for water by agroforestry systems. There was provision under this grant for Mr Stephen Burgess, a PhD student at the University of Western Australia, to study in Kenya for nine months and for Dr David Mungai of the University of Nairobi, who is involved in the research described above, to spend six months in Perth to develop both catchment measurement and modeling skills. Dr Mungai arrived in Australia in March and has been involved in hydrological measurements at the CSIRO site at Kanangra as well as developing an understanding of crop
and catchment modeling with the assistance of a wide range of Australian scientists. Travel to relevant key Australian institutions has been organised for Dr Mungai to enable him to meet and discuss his research problem and approaches to solutions with scientists who have experience in his fields of interest. The Crawford Fund for International Agricultural Research has supported the project leader in Kenya, Dr Francis Gichuki, to travel to Australia in late June to attend a training workshop in catchment modeling in Canberra and also to enable him to meet and discuss catchment measurement and modeling approaches with Australian scientists and to visit some of the research sites where relevant catchment research is being carried out. The Kenyan team appreciates very much the support from ACIAR, the Crawford Fund and the Australian institutions (especially CSIRO) and scientists in the training.

David N Mungai
Visiting Scientist
CSIRO Centre for Mediterranean Agricultural Research
Werribee, WA

Two Australian Women Postgraduates from Adelaide attend international conference on “Gender and Colonialism in Southern Africa” at University of Western Cape.

Tanya Lyons and Cecilia Moretti*

*Tanya Lyons and Cecilia Moretti, both postgraduates in Adelaide, attended the international conference on “Gender and Colonialism in Southern Africa” held at the University of Western Cape, South Africa, last January. I asked them how they organised their attendance, about their experiences in South Africa, how their papers were received and how their participation in the conference has helped them in their research.

Cecilia: I first heard about the conference from Tanya, who, I believe found out about it on the world wide web. We both mailed our abstracts to the University of the Western Cape, and were subsequently notified that our papers were accepted.

Tanya: We could not decide which would be more difficult, writing the papers or getting funding from our universities to go to South Africa. I was already going to be in Zimbabwe so it was only a matter of a three day train trip down to Cape Town, which the Faculty of Arts funded.

Cecilia: I didn’t actually apply for conference funding specifically, as I was able to coincide my attendance with field work I had already organised in South Africa. Since English postgraduates are only permitted one application for conference assistance, I thought I would save mine for a later date - maybe to facilitate a second foray into the field. My trip to South Africa was actually enabled by an Overseas Field Trip Award granted to me by Flinders University, to experience first hand the context in which black South African women’s autobiography is produced. This award covered my return airfare and related insurance costs, and I covered all other expenses. The conference itself took place within my first few days in South Africa and set the tone for my later activities. It was an amazing opportunity to get abreast of prevalent issues and debates, and to meet people in my field.

AFSAAAP: Cecilia and Tanya had met up a few days before the conference at the Green Elephant Backpackers in Cape Town where they discussed strategies on how to present their work to an international audience. The conference was organised by the English and History Departments at the University of Western Cape and was well attended by scholars from all over the world interested in gender and African studies. Tanya Lyons was first to present her paper which carries the same title as her PhD thesis, “Written in the Revolution(s): Zimbabwean Women in the National Struggle for Independence”. This paper was the culmination of her research in Zimbabwe on women ex-combatants, and particularly focussed on the film “Flame”, about women guerrilla fighters in Zimbabwe’s liberation war, which was also screened at the conference.

Tanya: I was able to practice my speech on unsuspecting South African women who were in my compartment on the train, while travelling through the beautiful Karoo. They had no choice but to listen to my thoughts on the political situation for women ex-combatants in Zimbabwe. So, by the time I got to Cape Town, I was fairly confident that my 10 minute speech would be interesting and well received at the conference. Despite the hangover from lack of sleep, my talk went well and I got a lot of supportive comments from the audience. However, mostly people had not heard of the situation in Zimbabwe for women ex-combatants, so it seemed more that I was informing rather than being lectured. Overall it was very useful to have to justify my arguments though. The best part was meeting the director of the film “Flame” and discussing my work with her. I felt I was making a significant contribution to the field of women and war.

Cecilia: I had presented some of my ideas previously in conference and seminar settings in Australia, but to do it in South Africa was a completely different, and infinitely more nerve-wracking, scenario! I think this is a huge issue for foreign students of African Studies, coming to terms with the sometimes seemingly insurmountable distance between their research and the actual subject of their enquiry. To bring these closer together by actually addressing the former to the latter is highly challenging, but extremely important for postgraduate students.

As to how I actually went about getting the paper ready, that was a true saga - as Tanya, my conference room-mate, would be able to testify to. As a result of my angst, I was writing and rewriting my paper right up until the moment of presenting it, a mentally and physically exhausting process (for both of us, I believe!). But far from considering it finished at this point, my experience of presenting and discussing and ruminating about it afterwards was that I had only just begun putting it together. I continued reworking it over and over throughout
experience provides some kind of encouragement to other students who do not have the safety net of an APA stipend and are limited on the basis of funds and thus time spent in the field.

Field work in urban South Africa can be done inexpensively and is relatively easily facilitated in the areas of political economy and public policy. While the nature of my topic as an immediate and politically sensitive one greatly facilitated my research and the number of contacts and interviews I was able to arrange I can also say that I gained access to a very broad spread of ethnic and socio-economic groups across the community. I was overwhelmed by the willingness of the great majority of people I came into contact with to discuss and assist my research program.

Most Australian universities offer field trip awards, University Research Budget allocations or other means of supplementary funding to post-graduate students. These funds are usually available on application. (It was by these means that I was able to fund approximately sixty percent of my expenses).

Resources and facilities for post-graduate students in South Africa are exemplary. There is a great deal of interaction between post-graduate students - connected to academic departments in the social sciences - with government, private sector industry and NGOs. This fact is indicative of the transitional and reformatory nature of political economy and social policy in South Africa at present.

In the age of internet one can contact and prepare meetings and interviews in advance, the rest will snow ball, (believe me!). I am sure readers are more than aware that African related web sites and lists of organisational e-mail addresses have grown exponentially in recent years. Most South African universities have a home-page. There are excellent facilities at UCT, UWC and especially Wits which cater for visiting post-graduates and research fellows. Basing oneself at one or more university campuses is infinitely preferable to the other low cost alternatives. The university environment should also allay any safety concerns one may have and I found contacts in an academic department an excellent mode for introduction to all levels of the general community. The relevant "international" and "graduate research" offices are also e-mail accessible.

If you are a student contemplating field research, stop procrastinating, and GO.

Finnander University of South Australia
Politics Department

Call For Papers

"Wicked" Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa. Edited by Dorothy L. Hodgson (Rutgers) & Sheryl McCurdy (Penn State)

We are soliciting abstracts for papers to include in "Wicked" Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa, a volume we are editing for publication in 1998. The book will be a substantially expanded version of a special issue of the "Canadian Journal of African Studies" that we co-edited, which included six papers from diverse disciplinary perspectives, different geographical arenas and a range of historical periods. We are seeking unpublished papers based on extensive ethnographic and/or historical research which will address the book's theme, broaden its geographic coverage, and deepen its theoretical insights. Tanzania is already well represented in the volume and we are interested in studies from other countries, particularly papers which address the theme in francophone and lusophone Africa, urban contexts, and contemporary or precolonial times.

Theme: "Wicked" Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa will feature current scholarship on gender in Africa which foregrounds female agency and issues of gender, power and social change. Articles will examine the myriad ways in which African women, individually and collectively, push the boundaries of "acceptable" behaviour, and thereby challenge and transform gender relations. Such women are often stigmatized, labeled as "wicked" or "misfit", and dismissed as mavericks by the communities and, all too often, by scholars as well. In contrast, our purpose in "Wicked" Women is to analyze the ways in which these women are central to configurations and theories of gender in Africa. Whether accused of adultery, abandonment, infanticide, or insubordination, their lives and action often reflect and produce contradictions and contestations of power within their local communities, and between the communities and the state, missionaries, and other actors. Located within the intersecting and shifting landscapes of power of the individual, family, community, nation-state, and global arena, articles will explore how such "wicked" women and the paradoxes they generate become sites for debate over, and occasionally transformations in, definitions of gender ideas and practices, morality, authority and other concepts.

Submission Information: If you are interested in contributing a paper to the book, please send a 1-2 page abstract (or a draft of the paper) and a current C.V. by July 1st 1997 to:

Dorothy Hodgson
Department of Anthropology
Rutgers University
PO Box 270
Douglass Campus
New Brunswick, NJ 08903-0270

We will notify everyone as to our decision by August 1, 1997. Contributors whose abstracts have been accepted are expected to submit their completed manuscript (7,500 word maximum, not including notes and bibliography) by January 1st, 1998. Please contact us if you would like more information or have any questions:

Dorothy Hodgson - dhodgson@rci.rutgers.edu; off: (908) 932-0633
Sheryl McCurdy - mccurdy@pop.psu.edu; off: (814) 865-6802

This call for papers was taken from H-Net List for Africa.

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Australia’s Pursuit of A Solution to Landmines Crises

IDRC Workshop on “The Role of Donors in Transitional Settings: The Case of Post-Conflict Southern Africa”

Opening of The Special Collections Reading Room In The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) Library in London

The Alan Paton Centre University of Natal

African Librarians Council of The ASA USA 40th Anniversary

The Basler Afrika Bibliographien (BAB), Namibia Resource Centre and Southern Africa Library

The Centre of African Studies, St Petersburg University

African Literature at UNSW

Australia’s Pursuit Of A Solution To Landmines Crises

[End note: The 4th International Landmines Conference was held in Maputo, Mozambique, in February 1997. Readers who followed that meeting will be interested in this statement from the Australian Government which is extracted from the March edition of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s Peace and Disarmament Newsletter.]

The Australian Government is continuing its efforts to achieve a meaningful and effective solution to the global landmines crisis. One of Australia’s key arms control objectives for 1997 is to build support for a global ban on landmines and in particular to build support for an early start to negotiations for a legally binding and verifiable ban in the conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

Pending the achievement of a total ban, the government is pursuing tighter restrictions on landmines through the amended Protocol II of the Inhumane Weapons Convention, currently the only legally binding international instrument which regulates the use and trade in landmines.

The Australian Parliament’s Joint Standing Committee on Treaties has supported Australia’s early ratification of amended Protocol II which contains stronger restrictions and prohibitions on anti-personnel landmines use and transfers, thereby providing greater protection for civilians. The committee tabled its report on 24 February 1997, clearing the way for ratification of amended Protocol II (as well as a new Protocol IV outlawing the use of blinding laser weapons).

The Government will now move as quickly as possible to complete the ratification procedures and Australia expects to be among the first states to do so. The Government will also continue to encourage other states party to the Convention to ratify amended Protocol II and new Protocol IV as soon as possible, and non-states party, particularly in our region, to adhere to the Convention.

In international forums, the Australian Government is continuing to add its weight to the growing international movement in favour of a global ban. Australia took part in the international conference of pro-ban states and non-government organisations in Ottawa in October 1996 which looked at future strategies for achieving a ban. Australia also co-sponsored the historic resolution adopted at the 51st session of the United Nations General Assembly which calls for urgent negotiations for a global ban on anti-personnel landmines. The resolution, adopted on 10 December 1996, attracted 115 co-sponsors and was supported by an overwhelming majority of states. On 30 January 1997, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, in his address to the Conference on Disarmament, urged that body to respond to the expectations of the international community and the urgency of the global landmines crisis by beginning work immediately on a treaty which would effectively outlaw anti-personnel landmines as a weapon of war and civilian terror.

Australia has had wide discussions with other countries on the best way of achieving a global ban on anti-personnel landmines, including discussions with Canada on the proposal announced by Foreign Minister Axworthy at the conclusion of the Ottawa Conference. The Government considers that for a ban to be effective, negotiations should desirably take place in the Conference on Disarmament as the most representative forum with the expertise and experience necessary to negotiate arms control treaties, and with the Chemical Weapons
Convention and the recently adopted Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to its credit. Australia is participating in the series of post-Ottawa follow-up meetings in 1997 and is seeking to ensure that the work undertaken complements and accelerates negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, leading to the early conclusion of a global ban treaty. But Australia is also acutely aware that, even after a global ban on anti-personnel landmines is achieved, the task of addressing the deadly legacy of decades of landmines misuse will still be with us.

The Government is committed to continuing Australian assistance to the international effort to clear mines from mine-stricken countries and to assist mine victims. In 1995-96, Australia ranked third in the world in terms of demining expenditure as a percentage of GDP. Up to the financial year 1995-96, Australia contributed $8.5 million to demining efforts and the rehabilitation of mine victims. Australia has also sent its own army experts to help with mine clearance work in countries including Cambodia, Afghanistan, Mozambique and Angola. On 5 May 1996, Mr Downer announced a demining program for Cambodia and Laos worth $12 million over three years, on 28 January 1997, Mr Downer announced that an additional $4 million over three years would be contributed from Australia’s aid program to combat the effects of anti-personnel landmines in Cambodia and Mozambique, on 8 April 1997, he announced that $1.4 million would be channelled through Australian non-government organisations working to rid Angola of landmines and rehabilitate landmine victims and on 23 May, he announced a contribution of $500,000 for a United Nations mine awareness program in Afghanistan. This brings the total Australian contribution to the demining process announced since March 1996 to almost $18 million. In addition, AusAID is supporting the participation of delegates to a regional seminar on landmines, organised by the Australian Network of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, to be held in Sydney on 14-17 July 1997.

The Government is also looking at ways in which improved demining technology can speed up the rate and scale of the demining process. To that end, Mr Downer put forward a proposal at the 51st UN General Assembly for enhanced international cooperation in the area of demining technology. He has also drawn the attention of the international community to a breakthrough demining technology being developed by the Defence Science and Technology Organisation, CSIRO and industry which has the potential to make mine detection faster and more reliable.

Further demonstrating the strength of Australian Government support for demining initiatives, a team of Australian Government representatives led by AusAID Assistant Director General for South Asia, Africa and Humanitarian Relief, Mr Colin Lonergan, attended a conference on anti-personnel landmines in Tokyo on 6 and 7 March 1997.

The conference aimed to enhance momentum in the international community to address problems related to anti-personnel landmines, especially in the areas of landmine clearance, new techniques for the detection and removal of landmines and assistance to victims. It was attended by 27 countries, the European Union, eight UN agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Conference participants expressed their will to work towards substantially reducing the number of mine victims, with the ultimate goal of zero. In the meantime, participants agreed that the international community should seek to bring about efficient medical care to a much greater proportion of injured victims. The participants also emphasised the need for a better co-ordination of the roles of mine-affected countries, donor countries, the United Nations and other international organisations in landmine clearance and the central importance of donors working to enhance indigenous capacity in the demining field.

IDRC Workshop on “The Role of Donors in Transitional Settings: The Case of Post-Conflict Southern Africa”

The Southern African office of Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC) organised a workshop on the above theme in Johannesburg in April (1997). David Moore, of Flinders University of South Australia, provided the framework for the discussions with his opening paper on “Theoretical Perspectives for Understanding Donors in Transitional Settings: Aiding Post-Conflict” Southern Africa in the Age of Global Neoliberalism”. The rest of the workshop’s agenda included case studies of post-conflict Angola, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe conducted by independent researchers and activists from those countries and from Canada, as well as an analysis of regional post-conflict resolution by the Overseas Development Council’s Nicole Ball. Agnete Johannsen, from the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) reported on the latter’s Social Development of War-Torn Societies Project. Finally Ball summarised the lessons learnt from the workshop.

Moore’s paper, entitled “Theoretical Perspectives for Understanding Donors in Transitional Settings” analysed the inherent contradictions in foreign aid as a component of global capitalism’s hegemonic attempts in Africa, in as much as it combines aspects of modernity which simultaneously negate and support the commodification of everyday life. The charitable, helping impulse which is part of a non-commodified and potentially cooperative set of social relations is thus set against the modernisation push, which is part of the process of the creation of capitalist and individualist relations of production and reproduction. These contradictions in aid as applied to Africa as much as aid in general, and more particularly structural adjustment programs — an expression of neoliberalism’s global reach — do not seem to be working very well in the interests of any agenda. Such contradictions are at their peak in time of “post-conflict” (or perhaps more properly post-war since conflict does not disappear with the official cessation of war) transitions in which “aid” is neither humanitarian/emergency or “normal” aid but part of a fragile reconstruction process. As such aid is also an integral part of donors’ attempts to influence the shaping of the society that will emerge out of the rubble. Agencies concerned to see societies emerge with the capacity to determine their own fate should attempt to intervene in these interregna with agendas that will, amidst basic rebuilding, encourage autonomy and deep democratization. Although there is little latitude in the current global climate for such approaches Moore argued that perhaps a strong argument can be presented for such innovative agendas in the aftermath of societal destruction.

Although the cases presented vary in many ways, and research is at an initial stage, the discussions seemed to make clear that there should be a special variety of aid earmarked for “post-conflict” transitions. Also that lessons can be learned from across southern Africa, positive and negative, worthy of application to the rest of the continent. The examples of Rwanda and the Democratic of Congo come to mind.
The papers presented are to be revised in the light of the Workshop discussions, and will be published as a book by the IDRC-ROSA by September 1997. For further information contact the IDRC/ROSA at PO Box 477, WITS 2050, South Africa or msilay@idrc.ca

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Opening Of The Special Collections Reading Room In the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) Library in London

Rosemary Seton*

The Collections
The archives and manuscript collections are highly significant and substantial non-official primary sources for the history of both colonialism and the post-colonial world. The Library is now the major centre for missionary archives in the United Kingdom with 750,000 documents on mission work in Asia, Africa and the Pacific, some 17,000 photographs and about 20,000 published works. Another distinctive feature, and one which makes us unique in this country, is the strength of our holdings relating to East Asia, particularly to China, with twenty-eight archives and collections, containing significant and substantial business, diplomatic and political materials. There are rich African language and literature manuscript holdings, notably in Swahili, and an immense range of manuscripts and scholarly papers relating to East Asia, South and South East Asia and the Pacific. The rare book collection reflects and adds to the scope of the original source materials. There are many rare and fine valuable editions dating from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries including the writings of Jesuit missionaries and other early travellers, and a number of early grammars and dictionaries.

The New Reading Room
With up to fifteen places the new room provides a spacious and quiet study environment for readers of these materials. Additional funding for archive staff has enabled us both to provide an improved service for readers and to exercise a greater degree of surveillance over the use of the very valuable and irreproachable materials in the Library's special collections. A range of bookcases hold finding aids to the archives, guides, reference works and key serials from missionary society libraries, formerly held on closed access. A user's computer provides access to a variety of databases and to the Library's on-line system.

Funding
The creation, equipping and staffing of the Reading Room has been made possible by an award from the Higher Education Funding Council of Specialised Research Collections in the Humanities. We are looking for further funding so that we can continue to service and develop the facility.

* Rosemary Seton is Archivist at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. This report is taken from the Net List for African History.

Staff
The Staff of the Section are: Rosemary Seton (Archivist) tel. +44 (0)171-323-6112, fax +44 (0)171-363-2834, Email rs8@soas.ac.uk; Louise Ray (Assistant Archivist) Email: lr6@soas.ac.uk; Charlotte Smith (Archives Assistant) cs156@soas.ac.uk and Warrick Harris, (Missionary Library Cataloguer) wh3@soas.ac.uk. Staff are pleased to help with enquiries both about our collections and the services we offer.

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The Alan Paton Centre University Of Natal

(30. This short article is taken from CONCORD, The Newsletter of the Alan Paton Centre for the study of conflict and reconciliation. I am grateful to the editor for permission to reproduce.)

Few people in South Africa's literary history have made as great an impact as Alan Paton. Author 'Cry, the Beloved Country', one of the classics of our century, was also the author of biographies of J H Hofmeyr, and Archbishop Geoffrey Clayton, as well as a two-part autobiography, short stories, essays, poetry and two other novels.

Respected as an educationist and humanitarians, Alan Paton is regarded as a 'veteran of the Anti-Apartheid struggle experience'. After his death in 1988, there was a desire to remember and further what he stood for. Opened on 24 April 1989, the Alan Paton Centre (APC) is a Centre for the study of the literature and politics of conflict and conciliation - the two major themes in Alan Paton's life. Its particular reference is to our region KwaZulu-Natal.

As the opening Professor Colin Webb said clearly the aim of the Alan Paton Centre which is 'not to create a memorial... still less a shrine. Its purpose is quite different. It is a facility for the living, an instrument for carrying forward the struggle for improved human relations'.

Core donations comprised the contents of Alan Paton's study, including books, journals and memorabilia, made available to the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, by Mrs Anne Paton shortly after Alan Paton's death. Subsequently the Alan Paton archives - a large collection of unpublished works, short stories, addresses, diaries and correspondence, and the papers of the head office of the Liberal Party of South Africa, which was forced to disband in 1968, were donated. Acquisitions of interest to users include the documents of the Greater Pietermaritzburg Local Government Forum, and the minutes and reports of national bodies such as the Multiparty Negotiating Forum. During the period of the National Elections in 1994 and during the KwaZulu-Natal Local Government Elections in 1996 the APC collected manifestos, policy statements, pamphlets and posters across the party spectrum.

A focus of collecting during the 1990s has been the archives of NGOs (non-government organisations) of the region. The partial closure, or amalgamation of some of these bodies being the spur. NGO material includes archives of the Detainees Aid Committee, the Natal Midlands Black Sash and their Advice Offices, the ECC - End Conscription Campaign, Five Freedom's Forum, Peace-in-Natal and Africa - the Association for Rural Advancement Individuals with links to many of the organisations, and to Alan Paton, continue to deposit their papers.
A branch of the Campus Library, the APC is thus an archive with a library and museum component. For several years (1992-1994) it has also been part of an education for democracy project, and is currently engaged in an oral history project. The APC is visited by students, researchers - local and foreign, by tourists, groups of high school children with their teachers, and by the public. Visitors are given a guided tour of the APC, and there are pamphlets and videos on the life of Alan Paton and the work of the Centre.

African Librarians Council Of The ASA USA 40th Anniversary

Africana Librarianship in the 21st Century: Treasure the Past and Building the Future. To celebrate this milestone in our history, the African Librarians Council of the African Studies Association USA will hold a one-day conference with invited participants from Africa, Europe and America on November 16th, 1997 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Columbus, Ohio.

Kay Rasiroka, University Librarian of the University of Botswana and active member of IFLA, will be the keynote speaker. Panels of librarians from three continents will discuss collection development, cooperation and reference/bibliographic instruction. The final session will feature reminiscences of the past and predictions about the future from an international perspective. For more information about the Conference on Africana Librarianship in the 21st Century contact Nancy J Schmidt, Main Library E660, Indiana University, Bloomington IN 47405 or schmidt@indiana.edu.

The Basel Afrika Bibliographien (BAB), Namibia Resource Centre and Southern Africa Library, have acquired the library and parts of the archives of the former Swiss Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAB). The library of ca. 500 monographs and some 30 periodicals has been incorporated into the existing Southern Africa Library. The archival material, which runs into some 15 metres of shelving, consists primarily of printed material such as press cuttings, pamphlets, posters and ephemera. The material covers the period between the mid-1970s to the early 1990s and obviously emphasizes South Africa, but includes titles on Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola and Mozambique. In part, it documents local rallies and other events organized by the AAB, but it also includes material from other Anti-Apartheid Movements and from various organizations and unions in southern Africa itself. Published material on SWAPO, the South West Africa People’s Organization of Namibia, has been incorporated into the existing SWAPO collection of the BAB. The collection is accessible. Enquiries to Pierre-Andre Schlettwein or Dag Henrichsen, Basler Afrika Bibliographien, PO Box 2037, CH 4001 Basel, Switzerland (Tel: +41-61-271 3345; Fax: +41-61-271 3155). Please note that BAB has a new e-mail address (bab@bluewin.ch).

The Centre of African Studies, St. Petersburg University, held its inaugural meeting on 9 December 1996. The Centre already has more than 60 members from the departments of the University and related institutions. The main objectives of the Centre are to promote Africanist research and to foster interdisciplinary cooperation between the University and other African-related institutions in St. Petersburg, Russia and abroad. Its activities include lectures, seminars, conferences, staff and student exchanges, and publications on African subjects. For further information please contact the Chairman, Professor Andrei Zhukov, Centre of African Studies, Department of African Studies, University of St. Petersburg, Universitetskaja nab. 11, 199034 St Petersburg, Russia (Tel: +7-812-218 7732; Fax: +7-812-218 1346; E-mail: vladimir@orient.lgu.spb.ru).

African Literature at UNSW: UNSW continues to expand its offerings in African subjects. The very active and high-profile School of English there now offers subjects including ‘Africa in Black & White’ (taught by Peter Alexander), ‘Life Writing’, a study of biography and autobiography that includes African subjects (Peter Alexander), and several other subjects which draw on African texts: ‘Post Colonial Representation’ (Dr Bill Ashcroft); ‘African Resistance Writing’ (Dr Sue Kossew), ‘Post Colonial Literature (Sue Kossew)’ and ‘Post Colonial Writers’ (Sue Kossew).

Bob Turner tells me that Bushbooks is now distributing the Heinemann African Writers Series. Address: PO Box 1370, Gosford, NSW 2250. Tel/Fax (043) 233274; Email: bushbooks@ozemail.com.au.

CONFERENCES

The annual meeting of the African Studies Association of the U.S.A. will take place in Columbus, Ohio, November 13-16. The theme will be, “ASA and Africa: The First Forty Years and Beyond”. For information about the annual meeting contact African Studies Association, Credit Union Building, Emory University, Atlanta GA 30322 or africa@emory.edu.

The Scientific Council on Problems of African Countries, the Institute for African Studies, the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Russian Association of Africanists are convening the 7th All-Russia conference of Africanists on the subject Africa in a Changing World in Moscow from 1-3 October. In addition to two plenary sessions, the following panels are proposed: Economics; Socio-political, ideological and legal problems; international relations, Africa, Russia and CIS; Regional and country studies; History; Ethnic and socio-cultural problems; Literature studies; Linguistics. The working language will be Russian; however, simultaneous translation into English and French will be organized during the plenary sessions and relevant assistance provided at the panels. Applications and abstracts should be submitted by 15 March. Enquiries to Dr Yuri Iljin, Executive Secretary, Conference Organising Committee, Institute for African Studies, 301 Spiridonovka Str., Moscow 103001, Russia (Tel: +7-095-290 6025/2752; Fax: +7-095-202 0786; E-mail: dir@inafr.msk.ru).

The fourth Royal African Society biennial conference on the theme Partnership in Africa’s Economic Development will be held at Queen’s College, Cambridge, from 28-30 September. There will be sessions on Professional Networking (examining linkages between British professional firms and organisations and their counterparts in Africa), Business Networking (discussing the experience of large companies in the growth of joint
ventures and their links with small and medium scale enterprises. Academic Networking (examining academic partnerships in research-related economic development and programs promoting human resource development), and Networking Africa (discussing the roles of the press and broadcasting, technological advancement, and trade and investment associations in the diffusion of knowledge and economic development). For further details please contact the Royal African Society at the SOAS address (Tel: (0)171-323 6253; Fax: (0)171-436 3844).

A Conference on the Socio-Economic Impact of AIDS in Africa was held in Durban from 3-6 February 1997. It was co-sponsored by the Committee on AIDS of the International Union of the Scientific Study of Population and the University of Natal. The conference was organized into four sessions, on fertility, household and family structure, measurement issues and policy implications. Professor James Ntoum of Makerere University, who will be visiting Canberra later in the year described the problem of widow-inheritance: if practiced it could spread HIV, if not practiced it could lead to the stigmatization of widows. Alan Whiteside from the University of Natal asked which word appeared most often in the titles of the conference papers. The correct answer was "rural" with Uganda as the probable runner-up, indicating that most of the best studies are done in rural areas, and that many of these are done in Uganda.

The conference was followed by a Workshop on Multi-partnered Sexuality and Sexual Networking in Eastern and Southern Africa organized by the University of Natal and the ANU (Philip Setela, Jack and Pat Caldwell).

PEOPLE

One of Australia's leading Africanists, Prof Deryck Schreuder, is to move from his present post as Vice Chancellor of the University of Western Sydney, to become VC of the University of Western Australia, succeeding Prof Fey Gale at the beginning of 1998. Deryck Schreuder is a long-time member of AFSAAP, served with distinction as President, and was chair of the 1995 Conference in Sydney with another AFSAAP President, Peter Alexander. He continues to maintain close and active ties with Africa, and AFSAAP members may suspect that one of the attractions of Perth over Sydney is that it's four hours closer to Johannesburg!

Mr Fessahaie Abraham ended his term of office as Ambassador for the State of Eritrea in Australia in February 1997. Fessahaie, who came to Australia as a student some eighteen years ago, is well-known to many members of AFSAAP and to other Australians for his work as coordinator of the Eritrean Relief Association (ERA) during the long years of Eritrea's struggle for freedom. He became Ambassador in 1993. He intends for the present to continue his part-time studies for an Executive M.B.A. in the Australian Graduate School of Management at UNSW, and at the same time to further increase Australian-Eritrean links across the Indian Ocean region.

The new Ambassador for the State of Eritrea in Australia is Mr Okhar Habshe Michael, who AFSAAP looks forward to welcoming at the September conference in Canberra.

Dr Alex Bourne, an authority on the issue of race and reconciliation, and deputy chairman of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, visited Australia during May to speak at the Aboriginal Reconciliation Convention which met in Melbourne at the end of the month. While in Australia he also met the Governor General, the Chief Justice and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and delivered a letter from Mr Mandela to the Prime Minister. In an interview with the press he spoke movingly of the South African experience of reconciliation, and of the healing nature of saying sorry.

Wole Soyinka, Nigerian playwright, presently an exile and an intensely active advocate for human rights in Nigeria, and Africa's only Nobel prize winner, spent two weeks in Perth, in February. He was in Western Australia to attend the opening of his latest play, The Beatification of Area Boy, which opened the Festival of Perth. He also gave an afternoon address as part of the Festival, speaking in the Octagon lecture theatre at the University of Western Australia, both on his own writing but also on Nigerian politics, and his role as defender of human rights. The Beatification of Area Boy had earlier been part of the Sydney festival, and the first professional production in Australia of a Soyinka play.

Seven Kenyan Parliamentarians, including the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Honorable Mr Godhana and the Clerk to the Assembly, Mr Masa, spent a month in Australia earlier this year as the official guests of the Australian Parliament. The occasion was a reciprocal visit following a visit by Australian MPs to Kenya in 1996. For the Kenyan MPs the visit was also part of a study tour that included Canada to consider recent developments in the Westminster model of parliamentary government. The group visited Canberra, Sydney and Perth, before returning to Kenya.

Dr David Mungai, Senior Lecturer in Geography in the University of Nairobi, Kenya, is in Perth on a six-month attachment with the CSIRO, to work on catchment modelling, involving water use and flows. His research is part of a joint venture between CSIRO, Centre for Mechanical and Agricultural research, ICRAF (International Centre for Research in Agriculture Forestry), the University of Western Australia and the University of Nairobi. (See also p7 of this issue where he discusses his project.)

Dr Daniel Alban Wylie, of the English Department, Rhodes University, South Africa was a visitor to the History Department, University of Western Australia, in February-March of this year. While in Perth he lectured on "In Search of Shaka" and gave a keynote paper at an interdisciplinary symposium on the mythologizing of historical heroes and events. He also visited Curtin University of Technology and Murdoch University.

Catherine Macdonald, University of Western Australia, History Department, has been awarded her PhD for the thesis on "Women-Headed Households in Tanzania: A Rejection of Patriarchy?".

Dr David Moodie, Lecturer in Drama and Theatre Studies at Murdoch University, WA was in Nairobi, Kenya, at the end of 1996, on two months' research leave, during which time he was engaged on a study of community and popular theatre. In Nairobi he was attached to Kenyatta University. He also participated, as a guest tutor, in an international playwriting conference for young East African playwrights, sponsored by Kenyatta University and the British Council.
Nomboniso Gasa-Suttner will give the keynote address at the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History Conference in Perth, October 2-4, 1997.

Nomboniso Gasa-Suttner is a long-standing political and feminist activist in South Africa; she links her journey to activism with her "difficult, painful and...celebratory" journey in the struggle for liberation and democracy in South Africa. Nomboniso has been extensively involved in the African National Congress and was a key worker in developing and monitoring the ANC Commission on Emancipation of Women. Nomboniso has also been a member of the South African Commission on Gender Equality. She has a number of publications dealing with political and women's issues and has been an active participant in public debates, particularly in those dealing with issues that face South African women.

The Conference, Frontiers of Labour, presented by the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, Perth branch, will be held at the Perth Cultural Centre, Perth. For further information contact:

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African Studies Association Of South Africa: Third Biennial International Conference
"Africa In A Changing World: Patterns And Prospects"

The African Studies Association of South Africa is pleased to announce that it will be hosting its third international conference at the Megaliisberg Conference Centre, Broederstroom, South Africa, from 8-10 September 1997. The Conference Centre is located some 60km from Johannesburg and on site accommodation will be available for sixty delegates who prefer to avail themselves of this facility. The principal conference focus will be on Africa in a Changing World: Patterns and Prospects. For further information contact:

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About the AFSAAP Review and Newsletter

The *African Studies Review and Newsletter* is published by the African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific twice a year in June and December. Its objectives are:

- to inform members of the Association as well as other Australians of developments in the field of African Studies in Australia and overseas
- to publish both scholarly and more generalist articles on Africa and African affairs including reports from Australians working in Africa and to provide reviews of recent literature
- to provide information on research and research-related facilities in Africa and elsewhere overseas as well as in Australia
- to ensure awareness amongst AFSAAP members of Australian government policy towards Africa as well as Africa-related events in Australia
- to publish news of AFSAAP

The *Review and Newsletter* has a wide readership of academics, government personnel including diplomats, professionals, NGO personnel, students and business people in Australia. It is also sent to a number of overseas libraries and African Studies Centres and African Universities. Members of the Association receive the journal as part of their subscription.

Editorial Policy

The *Review and Newsletter* seeks to balance the specialist and non-specialist interests of Africanists and those interested in Africa in Australia. Contributions are welcomed from specialist and non-specialist alike, and on scholarly and more generalist topics. Articles should be no more than 5,000 words, although exceptions may be made. Since 1994 there has been a Panel of reviewers for any contributor wishing his or her article to be refereed. The Book Review section aims not only to draw attention to recent and major publications, especially those published in Africa, but also where appropriate to enable reviewers to highlight and discuss contemporary African issues. Research reports and short contributions on Africa-related events in Australia, community groups, etc, are especially welcome.

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