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The AFSAAP Review and Newsletter appears twice a year in June and December. Long and short contributions, correspondence and items for the News and Notes section are invited. Contributions on Africa-related research and teaching are particularly welcome. Material received by April 30th and September 30th will appear in the June and December issues respectively. Contributions should be sent to Cherry Gertzel, School of Social Sciences and Asian Languages, Curtin University of Technology, GPO Box U1987, Perth, WA 6001.

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Note From the Editor

I must reiterate Paul Nursey-Bray's appeal to AFSAAP members (p3) both to participate in the 1996 African Studies conference and also to give thought to the latest Review of Australian Overseas aid setup last month by the now Minister of Foreign Affairs. The AFSAAP Conference organisers plan to include in the September programme a panel discussion on Australian - African relations, so I draw your attention to ACFOA's statement (p.52) on aid. Readers might also look back to the Parliamentary enquiry into Australia - Southern Africa relations in the December 1995 Review and Newsletter. And on the Parliamentary enquiry itself see p. 39. Concerning the critical questions about the relationship between humanitarian and development assistance, Fiona Terry's article on Liberia in this issue provides much food for thought; especially her conclusion (p.12) that "the logic of nations ... appears to favour non-involvement, preferring to throw money into the "neutral" domain of humanitarian support for the victims of war." With Australian aid in mind I further draw your attention to Nomboniso Gqin's call for us to sustain our support for the now independent South Africa. (p.20). Senator Beazley's reflections provide additional reasons why we should.

Fiona Terry's article along with Peter Limb's report on his time at the University of the Western Cape provide instances of the kind of positive contributions to African development, indeed in some regions, to survival itself, made by individual Australians in a wide and varied range of assistance programmes. Such involvement is the firm bedrock of Australian relations with Africa; it demands the continued support for Africa at the official level that hopefully the Aid Review will recommend.

I must thank contributors for the varied and wide-ranging material included in this issue. The book reviews reflect on a range of key development issues including the Kenyan debate on indigenous capitalism which figured so prominently in the literature through the 1970s. For those of you interested in film, may I point out that I shall take with me to the September conference a copy of The Water War, which Robyn Alders has reviewed on p.39.

It is good to include the contribution from Nicholas Twoli (p.46), who was a postgraduate student at Flinders University some ten years ago, and to know that he continues to value his connection with Australia and AFSAAP. Finally readers will recall Major Lindsay Bridgford's account of his work in Rwanda in 1994 included in the December 1995 issue of this journal. You will be delighted therefore to know that he was awarded the conspicuous service medal for meritorious achievement as a medical officer with the Australian Medical Support Force Rwanda, in the January 1996 Australia Day Honours. On which we congratulate him.

A Conference brochure with registration form comes with this Review. Please register as soon as possible. An information sheet on the Workshop and Multidisciplinary forum for postgraduate and honours students in African Studies to be held immediately before the full conference is also included. This will be the first such conference that AFSAAP has held and we hope for a good number of postgraduates.

Cherry Gertzel
Letter from the President

I would like to take this opportunity to remind members that the Annual Conference of the Association will be held in Adelaide from 27 to 29 September 1996. Registration will be from 5.00 pm - 7.00 pm on Friday, 27 September at St Mark's College, North Adelaide. The Conference promises to be an interesting and exciting event. Thirty papers have already been offered, covering current events in Africa, Australia's role in Africa and addressing one of the key themes, critical theory and Africa. We also have a wide geographical distribution of potential paper givers. Offers have come in from Southern Africa, the United States and Russia. Representatives of NGOs have been invited and they are planning to provide a session on Australian/African relations and the role of NGOs. Professor George Kabari, Director of the Zimbabwe National Gallery, will be with us and we are hoping other African academics will attend.

The Conference will be an occasion to show the concern felt by members of the African Studies Association for African issues. It will enable us to take up questions of aid and Australia's role in the African continent. Members should note that a Review of the Aid Program is currently underway and a report to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the overall priorities, objectives and focus of the aid program will be handed down in six months time.

I hope you can attend the Conference. If you wish to offer a paper please let myself or Pal Aihuvalia know at the earliest opportunity.

Paul Nursery-Bray

AFRICA, PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS: A PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Senator Michael Beahan*

In April 1993 I made my first visit to Africa to participate as an observer at the Eritrean independence referendum. I spent time in Asmara and the port city of Massawa and saw for myself the physical and material ravages of the civil war which eventually led to Eritrea's independence. It brought to me the depressing realisation that Africa's post-colonial history is littered with the enduring legacy of superpower rivalry and ethnic conflict which in so many cases has led to civil wars.

Against this background of pessimism and poor prospects for the future, I made a second visit to Africa in July 1995 when I attended a Socialist International Council Meeting in Cape Town. I had spent some time researching aspects of African development and also had an opportunity, during a few days stopover in Harare, to discuss various ideas with African interlocutors. As a result, I took the opportunity at the conference to make an intervention in which I attempted to redress the pervasively negative views of what is happening in Africa and to counterbalance what was referred to at the conference as Afro-pessimism.

I believe a better case can now be made for Afro-realism or indeed Afro-optimism and that the increasingly widespread adoption of democratic pluralist principles and practice has taken root and, while certainly not universal, is blossoming with some positive role models for example in South Africa, Botswana and Zambia. Pluralism and tolerance has become a yardstick for emerging political parties, unions, youth and women's movements and the media to become genuine forces for change. Even one-party states such as Zimbabwe have conceded elements of pluralism as a concession towards the growing demand for democratic forms.

In economic terms, Africa is a debtor's morass. In 1993 for example African countries paid S296 million more to the IMF than they received from it! The flow-on consequences of the debt burden include the neglect of spending on health, sanitation, education and safe water; cutbacks in imports; less investment in infrastructure, which lowers productivity and competitiveness to declining national income; and declining foreign investment. For example, in Uganda, which is at the centre of an AIDS epidemic, the government spends only $3.45 per person on health each year, and $38.75 on debt repayments.

The problems continue. Many African countries continue to experience food concerns and are

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This paper was completed in April and does not take into account recent developments in Zambia.
reliant on international food donations and assistance. Africa has the highest population growth rates in the world and the highest levels of poverty. In many areas health care is in crisis as shown by the recent Ebola outbreak in Zaire and the deadly meningitis plague in Nigeria, not to mention the tragic AIDS pandemic afflicting the whole continent. Expenditure on education in many parts of Africa has gone backwards. Terms of trade have worsened with declining traditional exports, both in price and quantities at a time of increasing imports (price and volume). Physical infrastructure has generally deteriorated since mid 1960's. Essential services such as roads, railways, ports and communications have been neglected, urban drift has imposed enormous pressures on resources, particularly health, sanitation, utilities and education.

Africa has also suffered a fall off in aid and a collective hardening of attitude towards famine and starvation. The US, particularly since the debacle in Somalia, has been reticent to become heavily involved. European countries have also demonstrated less commitment towards Africa, particularly as the ‘problem of apartheid’ has disappeared as an issue. Their focus has been much more on problems associated with Eastern Europe. Former communist donors such as the Soviet Union and China are no longer major players in Africa, and countries like Canada, Australia and the Nordics have also reduced their contributions. Many Africans also have a negative view of the military and used to keep themselves in power and as a vehicle to dispense largesse. Similarly, much aid during the Cold War period was so often a military nature and used by some obtrusive leaders in the suppression of their own people.

The legacy of colonialism can also not be underestimated. Colonialism was, by its very nature, elitist and autocratic. That is part of the ‘downside’ that many identify with Africa - but there is another side which offers grounds for optimism.

The end of the Cold War brought about a sea of changes in Africa. African leaders, through the avenues of the media, particularly television, saw the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the Soviet Union and its satellites. What is more important, they saw too. Almost overnight there was a drying up of the military aid. At the same time there was a growth of non-governmental pressure groups with clearly defined political agendas combined with an increasing number of Africans demonstrating their hostility to their rulers and demanding political structures which reflected their own aspirations. This meant dramatic change for international financial institutions, aid-giving governments, concerned western citizens and the great majority of Africans who had a common interest in reforming an African state system which had been hijacked by rulers whose policies were both economically disastrous and often politically and socially horrifying.

Far from having western values imposed on Africa, the new agenda of democracy and human rights meant that the west was supporting African aspirations against the regimes which had tacitly, or explicitly, been kept in power by the provision of Western aid. The decision by the United States to suspend aid to Kenya in 1991 because of that country’s human rights abuses, eventually led to President Moi reluctantly agreeing to multi-party elections. Similarly it took the suspension of all non-humanitarian aid in May 1992 to Malawi’s autocratic President-for-life, Hastings Banda, to induce him to call a referendum on multiparty democracy and his eventual ouster at multiparty elections in May 1994. Many African countries called for independent election observers to determine whether elections were free and fair. And, while abuse and fraud did continue, international observers played a key role in limiting their scope and providing a legitimacy for the results.

While there continue to be regimes which cling to power by authoritarian means (for example, Nigeria, Zaire) the trend since 1990 has been very much in the other direction. While democracy in Africa remains a fragile concept, it is seen by Africans as a concept whose time has come. It is impossible to study African politics without being buoyed by the courage and dedication shown by Africans in their struggle for democracy. Even military governments have had to recognise that multiparty elections remain the ideal, it is what the people want. Anyone who, like me, has witnessed Africans queuing for hours in the burning sun to cast their vote, knows that they treat their voting seriously. In Eritrea, as elsewhere in Africa, many voters trudged miles to participate in the ballot, and were prepared to wait as long as it took to cast their vote. Under similar circumstances I could not see Australians or other westerners showing such patience or virtue.

Prior to the Benin presidential election in 1991 (where a Marxist rule of 17 years was overthrown at the ballot box) no African Government had ever been voted out of office as a result of a contested election. By the end of 1991 however, no more than a handful of African states lacked opposition parties and a number of long established governments had been voted out of office. As expected, the process may in instances be flawed with allegations of vote rigging and fraud but there are positive examples which serve as a beacon to other African governments.

Zambia, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, the Ivory Coast, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe have all held multiparty elections. Uganda, the Gambia, Sierra Leone and Sudan propose to follow suit. The possibility of lasting peace in Angola now looks promising after years of war. It is easy to say, as the Afro pessimists do, that despite the advent of pluralism, many of the election winners will see their victory as a means of personal or clan enrichment. However, multiparty democracy is only one facet of democracy and only by education - in which the parties, the government, the parliament, the courts and the media play such a vital role - will the institutions be strengthened.

We have in the Australian Parliament a role to play in helping expose African Parliamentarians and parliamentary and electoral officials to our own system and helping train them to improve and, if they so wish, adapt our models to their own circumstances. I have been a strong supporter of the role that the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) plays in this process and firmly believe that the CPA should be an inclusive association so that countries can learn from each other what is acceptable and what is not. We should not keep countries outside our collective tent merely because they don’t fulfil all aspects of what we regard as a true democratic structure. For example, at present Uganda’s membership of the CPA is suspended because it has not met all the requirements for full re-entry; yet a country like Swaziland which bans parties and the establishment of any opposition party, is included. In my view both Uganda and Swaziland should be regarded as full members of the CPA so that within the organisation we can work for improvements.

It would not be possible to look at developments in Africa in a positive light without focusing attention on the enormous contribution made by South Africa. The restoration of peace and democracy in South Africa has meant that regional countries can now develop their resources without diverting them to meet the South African threat. At the same time, South Africa has been able to scale down its war machine and transfer those resources into productive efforts. No longer can regional countries blame the apartheid regime for all their own shortcomings.

Since the end of apartheid there has been a new surge in investment, by foreign interests into South Africa and also by South African interests into Southern Africa. While South Africa's
huge economy provides enormous possibilities for the rest of Africa, it does not provide the answer to all Africa's problems. There is a concern in South Africa that because of the diversity of its economy, it is dragging in unwanted unskilled labour. It is estimated that there are between three and five million illegal immigrants in South Africa.

Many formerly socialist countries have realised that they have to make economic changes and they have instituted their own reforms to free up markets and sell off state-owned enterprises in an effort to attract foreign investment. At the same time they are wary of the problems caused by IMF and World Bank loans which have previously led to structural adjustment in which harsh economic measures have been taken to reign in massive debts. This has generally meant that labour costs are driven down by lowering wages which are often already at subsistence levels. Countries are aware that they no longer want to slip (or slip further) into a dependency relationship in which they export only raw materials and food and suck in costly imports. In this way some regional countries are wary of South African investment and calls to reduce tariffs which they see as only advantaging first world countries (and multinationals).

They also see the possibility of South Africa 'sucking up' the bulk of investment in Africa. At the same time South Africans, while trying to attract more investment, are wary of taking soft loans. The South African Government has told the World Bank it is not, at this stage, interested in taking out bank loans. This is despite the World Bank having set up an office in Johannesburg and indicating its interest in lending in South Africa. The World Bank is now contemplating the establishment of a fund to help pay off some of the debts owed to it by some of the world's poorest countries - something it has previously refused to consider. This is clearly a step in the right direction, although debt problems will not be overcome until the West places Africa higher on its priority list and seriously addresses the vicious circle of debt. Meanwhile, African Governments have become far more confident in their dealings with international institutions and are now much more cautious about becoming dependent on dominant states and institutions within a highly unequal global economy and power structure.

At a political level, those pessimists who saw South Africa collapsing if Nelson Mandela were to die suddenly, must be heartened by the structures which have been set in place to ensure a successor. There must also be delight at the way the South African Government seems to date been able to control black expectations and the general stability which now prevails. The increase in urban crime is however a concern, not only for the danger it imposes on life, but also the dampening effect it has on potential investors.

Another positive sign has been the way that countries of the Southern African region have been willing to resolve their own regional problems. As Nelson Mandela has said (Economist, 2 September 1995) 'Southern Africa has long passed the stage of lamenting the privations of the past. The challenge is to find within ourselves the resources to overcome this legacy'. In this way the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) has signed agreements on regional water control and agreements on electricity and mining will follow. There is an ambitious proposal to eliminate internal trade barriers and export subsidies within the region by 2000.

Similarly Nelson Mandela and Robert Mugabe resolved internal problems in Lusaka (where the King had moved against the Prime Minister) and had the Prime Minister reinstated. They also ensured that the Mozambiquan resistance movement Renamo partook in the Mozambiquan elections after initially threatening to pull out. They have helped broker an Angolan peace settlement and together with Namibia and Botswana have offered help for a UN peacekeeping force to help implement the Angolan peace. (It may well be the forerunner of an African peacekeeping force which could be called by the UN to settle affairs in Africa. This proposal was unanimously endorsed at the June 1995 OAU Summit in Addis Ababa). There is also increasing SADC police cooperation on drug trafficking, transport and energy infrastructure and customs union. These are all positive measures in keeping with pan-Africanist notions that they ought to be able to sort out their troubles for themselves. Africa is organising itself.

In 1963 the OAU decided not to interfere with the internal borders of Africa, even if they were drawn to complicate national political and social structures. But created artificial states and had divided communities among groups within a border. While participant political systems and ethnic divisions might have destroyed the basis of statehood, far from intensifying ethnic and religious differences, however, those differences have largely been contained within the confines of established boundaries with very few claims for breakaway status. (Eritrea is more the exception than the rule.) As has been argued by some commentators, it is precisely the process of democratisation and tolerance which has rescued some African governments from the consequences of their own misgovernment. Ethnicity remains a democratic and cultural issue which is integral to universal problems confronting democracy since it raises the issue of respect for minorities and the legitimacy expression of differences. How African Governments handle those minorities and differences remains the crux of whether democracies will continue to flourish in Africa.

It is clear to me that since 1989 fundamental political changes have taken place throughout much of Africa. Up until that time, though many countries claimed to have democratic institutions, civil wars were exacerbated by a badly organised democratic process in which ethnic and clan differences were manipulated by groups wanting to establish their own political power with scant regard for democratic practices. Since then the changing global map, but particularly the collapse of the Soviet Union, has meant that within many African countries, regimes have been unable to withstand internal and external pressures for better education, decentralisation of decision making and greater regionalism which of necessity has meant that people have had to become more involved with the management of their own affairs. The media has played an active and often courageous role in this transition. The possibility of military coups and autocratic government still remains but in general, democratic principles have found fertile soil. As a senior bureaucrat told me during my visit to Harare, 'no-one will come to power in Southern Africa unless it is through the ballot box'. This is very hopeful sign. In 1996 alone, 15 African countries expect to hold national elections with further eight to go to the polls in 1997. As the Economist (3 February 1996) observed 'Africa ought to be the world's most democratically tested continent this year'.

As I indicated at the outset, I am an optimist on Africa - there is much that affords promise. I am therefore concerned at the views of those who appear unduly pessimistic and those who claim that the supply of further aid to Africa is a waste of resources. In the words of Michael Chwe, a long time student of African affairs and a visiting fellow at Harvard University, 'The prophecy of imminent doom in Africa cannot be dismissed, particularly considering the dreadful times the majority of the continent's people are now living through. But it would be unwise to ignore the signs of hope, which could be amplified over time to allow the region to recover lost ground should the leaders and thinkers of sub-Saharan Africa decide to do so. The Right's current pessimism and the conspiracy theories of the Left are inclined to throw the baby of hope out with the bathwater'.

I believe that optimism is a concept that Africa needs so that it can nurture and develop its baby of hope.
LIVEIRA: NOT JUST ANOTHER “ETHNIC CONFLICT”

Fiona Terry*

The recent eruption of violence in Monrovia, the overcrowded capital of Liberia, cannot come as a surprise to observers of the 6 year civil war. The general indifference shown by the international community throughout the conflict did not sufficiently change following the signing of the most recent peace accord in Abuja, Nigeria in August 1995; no serious support was given to the peace process. The international scepticism was not altogether unjustified, since the August accord was the 11th attempt at peace since the start of the war in December 1989. Nevertheless this accord contained vital elements which were previously absent and deserved a more concerted effort, particularly from the UN who have consistently turned a blind eye to events in Liberia; and from the United States for whom Liberia was the largest recipient of foreign aid in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1980s, when Cold War rivalry necessitated military installations in the region.

The Origins of the Violence

The war in Liberia, as with many internal conflicts in the post Cold-War era, has been categorised under the all-embracing term “ethnic violence”. Whilst the recent violence and much of the civil war has an ethnic dimension, the strong animosity between certain ethnic groups developed under the rule of Samuel Doe (1980-89), rather than being a pre-existing feature of Liberian society. Prior to Doe’s rule, the predominant rift in Liberia was between Amercio-Liberians and the indigenous inhabitants of the country which stems back to the fashion with which the contemporary nation was formed.

Liberia was founded by freed slaves from North America who settled with the assistance of the American Colonisation Society from 1822. The name “Liberia” was adopted to reflect the ideal of liberty; this concept, however, only extended to the new arrivals as they embarked upon their own form of colonisation of the indigenous inhabitants. The indigenous people were treated as second-class citizens, and the Americo-Liberians dominated all aspects of political, economic and social life.

The frustration of the indigenous Liberians came to a head in 1980 and in a bloody coup Samuel Doe, a master-sergeant in the army, came to power. The televised execution of 15 prominent politicians, including the former President, on a Monroviuan beach was the first instance of what was to be a brutal and repressive rule. Doe began politicising the ethnic differences in Liberia, favouring people in his own Kran ethnic group in government appointments, despite the Kran only representing some 5 percent of Liberia’s population. In 1985 a failed coup attempt led by Thomas Quiwonkpa from the Gio ethnic group in the north-east of the country led to massive reprisals against the Gio and Mano ethnic groups of this region. When Charles

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Taylor and his small rebel group (the National Patriotic Front of Liberia - NPFL) entered the north-eastern corner of Liberia from the Côte d’Ivoire in 1989, profiting from the hatred of the Gio and Mano groups towards the Doe regime, and gained their support in his armed struggle, despite his rather Americo-Liberian persona.

Despite this backdrop of ethnically-inspired conflict, the allegiances to factions during the war have not been purely ethnically based. The recruitment of fighters, particularly in the rural areas, has often resulted from forced recruitment or voluntary inscription for revenge. In the former case, fighters either threaten to murder family members of potential recruits, or force the young man or boy to kill some or all of his family, thereby alienating him from his village. The latter form of voluntary inscription occurs following an attack on a village; the young man and boys join a rival faction to avenge their loss. Instances were even cited of soldiers pretending to be a rival faction when attacking a village to encourage hatred of that faction and gain recruitment to their own ranks. This spiral of violence has continued throughout the war, with the recruitment of child-soldiers being particularly sought in the belief that children are often the most ruthless killers, seemingly questioning and understanding less of the consequences of their actions.

The lack of strong ethnic or ideological rationale for the conflict is also evident in the ease with which fighters change factions. Allegiance of the lower ranks moreover is encouraged in all factions through the ‘fast promotion scheme’ through which boys rapidly become generals, to a point where after 6 years of war it is difficult to find someone of lower rank than colonel.

The lack of unifying ideology and the precariousness of the leaders’ positions within their own factions is partly responsible for the most recent outbreak of violence. Throughout the war the followers, particularly within the NPFL, were promised the “riches of Monrovía” as reward for their combat. The predation of the fighters on the village economy sustain the material aspects of their fight and was thus encouraged at all levels (with the exception of Muslim villages by Muslim fighters of ULIMO-X).

The signing of the Abuja peace accord for the first time saw all the faction leaders take up political positions in Monrovia either on the Council of State or in important Ministerial portfolios. Government positions were divided between the factions; a minister from one faction would have 2 deputy ministers from rival factions. Not only did this system make consensus incredibly difficult to reach, but it filled the government with warlords whose only qualifications were their battle prowess. Nevertheless, the time during which the “riches of Monrovía” were divided among the most prominent warlords was a time of relative peace. Several cease-fire violations occurred, but it was in the interests of leaders to quell problems within their ranks as much as possible to avoid jeopardising their own legitimacy.

The fighters, however, were looking at the peace process with different eyes. They saw that the first priority of their leaders upon taking office was to match their new legitimacy as heads of state with material status; huge houses in Monrovia were inhabited; convoys of expensive cars established; and suits and office furniture acquired. The fighters were told to respect the ceasefire and to allow humanitarian convoys of food and medical supplies passage through their checkpoints unattended. Humanitarian goods had periodically been legitimate targets of the fighters, particularly the “loot” of a relief vehicle by fighters at times of real or perceived threat of attack from another faction. But now fighters were being praised for doing that for which they had previously been rewarded. Furthermore, there were insufficient government positions for all the generals to occupy and these disgruntled fighters either returned to “the bush” or remained in
Monrovia. The fighters wanted to see a reason to put down their guns and to respect food convoys and relief supplies.

The Peace Process

The apathy with which peace negotiations were handled left those responsible for its implementation completely unprepared once a positive outcome was reached. The lack of optimism immediately prior to the talks was not altogether surprising since the chosen venue, Abuja, the political capital of Nigeria, could certainly not be considered neutral ground. Nigeria contributes some 80 percent of troops and funds to ECOMOG, the "peacekeeping" force present in Liberia since 1989, who have been glaringly partial in their actions, predominantly against Taylor’s NPFL to the point of arming opposing factions. The animosity between the two groups is fundamental to the war; ECOMOG was formed by the Economic Community of West African States at a time when Taylor occupied 90 percent of the country and was on the verge of taking Monrovia. It was only ECOMOG that stopped him then, and again in 1992 when the NPFL laid siege to the city. Taylor can therefore rightly imagine that he would be president if not for ECOMOG. Nigeria has consistently viewed Taylor as a rebel and has threatened him with arrest if he ever set foot in Nigeria. The Nigerian venue for the peace talks, therefore, seemed an incredibly strange choice and, as expected, Taylor refused to attend.

What happened between General Abacha of Nigeria and Charles Taylor in the week following the failed talks remains a mystery, but the deal must have been significant: suddenly 6 years of animosity vanished and Abuja 2 peace talks commenced with the attendance of Taylor. The composition of the 5 member Council of State was agreed upon and, for the first time since the beginning of the war, Taylor looked set to come to Monrovia and take his place as co-vice-president with 3 of his main rivals, and one neutral interim President. A 12 month timetable was drafted for a cease-fire, the country-wide deployment of ECOMOG, a process of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of combatants, the return of refugees, and general elections.

Whatever the rationale behind this ambitious schedule, such an unrealistic programme created disillusionment with the process when it was inevitably delayed at every step, ultimately creating conditions unadventive to its eventual success. Some of the following fundamental elements of the process had not been considered at the time of the signing of the peace accord, and were still not finalised by November 1995, 3 months into the programme:

i) The cease-fire regulations necessitated a capacity to monitor the cease-fire and to investigate any accusations of violations lodged by factions, civilians, NGOs or UN personnel. It was the role of the small UN observer group, UOMIL, to undertake this task. Their limited mandate, however, forbade UOMIL personnel from leaving Monrovia without an ECOMOG escort and ECOMOG’s priorities were their own different. On occasions when violations were investigated it was usually too late to apportion blame accurately, thus the verdict remained in limbo. Hampering the work of humanitarian agencies was also considered a cease-fire violation but even following the theft of NGO and UN vehicles, no official violation proceedings were taken against the accused faction. Thus the motivation for respecting the cease-fire rapidly waned and violations began to increase.

ii) Financial contributions to pay for the peace process were not readily forthcoming although money to send disarmament and demobilisation experts people from all over the world was. But even then began to complain when comparing the funding differences between the Angolan and Mozambican operations with that of Liberia. The US offered the largest amount at the UN pledging conference in New York in October: USD 75 million, a figure which in fact gave some USD 15 million to the peace process since the US annually contributes USD 50 million in food aid and 10 million in USAID grant. Most donors, preferred to restrict their contributions to "neutral" humanitarian operations rather than support the "political" activities of the peace process. Moreover, direct financial contributions to ECOMOG posed difficult dilemmas for donors since the major recipient of these funds would be the military dictatorship in Nigeria, whose human rights abuses have prompted a ban on the sale and repair of military goods and services by the United States.

iii) Despite the planned peace talks in Abuja, no actual procedure for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration had been proposed, let alone agreed upon by the factions. Every issue from the most basic to the most crucial had to be discussed.

iv) Very little consideration seemed to be given to the fact that 750,000 refugees and over 1 million internally displaced persons must be repatriated to their homes and registered before a "free and fair" election could take place. This undertaking alone was bound to take more than a year, and unable to take place until conditions of security and access to basic services for the returnees are guaranteed.

v) All these peace and reconstruction conditions, starting with the deployment of ECOMOG forces throughout the country, were to be undertaken within 12 months in a country in which practically all the infrastructure has been destroyed.

The combination of the lack of planning of the peace process, and the apathy and disinterest of the UN and major donors in its support created an atmosphere in which successful implementation became less and less likely. The New York pledging conference, rather than being a venue for the outpouring of support and solidarity of the international community towards peace, was a slap in the face to the interim government of Liberia, ECOMOG, and those responsible for brokering the peace agreement. Only a fraction of the funds requested by ECOMOG and the UN were pledged, and virtually no support was offered to the interim government. The ignorance and disinterest of the donors was captured in a suggestion made by a US spokesman when arguing that ECOMOG could deploy around Liberia with a reduced level of funding; He suggested that ECOMOG should seek creative solutions to this endeavour such as borrowing vehicles from NGOs or from the factions themselves.

Liberia is suffering from the hypocrisy of the United Nations and the United States; in efforts to avoid direct involvement in the Liberian conflict, ECOMOG has been embraced as an example of regional peace-keeping, and its legitimacy endorsed by the UN. A blind eye has been turned to the partiality of its activities and its human rights abuses, including the indiscriminate bombing of towns in which civilians were killed and the imposition of an economic blockade of NPFL territory due to which a clearly marked humanitarian convoy was bombed. ECOMOG has been supported in theory until the moment at which support was needed most to give ECOMOG a positive image and to seriously monitor its activities. The fight between the NPFL and ECOMOG has completely subsided; Taylor even has ECOMOG bodyguards and convoy escorts along side his armed NPFL fighters. If, however, the UN and the US justifiably deemed ECOMOG too corrupt (rotten) to receive overt support of their role in the peace process, an alternative should have been
proposed, instead of letting the whole process die through want of real commitment. Half-hearted attempts which end in failure seem to be the new characteristic of UN initiatives.

Conclusion

The recent violence can thus be understood within the general atmosphere of disillusionment of both the faction leaders and the combatants. The fighting allegedly erupted when Taylor, in his capacity as co-vice president, decided to administer justice and arrest Roosevelt Johnson, the leader of ULIMO-J and the Minister for Rural Development, for the repeated cease-fire violations committed by that faction. Taylor's frustration at the ineptitude of UNOMIL to monitor and declare such violations is understandable, but his motive must have been wider since Johnson has virtually no control over the behaviour of his fighters and thus such a move was unlikely to stop further cease-fire violations (especially since these have occurred predominantly in diamond-mining areas and thus have a motivation largely disconnected from the peace process). Whatever Taylor's rationale, he seriously misjudged the repercussions of his actions since such a spark was all that was needed to ignite the frustration of the hundreds of armed fighters who were roaming the streets of Monrovia. Taylor is unlikely to have desired this outcome since he stands to lose the most from a collapse of the peace process, being the easy favourite for president in a general election. The descent into chaos provided the fighters with the ideal opportunity for finally gaining "the riches of Monrovia", and as reports have indicated, fighters from all factions (including ECOMOG peacekeepers) have been involved in the looting of vehicles, shops and houses. The recent fighting is reported to have also united some Kran solidarity behind Roosevelt Johnson, with Kran fighters from the LPC joining the fight against NPFL and ULIMO-K combatants. The press reports of "an outbreak of ethnic violence", however, fail very short of describing the complexities of the situation.

As the helicopters evacuate all foreign nationals from Monrovia, the most recent image it brings to mind is the retreat from Kigali, when the world turned its back on the country and over 500,000 people were slaughtered. Peace is not easy to obtain in Liberia where so many youths have had no education and only know a life of violence, but a serious attempt was not even made. Rather than pumping millions of dollars annually in refugee camps in the neighbouring countries of Guinea, the Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone, a more durable solution in terms of a genuine attempt at peace and reconciliation seems a logical course of action. The logic of nations, however, in the past-Somalia international climate appears to favour non-involvement, preferring to throw money into the "neutral" domain of humanitarian support for the victims of war. In Liberia, moreover, the regional deployment of a peace-keeping force permitted the UN member states to delegate the responsibility elsewhere and, whilst peace-keepers have enforced their own version of justice, impunity was granted to avoid having to face other alternatives, perhaps involving direct UN action.

BLACK ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC RESEARCH SERVICES IN SOUTH AFRICA: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF REAL CHANGE

Peter Limb

This short paper looks at one specific indicator of whether meaningful change is taking place in South Africa - whether black people are able to access electronic resources. During a project in Cape Town last year I was struck by the enormous gap between white and black access to computers. The focus is on universities and libraries, but such access also has significant in other areas, such as business and labour.

The democratic changes of 1990 and 1994 ushered in a new political era in South Africa: universal franchise; the end of statutory apartheid; and the start of the Reconstruction and Development Program, with high hopes for better housing, jobs and health. Whether or not the majority gain greater access to services will, of course, be influenced by factors such as the nature and rate of transformation and by privatization and elitisation trends.

When black head university departments such as Engineering and History, then perhaps we can say that "black empowerment" in education is succeeding. I am not entering here the debate over the usefulness of the black "empowerment" issue, save to say that the US example shows the very real limitations of such Booker T. Washington schemes isolated from socioeconomic change, and that in South Africa empowerment is an important issue for the rising black bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois strata.

Electronic Services and Research: Skipping the Material Stage?

Today'sIsauding; electronic revolution presents exciting new possibilities to African studies researchers: discussion lists; e-mail; full-text electronic-journals. It also offers partial solutions to problems such as illiteracy and rural isolation common in Africa. Recent research shows that some people respond better to computer - or image-assisted education than book-based learning, and that rural-based professionals exposed to the Internet can enrich their skills. Robert White in Northwestern California, for example, has developed a new course on Africa that will incorporate Internet resources for rural students. In response to a recent survey I received comments from various researchers about the poor state of archives in Africa. One of them commented that "it seems skipping the material stage and going straight for electronic news etc. would be more conducive to equality of information access, but of course then the problem is getting a computer; electricity and telephones."64

Of course the Internet at the moment has real limitations: chaotic arrangement; varying quality of sites; and the relatively small percentage of people who have access to it.65

South Africa and Electronic Services

Some figures:

Africa, with 12% of the world’s population, has only 2% of the world telephone lines (0.9 phone lines per 100 people, compared to Sweden 68, US 51) and over the last decade registered the lowest growth in teledensity of any developing region.

* Ironically, most international traffic on African lines is outside of Africa. International lines often are better than internal ones - in Namibia, South African colonisation produced better links to Johannesburg CBD than to Ovamboland, where most Namibians live. Namibia still accesses Africa via South Africa, complete with South African tolls.
* Despite problems of lack of finance and telecommunication infrastructure, 30 African states have Internet access, 12 with full Internet connectivity.
* South Africa has the lion’s share of Internet connectivity in Africa. A 1995 Internet Domain Survey shows rapid growth in South Africa, with a 3-year growth to 1995 of 2,300%, though in 1995 it had only 27,000 computer hosts compared to 161,000 in Australia. South African companies also provide the backbone for Zimbabwe’s net users.

Black Researchers and Access to Electronic Services/Libraries

There are no reliable figures on black ownership of computers in South Africa. Internet guru Arthur Goldberg estimates that the installed base of PCs in South Africa reached one million in 1995 and is increasing by 16% per year. I have various casual indicators of the level of computer ownership and use by blacks. David Coplan (University of Cape Town) states that all his postgraduates are now on the Internet, though their use of services varies. Steve Rossouw states that all first year students at the Cape Technikon are required to undertake computer literacy classes and that many thus practice on laboratory PCs and have gratis Internet access, very few own computers.

Disproportions in the educational system are clear. In 1990 65% of current, and 75% of capital expenditure in tertiary education was spent on whites. In 1992 student figures at university level were: 135,482 (Africans); 135,513 (whites); 17,406 ("coloureds"); 23,491 (Asians). Staff comprised: 9,521 (Africans); 17,388 (whites); 3,734 ("coloureds"); and 1,404 (Asians).

The low number of black researchers reflects the impoverishment of the education system under Bantu education, political disruption and deeper causes of black poverty. Though some progress has been made towards developing a democratic library system, with energetic local resources

2 W. Wresch, "New Lifelines: the Net is Sprouting in Africa", Internet World Nov. 1995 pp.102-103. In 1986 83% of international calls made in Africa were to outside the continent.

Centres increasing community access to information, black access to electronic and library services is severely limited by poverty.

* In 1994 South Africa’s production of electricity was 167,927 million kWh, with a per capita consumption roughly equal to Western Europe. Yet only 37% of the population (15 million people) have home access to electricity. In 1995 illiteracy was estimated at 30%. Africans, making up about 76% of the population, earn 29% of the total income.
* Johannesberg, with 1.7 million people, boasts 37 library service points and a 0.9 book-person ratio, but Soweto, with at least 2 and perhaps 4 million people, has only 6 service points and a 0.16 ratio. In Cape Town, Durban, Johannesberg and Sandton there are 72 service points for one million whites but only 17 for 3.9 million blacks.

There are further problems such as:
1. only limited funds for educational change are available and even these must compete with priority programs such as basic literacy and outreach schemes;
2. lack of co-ordination between different library systems in South Africa;
3. lack of awareness of local black needs;
4. imposition of fees on "non-residents" which could lead to denial of facilities.

A 1992 report found that school libraries were “marginalised and under-resourced; public libraries were concentrated in white urban and industrialised areas; few libraries had been established in African townships, and rural areas had few library resources of any kind.” Repel of the Separate Amenities Act in 1990 has “not in itself brought about a more equitable system” of information provision. More basically, in Africa the nature and form of book culture and libraries often served to benefit the colonial power and not the people of the colonies.

6 Africa South of the Sahara 1996 (London: Europa, 1995), pp. 874, 879, 891, 896. In Dec 2 1994 SAPA reported Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs Pik Botha that people living in shacks are to benefit from plans to supply electricity to 2.5 million households in the next 5 years. A pilot project to provide 20000 informal shelters in Cape Town with electricity had proved successful and would be expanded. Botha recently announced government planned 30000 new electricity connections annually in the next 5 years. For every 100 domestic connections, there would be an additional 114 within five years; Social Equity and Job Creation, the key to a Stable Future (COSATU-NUCTU-FEDSAA, Apr. 1994)
Manaka, of the University of the North, argues that South African library services “are greatly biased towards Western culture”.

Electronic services offer at best only partial solutions to such problems. But the new generation is somewhat more closely aligned to the changing paradigm of the electronic age. The visual possibilities of modern computers allow illiteracy problems to be tackled. And they are not really that expensive once installed. “Mirror sites”, that is, computer sites which reflect or mirror larger, real-time Northern hemisphere sites - if often without real-time interaction - enable third world users to benefit from reduced off-peak satellite-transmission tariffs. Once established, World Wide Web sites are easily accessible to anybody with computer and modem access. The University of Virginia Virtual Library is a good example of how people in isolated mountain homes can view the scanned letters of Thomas Jefferson without having physically to visit the archives. Imagine the possibilities this offers in Africa to researchers. It presents an opportunity to democratise the research process, to open up archival resources to black workers and women, to accelerate the involvement of such groups hitherto “hidden from history” in the writing of their own histories.

There may, of course, be disadvantages in merely mirroring Western initiatives. Many fear the mere repetition of Western dominance. One US plan envisages a major thrust into African academia, to bring dozens of professors to the US for intensive training. To gain US funding organisers have included a simultaneous intensive course in “US democracy”. Whether this “Cultural Imperialism” outweighs projected gains in technical access I will leave up to you.

Keep in mind also that the black elite is likely to monopolise the NET without effective socio-economic transformations and political interventions to democratise access. Then there is also the problem of the continuation of old patterns of thinking. One young African historian informed me that despite the lifting of official censorship and restrictions on the use of archives, he remained wary of certain rules of access linked to the “old order”.

Still, there are possibilities for change. Lacking funds for expensive books, black communities can use the “great electronic leap forward” to leap-frog the whole paper-bound cultural monolith that prevents them effectively interacting in wider intellectual or commercial arenas. It is perhaps the only alternative to the African “book famine”. The Internet is the ultimate interactive technology that enables communities to specify their own needs, publish and communicate, and this can help overcome the bias associated with imposition of Western book cultures. The public library needs to be re-invented, in a new, user-friendly, African-friendly, electronic form. Some librarians in South Africa argue that, given political changes, information provision should be focused on communities, with public libraries providing information relevant to the daily needs of grass roots groups. That public libraries with Internet access can link people with research resources is evident from Australian examples. But the adoption of commercial charges, as in VICNET in Victoria, can encourage an elite of Net users.

Examples of African involvement in the new electronic paradigm of interactivity include the impressive ANC web site and discussion lists such as Nafrica and Swazi-Net, and many South African newspapers. A history professor told me recently that in South Africa “Email is a fantastic boon for those in rural areas and away from libraries and archives”.

The potential for the effective use of electronic services by researchers is great. And improved block access to this information is one key to a genuinely transformed South Africa.

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15 See the recent debates on Afrika-IT (Information Technology) listerv.
17 Personal communication, 13 Mar. 1996.
THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

Nomtoniso Gasa*

Nomtoniso Gasa, long time active member of the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party addressed the West Australian public late last year on her way back to South Africa after participating in the Beijing Women’s Conference. Nomtoniso is Principal Officer of the World University Services (WUS) in South Africa. She was at the ANC Women’s Desk in the lead up of the 1994 elections and ANC Media officer in the first year of the Government Unity elections.

Nomtoniso welcomed the opportunity to share the ideas, visions, hopes, worries and preoccupations of women straight from Beijing. The whole idea of getting women together all over the world was inspiring. For those who have had the privilege of attending such gatherings before it is easy to be cynical. But for the delegation of South African women it was a very emotional step because for the first time they were recognised as a participating country as of right. Previously the ANC had been given a special seat at conferences as a token of solidarity with the struggles of South Africa and the world’s commitment to human rights. For the first time they could walk tall, they had speaking rights. It was always painful in the past to feel that they were excluded as a country for crimes that the majority of the people did not commit. The ANC had campaigned so hard for the isolation of South Africa from the international community that when it came to shaping policies for the empowerment of women, South Africans sometimes wished they could have played a part. This is why the Beijing conference was so very special. As Africans they could discuss issues of health, poverty, gender with people from Africa, Asia, even Australia, all talking about the same issues that concern women the world over.

It had been very inspiring to meet comrades from the Aboriginal community and to learn about their common experience at the hands of their respective governments. “We know what it means to be made invisible, to live on the margins of society. Our histories are very similar” she told members of the aboriginal community at the meeting “We have lived through colonial conquest and dispossession. We have had the same experience”.

The gap between the haves and have-nots had widened in South Africa since the advent of political freedom. The rate of unemployment was at an unprecedented level. At the core of this are black women - unemployment, racial oppression, women bear the brunt. The interaction between race, class and culture had resulted in the invisibility of women such as herself. The status of South African women has improved immeasurably and they can say that the political status of women has become more positive even than that of men in Australia. In a democracy of less than two years standing, women in South Africa have fought hard to become part of mainstream politics. Women have learnt from women in other African countries where they fought side by side with men in the struggle for freedom and equality but in the end had not achieved gender equality and have been marginalized. In South Africa they were determined to work out a programme which would make them visible as women - in positions of political power, in positions of general influence in society but also in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) to ensure that the socio-economic status of South African women is improved.

* This is a transcript of a talk Nomtoniso Gasa gave in Perth at a public meeting held under the auspices of WASAS and WACARE on 15th September 1995. I am grateful to Sheila Sutner for making it available.

“In South Africa we have a President like no other president in the world. He has had to learn the hard way that he cannot stand on a platform and not talk about women”. In his first address in Parliament he said that it is vital that all structures of government should understand that freedom cannot be achieved until women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression. Everyone must understand that the RDP cannot be achieved without the participation of women. The RDP will have failed unless the situation of women is visibly and radically changed for the better and they have been empowered to enter into every aspect of life as equals with every other member of society. Whatever level women are at, they don’t have to argue with government about issues of equality. The new constitution is very progressive, with a clearly delineated equality clause stating that women are equal with all other people in society. This is difficult. Equal opportunity on its own is not enough. A programme is needed to redress the social and economic inequalities of the past in order to access opportunities - affirmative action within the RDP such as fleshing out the issues that affect women. There is constitutional protection now for women: if anyone undermines a woman’s rights as a woman she can take them to court on the basis of a violation for her constitutional rights. There is constitutional protection for women in the South African Bill of Rights, there is CEDAW (the convention for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women), a UN document to which South Africa is a signatory. So there is an affirmative legal framework for women on a national and international level.

What is needed is a programme that ensures that women can access all these things - national machinery, special courts to ensure women’s rights without an expensive legal process. Women ought to be able to go to structures of government and say “you facilitate this process for me”. This is a lesson learned from Zimbabwean women who after an independence which was to have eliminated all forms of discrimination found that when legal rights in terms of inheritance and land ownership arose, there were no structures to protect their rights and no enabling structures to access their legal rights. South Africa has had the benefit to enjoy their freedom first so they have been able to benefit from the experience of others.

Serious problems still exist: there are only three women ministers in the new parliament - Social Welfare, Health and Public Enterprise. There are hundreds of very competent women who could occupy important positions but they don’t because they are women. Women make up 20% (ANC women 30%) of the national assembly. There are too few in provincial legislatures. With the coming of local government elections traditional and religious leaders are claiming that this is the level at which they play a role. Women are saying “That’s fine. You fight over your 50% but don’t tamper with our 50%”. Experience has shown that special interest groups strengthen one another and can undermine anything women put on the table. So women have drawn a line in the sand at their 50% and have withdrawn from the contest.

Wherever South Africans go they are asked “What has the new government accomplished? The picture we get is so negative that it almost seems that you were better off before”. There have been big steps in terms of women and children: # free health care for pregnant women and children under 6 years of age # free and compulsory education for all children # a school feeding scheme # RDP which has spell out at every step how it improves the lives of women. RDP women’s forums ask questions of the RDP as to who will benefit in terms of housing, water, electricity, etc. Every part of society has been radicalized with questions such as What constitutes a family? Single parents? Gay couples? There is tolerance of difference in lifestyle.

In Beijing the media described the conference as a circus. The truth is that women of the world had very little to do with the circus. The UN should accept 80% of the responsibility, the Chinese
government 10% between world governments. What was crucial was the getting together of women of the world, working out an agenda and agreeing that though coming from such diverse backgrounds and interests, women have much in common. The Vatican and the Islamic leadership will do whatever they can to see that the resolutions on reproductive health agreed upon in Beijing do not go through and are not adopted in the platform of Asia. But they will not be able to reverse the experience. What has happened in Beijing is that women have shared experiences which they will take back to their communities with a taste of what happens in other societies and this is what is important about Beijing. They may lose some battles, they may win some, but they will all go back to their countries as changed people, women will be stronger so that not their own governments, not the Vatican nor the Islamic leaders will be able to prescribe to women any more.

Since the Nairobi Women’s Conference great strides had been taken in terms of the political advancement of women. In terms of socio-economic empowerment women are in a worse position than they were 10 years ago. “We know who the culprits are” declared Nomboniso “The multinationals have got into our countries and we know what they have done!” One of the weaknesses of Nairobi was that women did not come up with a strong mechanism to monitor their programme post-Nairobi. After Beijing there will be a women’s watch mechanism that will monitor progress world over. Women will come down heavily on the UN and different governments.

In conclusion Nomboniso said that the people of South Africa feel highly indebted to those who waged the anti-apartheid campaign on their behalf and for the solidarity shown throughout the years of struggle. “But we also feel that you have deserted us as South Africans. We have the vote, it’s true, but we call upon you to keep in touch with the South African situation, to take an interest in understanding the complexity of a negotiated settlement. It is difficult to articulate our own concerns because we are bound by a Government of National Unity. But you are bound to see that human rights prevail world over. So we still call upon you to continue to support us”.

EXCERPTS FROM A KENYA DIARY
Penelope Hetherington

The diary entries which appear below were written during a study leave period in 1993 but are still relevant today. I wish to thank Cherry Gertzel for giving me a copy of a paper by Karen Tranberg Hansen called “The Sabaal: pick-a-lot: exploring the second-hand clothes trade in Lunasa”. Hansen has done valuable work on this under-explored subject and provides references to other research in her footnotes.

Kenya, June 18th, 1993

Most Kenyans are dressed in the cast-off clothes of the Western world. Today we visited Albert Kamore who has a second hand clothes stall at the central clothes market in Nairobi, and he explained how the system works. His stall consists of wooden poles balanced on short legs, about two feet six inches off the ground. The stalls are not supposed to have any kind of roof constructed over them. When it rains the clothes are covered by large sheets of heavy duty plastic which are folded ready nearby. Albert claimed that he paid the previous holder six thousand shillings a year to the council and three hundred shillings a month for a place in the small store nearby where he leaves one bundle of clothes when he packs up each night.

Albert specializes in the sale of trousers. He can purchase a bale of one hundred pairs of trousers for six thousand five hundred shillings which he sells at first for about eighty shillings a pair and gradually reduces the price. However, the actual price is always reached by bargaining. A bale of smaller pieces - for example, children’s trousers - will cost him four thousand five hundred shillings. There are hundreds of people in this market selling clothes and it is impossible, so Albert says, to make enough money for more than food. It costs Albert four thousand eight hundred shillings for each child for every three months at the Polytechnic and, for this, he has to rely on what the shambas produces.

The second hand clothes arrive in Kenya in bales already sorted and named according to their contents. They are all cleaned before they are baled. Albert explained that they are exported by business men from all over the world and arrived by ship in Mombasa. Large trucks bring them to these open markets where agents have stores which are here open areas with walls on three sides and a roof. The agents sell the bales to the stall holders. The clothes are then sometimes bargained for in smaller lots by people who wish to take them to local markets further afield. They are then carried, usually by matatu to Thika, Nanyuki and other smaller centres across Kenya and sold for a small profit.

Along one wall of the shed which housed all the bales, men had set up ironing boards and sewing machines, so that clothes destined for display can be ironed and, if necessary, repaired. The men use flat irons containing burning charcoal. Our companions, Sam and James, each tried on a suit coat with a dark blue stripe which we bought for them for two hundred and fifty shillings each. They were both well cut and made of excellent material. The inside brand names indicated that one was made of pure wool and came from Finland; the other was a mixture of fibres and came from Israel.

Kenya, June 19th, 1993

Today I enquired about the crops planted along the roadsides which are public property. The
people who plant in such places return to weed and finally to pick the crop which includes maize and beans. This planting is undertaken by people who have lost their land, many of whom also set up some sort of more or less temporary dwelling on public land where they squat until they are evicted. James assured us that everyone would respect the right of those who planted these crops to also harvest them.

The Kikuyu and related people are exemplary and industrious gardeners who cultivate steep hillsides by carefully hoeing and terracing across the slopes. A large chamba of eight acres in the highlands characteristically has avocado trees, coffee bushes, paw paw and mango trees, passion fruit vines and, sometimes, bananas. Maize, sweet potatoes, beans, tomatoes and various green vegetables grow between the trees. There is now usually one stone house in the compound, sometimes with foundations ready for the next one. Other living quarters are built of wood, although there are some wattle and daub huts still standing. The compound almost always contains one or more confined yards for a cow and calves as well as a chicken coop. Today we visited Elias and his wife and mother, who all welcomed us warmly. But we later also met many members of the extended family who share the larger compound.

Kenya, June 20th, 1993

Yesterday we travelled with James Karande Neiani, Samuel Karanja Kamore and Elias Mwuga Kiru to Embu and Meru, two provinces located to the south and east of Mount Kenya and, at one time during the Colonial period, part of the Central Province. The people speak a language not unlike Kikuyu - they all appear to understand one another - and very probably have common origins in the migratory patterns of the 15th and 16th centuries. Although, in geographical terms, the road runs around the foot of Mount Kenya, the mountain itself is scarcely ever visible because this is a region of steep vleveys and endless ridges. A visitor in the 19th century described this region as 'one vast garden' and this remains an apt description today. There are some rice fields in one low lying area on the road to Embu but most of the land is still in the hands of Embu and Meru families who cultivate relatively small plots. There are small streams at the foot of each ridge and the gardens cover the slopes, however steep. Each plot has some decorative trees, quite apart from those grown for their fruit, including Australian gums, silks oaks (grevillea robusta), the Nandi flame tree, the jacaranda, the cedar tree, the casuarina, the pine, the oak and the occasional willow.

Other trees of various size, some of them growing in small plantations, are more productive. They include the macadamia nut, loquat, cherry guava, paw paw, banana, mango, avocado, fig and citrus. From the road the traveller can see the occasional stands of bamboo, wattle trees which are used for tan bark and charcoal, and castor oil trees. A few bottle brush plants mingle along the roads with the euphorbia, which is used for light posts, and the lantana plants which are a favourite food for goats. Apart from the rice grown on the flat land, the export crops of the region include coffee, tea, sisal, sugar cane and miraa, a green leafy plant which is chewed as a drug. This is exported to Somalia and the Arab countries. Other crops which are grown for consumption or are sold on the local market include maize - the staple diet - yams, beans, sweet potatoes, carrots, cassava and arrowroot.

The houses are generally small, some of them still wattle and daub with thatched roofs. But, like other people in the region, the people of Embu and Meru are gradually replacing these small huts with stone houses. The stone is found in the area and is cut for use by builders and sold for six to seven shillings a foot. Although there is considerable traffic on the road, most of the vehicles are matatus crammed with people moving around the district or travelling to and from Nairobi. There are also carts which are pulled by donkeys or by individual men and used to carry unwieldy loads. The smaller loads are on the backs or heads of women. However, the pickers, who are both men and women, carry their tea leaves to the factory in baskets. The livestock in the area, including donkeys, goats and cattle, are herded, often on the roadside, by young men and boys whose job it is to protect the crops while also finding feed for the animals. In the markets there are plum birds and fresh fish, caught in the Sagana River which eventually links up with the Chania River to become the Tana River.

Kenya, July 3rd, 1993

The new city of Nairobi, consisting of the major business offices and Government departments, is being built away from the central business area of the old colonial city. The high rise buildings start at the corner of Uhuru Avenue and University Way, where the major Christian churches have their buildings, and then extend along the slopes which are bordered by Hailes Selassie Avenue and State House Road. In spite of the appalling state of the footpaths and, in some cases, very narrow roads, here one finds the great office blocks of a modern city. Down the hill, in the old colonial city, where the footpaths are everywhere breaking up, and where narrow lanes are piled high with rubbish, the complex business life of the old city continues, dominated by the Indian population. A large part of the business is clearly directed at the tourist population although the continued survival of the many shops selling semi-precious stones, exotic beads and jewellery, khatene cloth and brightly coloured African clothes must clearly be in doubt. The future of the shops selling western styled clothes to the local population may well be more secure, as indeed might be the future of all those shops selling the household goods of the industrialised world. There are too many cars for the narrow roads, including a number of London taxis, some of them part of a fleet of taxis belonging to one company repeatedly owned by President Moi. There are a multitude of old cars, many of them plying for hire, and a great many mercedes-benz, the characteristic symbol of wealth of Africans, Indians and Somalis.

The process of capital accumulation and class formation is everywhere apparent. The relationship between state power and private business is not yet clearly articulated and the separation of powers between the executive, legislature, and judiciary is still more a fiction than a reality. The evidence of corruption in government circles and the manipulation of the electoral process have combined to create great scepticism about the modern processes of centralized national government. More than this the state seems more coercive than benign because state revenue, if it is assumed that it is used honestly, is accumulated by the process of taxing a generally very poor population so that it is inadequate to meet the needs of a welfare state structure. This means that fees are charged for education, that the few hospitals charge for their services, and that there is no unemployment relief. People who are starving, who have leprosy or who are mad, survive by begging in the streets.

In this society the paradoxes are everywhere. Those Africans who have amassed wealth live in the large houses of their erstwhile colonial rulers and employ servants as the colonizers did before them, often displaying their wealth through the ownership of expensive cars and the education of their children in overseas universities. In this way they secure the future of their children through their superior education, quite apart from their accumulated wealth. But the middle classes also include many well educated and skilled people who earn relatively small salaries in professional occupations.
Those who retain small plots of land and some independence use all kinds of stratagems to survive, including preserving some of the customs of their pre-colonial past at the same time as they try to find a place and some family security in the modern sector. Many of the adult men, for example, leave their shambas for work in Nairobi and live in crowded rooms, eating at one of the many food outlets in the inner city. By removing themselves from their home environment, except for irregular visits, these men reduce the pressure on the limited food supply of the shamba, maintain their wives and children in a safe place, and begin to plan some strategy for the time when resources of the shamba will no longer be enough to support family members. At the same time, the absence of husbands from home reduces the number of children born in the family.

But those who have lost their land, and who have to rely on poorly paid work in a society with an over supply of unskilled labour, live in sprawling and unhygienic "suburbs" where there are no government services and where the meaning of "community" is constantly being re-invented. Here prostitution, abortion and infanticide, as well as high levels of infant mortality, are commonplace. But here, too, are remarkable examples of cooperation and community effort, since the "economy" of each of these settlements has a life of its own even while it is also loosely articulated with the larger economy. Gradually "streets" begin to take shape between dwellings made of a mixture of cardboard, bags, plastic sheets, thatch and timber. Here, people who make beds in the open air out of whatever timber comes to hand buy food from those who cook for a small fee. Those who can be certain of their regular supply of vegetables or corn from their families in the countryside sell some of these products to people who can make a little income by working in the centre of Nairobi. Signs appear indicating the availability of alcohol, sometimes also offering "accommodation". Small markets for second hand clothes appear on the roadsides along the edges of the settlement. Those who know where the cut stone can be obtained begin to take orders from one or two lucky ones who have got a little money saved and who have permission to build. Within a period of two or three years these settlements begin to have an air of permanence about them, testifying to the energy and determination of the inhabitants.

University of Western Australia
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ABOUT BOOKS, RESEARCH MATERIALS AND RESEARCH


The late Philip Ndewga and Reg Green have made distinguished contributions to Africa's public policies and to the debate on economic reform in Africa. In this short monograph, they present a succinct summary of Africa's economic problems and provide a realistic program that African governments might follow to take the first footsteps on the path to recovery.

The first third of the monograph details how many elements of the "nightmare" scenario outlined by the ECA in its Lagos Plan of Action have come close to being realized. Per capita incomes in many countries declined substantially in the 1980s and first half of the 1990s; despite the emphasis of the World Bank on agriculture, many countries experienced a steady decline in food production per capita in the same period; basic physical, market and social infrastructure deteriorated in many countries to the extent that it seriously affected prospects for economic recovery; levels of debt and debt servicing by the late 1980s were unmanageable for many economies; not only have African countries suffered a substantial loss of market share for many of the commodities that they export but they have become increasingly dependent on imports for items that used to be exported; foreign investment flows to the continent have declined; and, with the ending of the Cold War, Africa has become marginalized in the international arena.

Most of these trends are all too familiar to those who have followed African economic decline in the last two decades, and the efforts by African governments and the international financial institutions to shape recovery programs. Nor is the authors' exhortation that African governments themselves should acknowledge the depth of their problems and take responsibility for their solution a novel one. The OAU and the ECA have voiced such sentiments for over a decade now. What is new and particularly useful in this monograph is the menu of practical suggestions that the authors put forward for addressing the continent's economic decline, many of which focus on the necessity of improving government capacity.

Ndewga and Green acknowledge that an emphasis on the depth and breath of Africa's problems can be counterproductive if it suggests that everything is going wrong and that no positive signs can be identified. Despite the overall tale of gloom, some positive developments are present: the authors point to co-operation in SADCC countries that has helped to raise food output and overcome shortages in some countries, to a satisfactory rate of growth in Zimbabwe for most of its period since independence, and to new horticultural exports from several countries in East Africa. In particular, they emphasize how important it is for African countries to "own" the structural adjustment programs they negotiate with the international financial institutions, that is, to develop the domestic expertise to be able to bargain effectively and to ensure that the domestic economy is not subjected to a standard formula that fails to give adequate consideration to local circumstances. African countries need to build the bureaucratic capacity to develop national strategies, so that governments can take the initiative in negotiations rather than as so often happens today, be forced onto the defensive in ad hoc responses to initiatives from outside. While emphasizing the importance of African solutions to African problems, Ndewga and Green argue that the receipt of continued international assistance will be a necessary part of Africa's recovery process - if for no other reason than to offset the imperfections in the global market system that work to Africa's disadvantage.
The establishment of political legitimacy is seen as a necessary pre-requisite for effective economic policies. In particular, Ndegwa and Green emphasize the need for democratization, but in a manner that safeguards the rights of minorities. They call for creative electoral systems to ensure that all parts of a country are represented at the national level, and that ethnic particularisms be overcome. Since many government services are delivered at the local level, they call for decentralized administration - again with the intention of ensuring that minority communities have an effective voice in policy making. Community participation should be encouraged - not just as a means of passing the costs of policies to end users. Affirmative action policies should be pursued to ensure that minority groups are represented in the public service and in education, and gender questions should be incorporated in mainstream discussions. They emphasize the importance of political tolerance and point to South Africa as a model to be emulated. Overcoming corruption is also crucial for the establishment of political legitimacy, they suggest; a starting point must be the payment of adequate salaries to public sector employees.

Political capacity also has to be strengthened at the regional/continental level. Ndegwa and Green are particularly scathing in their assessment of the activities of the ECA and the OAU. The ECA, they argue, has spent most of the last two decades putting forward programs that lack specific proposals in a manner that seems certain to be off-putting to foreign partners. The OAU, they assert, has been "pathetic" in its failure to intervene to defuse Africa's various civil wars.

While acknowledging the necessity of structural adjustment, the authors are critical of the international financial institutions for failing to emphasize the rebuilding of infrastructure, for their underestimation of the volume of external resources required to sustain adjustment, the extent to which adjustment programs have contributed to poverty, and the time period required for a program of sustained economic growth to be implemented.

The authors themselves recognize that, despite the ambition of their agenda, it is selective. They argue, however, that such selectivity is justifiable given the urgency of action in many African states. With this sentiment there can be little disagreement. What remains to be seen is whether African governments and the international community will heed their very sound advice.

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This book was actually released early in 1995, but on reviewing it a year later I am struck by how fast things have changed and are still changing in Zimbabwe's structural adjustment programme. Already the collection has a faintly dated air, most marked in one reprinted contribution (Bratton) and those dealing with specific policies which have subsequently moved on. Like all edited collections, the quality of its individual papers is variable: some are excellent, while others address the major purposes of the collection only to a limited extent, or are defective in their (especially historical) coverage. Overall, though, it is an extremely valuable book which should be on the shelves of every Africanist, whether or not they are Zimbabwean specialists, not only for the published version of Bernard Chidzero's 1990 budget speech which details the policy failures which led to structural adjustment, but for the book's attempt to grapple with policy issues against the provision of hard data.

The editors had three objectives for this collection: 'to analyse the historical development of Zimbabwe's agriculture over the past hundred years; to analyse Zimbabwe's second agricultural revolution post-independence; and to draw conclusions about and distill the lessons of the Zimbabwean revolutions and evaluate them in the Southern African context, with particular relevance to Manhica and the new South Africa'. The third objective is hardly addressed at all, except briefly and to my mind rather unconvincingly in the last paper by the editors, and may well represent an afterthought in marketing strategy. Historians may wish to query the competence of agricultural scientists and economists without a historian's training to address the first objective reasonably comprehensively (and even this social scientist is critical of the multiple omissions of important, local publications of direct historical relevance that have been ignored by many contributors). However, the book represents an important and very welcome trend in its generous acknowledgement of an important sector of Zimbabwe's history that underpins its current economy. It suggests that inter-disciplinary collaboration in the future will be easier than it has been in the recent past; and that at least students of agriculture will have a reasonable understanding of how their discipline has been built locally since 1890.

The second objective is actually the main concern of the editors, who have assembled a wide-ranging and comprehensive set of papers dealing with what they call the five 'prime movers' of agriculture: new technologies based on national and international research; human capital and skills dissemination; biological capital and physical investment; institutional performance; and the long-term economic policy environment. Most contributors have tailored their arguments to these parameters; but arguably the collection would have been strengthened by the inclusion of additional policy and socio-political analyses that would have addressed the reasons for the problems Zimbabwean agriculture - and especially peasant agriculture - has experienced since 1980. I was quite disappointed in the 'policy papers' which stop short after identifying problems and internal contradictions in policy and carefully shy away from any 'speculation' as to cause. But scientists are generally uncomfortable in the political domain; and where a contributor has taken a particular political line (notably Ngoni Makoza on 'Land reform policy and strategy'), the editors have included a contrary view (Michael Rod's 'Critique of Zimbabwe's 1992 Land Act'). The overall impression, then, is one of a balanced expression of views.

The length of this collection effectively precludes consideration of individual contributions, most of which might be best described as 'normal science' stocktaking exercises - useful, detailed descriptions of how things were up to the time of writing, in respect of state research policy (Tawonezvi), extension (Pawakawamba), seed production (Tattersfield and Havanidzi), irrigation (Rukuni and Makusho), rural farming (Chimedza), price policy (Takawarasha), research on various crops (maize: Mashingaidze; cotton: Mariga; tobacco: D and J Cole) and livestock (Ndlovu). The authors include technocrats and independent consultants as well as academics. Some of them must have been directly involved in the politics of distribution within government, defending departmental research budgets and programmes, but (from my perspective, curiously) such interesting details have been eliminated except by allusion from their papers. Yet even the more devoutly objective scientists must by now be aware that they cannot extract themselves from the political process, since contributors consistently remark upon the very close relationship between colonial politics and the country's 'first agricultural revolution' in the first half of this century.
Some papers struck me as particularly interesting as well as useful. One might wish to dispute some details with Rukuni in his overview of ‘The Evolution of Agricultural Policy 1890-1990,’ but it remains a pathbreaking overview. Kay Muir’s review of ‘Agriculture in Zimbabwe’ will be an indispensable teaching resource at all levels. Jansen and Muir’s discussion of ‘trade, exchange-rate policy and agriculture in the 1980s’ is much more technical, but raises critically important issues not just for Zimbabwe’s but also for Africa’s policy makers, as do Jayne and Rukuni on ‘Managing the food economy in the 1980s.’ The highly differentiated nature of Zimbabwe’s ‘second’ or smallholder agricultural revolution is detailed in the papers by Streck and Jayne, Chisvo and Rukuni, but they do not query whether it can be regarded as a ‘revolution’ at all under these circumstances of restriction. I was somewhat dismayed at Muchenzi’s curiously ungendered ‘Social poverty profile of communal areas,’ especially when set against Olivia Muchena’s review of ‘Changing perceptions of women in agriculture’. But now that Muchena herself is Zimbabwe’s deputy minister of agriculture, perhaps women will be seen as an integral, rather than separate, part of the agrarian economy.

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Women Wielding the Hoe, is a timely book, analysing western perceptions of development, from a self-critically western perspective. It will be of interest to students and teachers looking at the role of African women in economic and political development. The experiences of twelve researchers involved in feminist analysis and development in Africa are gathered in this book, providing an excellent overview of the recent history of women in socialist development thinking, and contributing to the ongoing African vs Western feminist debate.

Bryceson’s introductory chapter “African Women Hoe Cultivators: Speculative Origins and Current Enigma,” gives an overview of the history and pre-history of women hoe cultivators. This is not an agricultural extension bulletin, but an analysis of gender roles, influenced by the various changes in African society, politics and culture, ranging from slavery to colonialism, to IMF ‘structural adjustments’. Critiquing Boxerup’s now classic, 1970 study of women in economic development, Bryceson could have said more about Boxerup’s central thesis being still relevant 26 years down the track. And despite all the work done on this topic in the interim, many development and policy making experts are yet to read it or understand the fundamental differences between gender roles and expectations in Africa.

But then Jane Guyer does this in chapter 2, “Sisters of the soil”. Boxerup’s work might seem to be outdated now, because “Africa has changed, theory has changed, we have changed... our colleagues and constituencies have changed” (p.25). Guyer offers a ‘personal exposition’ of her own fieldwork and throws up some challenges to the ‘time frames’ of the way the division of labour has been analysed, focussing on Toruba women’s farming; she also offers a challenge to anthropology and ethnography.

Felicia Ekejuba gets “Down to the Fundamentals: [of] Women Centred Hearth-holds in Rural West Africa”. She begins by making the point that her own experiences of growing up in rural Nigeria contradicted the image of African women in most of the literature and development policies. She explains why with colourful examples. She then extends her dissatisfaction to a critique of using the concept ‘household’ as the central unit of analysis for women’s roles and needs. Instead, in her “search for a more gender sensitive analytical framework”, she finds that “hearth-holds”, or the extension of the mother-child bond, is more important, to enable women to be seen as active, rather than passive. This chapter seriously considers solutions, not just complaints.

Bridget O’Laughlin’s chapter on “The Myth of the African Family in the World of Development”, is suitably critical of modernisation theories and offers comparisons between western and African perspectives of what it means to consider development: especially where development policies are ill-conceived and do not relate to reality. She criticises the perceptions of the myths of the family in Africa, as making ‘simple’ something much more ‘complex’. Economic crisis is not necessarily to blame for “the traditionalism of African rural families”, but rather, “the complex economic and political relations that tie Africa to the rest of the world” (p.87).

Looking at the “Mixed Blessings of Motherhood”, Han Bantje analyses “women’s workload and reproductive areas”. She points out too, that academic theories in no way prepared her for “the daily reality of African society” (p.112). However, she argues that the “household production system” should be the “primary unit of social analysis”; rather than the society or culture, because it is “the basic focus of social reproduction and environment adaptation” (p.112). Pat Caplin looks at the desire for children, through “a difficult pregnancy on Northern Mafia Island, Tanzania”. Caplin “considers the effects of pregnancy not only on the woman herself, but on her kin” (p.151); between mothers, daughters and sisters. She asks, if it is such hard work to have a child - that is not just the pregnancy but maintaining the heavy workload - why do women do it? Caplin divides her results into ten scenes, like a play. With an anthropological edge, she analyses gender politics, household labour, and the responsibilities and burdens of children.

The “role of outside agencies in addressing women’s needs” is considered by Jean Davison and Bryceson. Using a case study from southern Malawi, Davison questions the assumptions made by mostly external aid and development agencies, that African women prefer to, and must work together in order to succeed. Bryceson does some “wishful thinking” to consider the “shortcomings of western donor agency intervention and recommends alternative measures for easing rural women’s workload” (p.201).

The most interesting section in this book is called “Listening to Women: Efforts to Record Female Perspectives”. It was an effort indeed. Else Stjensborg attempts to document women’s views through participatory research in rural Zambia. Using local people as assistants she analyses ‘time use’. Although revealing some interesting data on what people do with their time, there is not much of actual ‘women’s views’ here, except for the women researchers who were being paid for this extra work, on top of their normal workload. Some comments by the villagers are meticulously transcribed and translated at length in the text, but at the end of the day, the person whose views are heard are the author’s. Stjensborg however does not consider the debates about “who’s speaking for whom”. Furthermore, she concludes from her ‘time’ data that women spend more time processing food than producing it. So, if they had some ‘appliances’ (she doesn’t say this), they could have more leisure time (she does say this). However, the question of leisure time reeks of western bias. Is this a measure of ‘modernisation’?

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Madatally Manji, Madatally Manji: Memoirs of a Biscuit Baron, Nairobi: East African

This is an important autobiographical account of the establishment and subsequent operations of the House of Manji, one of the largest industrial enterprises in Kenya, by its principal owner. The importance arises largely from the evidence the memoirs provide regarding the advance of manufacturing in a country which seems likely to be central to the prospects for capitalism in Africa. However the book also allows glimpses into the political and other social dimensions of life for one of East Africa’s most important business figures.

The firm manufactures and sells food products, especially biscuits, sweets, pasta, milk powder and breakfast cereals. The principal location of production facilities is at a central complex of four factories in Nairobi's industrial area. However through a majority equity holding in the Tanzania Food Corporation, the firm also produces biscuits, and other foods in that country. The House of Manji exports to many countries, especially in East and Central Africa, as well as the Middle East.

Born in 1918 at Nyeri, central Kenya of recent migrants from India, Manji describes a childhood and teenage years dominated by his father's existence as a small trader at the frontiers of colonial capitalism. His own early entry into petty trade, while still at one of the numerous schools he attended as the family restless shifted from small town to small town, seemed to have confirmed his position alongside that of thousands of other Kenya Asians. That, is initially be linked to a stratum barred from agricultural land ownership and located in a colony dominated by late imperialism. European settler privilege and the first stirrings of African nationalism. Even his late 1930s move from small town life into Nairobi, was still within the milieu of Asian commerce: Manji left clerical duties in a Nyeri department store, owned by another Ismaili, to open a new branch of the same firm in the colony's capital.

However the move was fortuitous, and definitional for all that followed. Nairobi was poised for one of its most rapid periods of growth. The outbreak of World War II lifted the town and much of the surrounding countryside finally out of the depression doldrums. As the centre of East African military operations, with large numbers of troops, prisoners of war and displaced persons located either in Nairobi or nearby camps, the town became a thriving commercial centre. At first the effect was to encourage an increase in trade, growing shortages of food and light manufactures elsewhere in the world soon stimulated local manufacturing. In March 1941, Manji purchased a Nairobi bakery, with the aid of funds lent by a wealthy and influential Nairobi Ismaili. A series of contracts to supply bread and biscuits to the military underpinned the move from trade into manufacturing.

But the importance of the military conflict did not end in 1945. Tussles with business partners, competition from other bakers, a lack of support from the colonial administration none of these would stop the firm's subsequent expansion from bread and biscuits into sweets and pasta, the latter with the assistance of equipment captured in Abyssinia (Ethiopia) by the British army and operated by Italian POWs. The savings of returning African soldiers, plus changes in diets consequent upon war-time experiences, as well as the growing commercialisation of rural life, especially in areas proximate to Nairobi, provided an ever-growing market for the firm's increased production. A war-induced shortage of vermicelli, particularly important for the local Muslim population's food requirements during Ramadan, yielded yet another opportunity. By the early 1950s, the firm also was exporting to nearby colonies, in some cases undercutting already established local manufacturers and emphasizing Kenya's importance as the manufacturing centre for the region.

While much of the picture Manji draws of post-war Kenya is well known, his account of the late colonial regime's stance is especially instructive, if limited. He emphasizes the lack of assistance provided for local Asian manufacturing, in particular the continuous refusal to impose tariffs upon imports. Manji notes how the absence of support even extended to a refusal to allow the firm to export biscuits, a refusal which was only removed when the House of Manji appointed a British firm as distributor of its products. The regime's stance is explained, of course, by race since the Asian manufacturing expansion was occurring primarily at the expense of small local European firms and the British trading companies which imported European manufactures into Kenya and other colonies.

By comparison, post-colonial Kenyan regimes, whether headed by President Kenyatta or Moi, are given effusive praise for imposing, until the mid-1980s, restrictive tariffs against imports and encouraging local manufacturing. Behind the tariff wall, the House of Manji went into licensing agreements and joint ventures with a series of international firms to expand production of pasta and sweets, as well as enter baby food and cereal markets. At the same time as a dominant position was gained economically the firm became a major exporter, penetrating markets especially in the smaller economies of Africa and the Middle East. Borrowing widely, from UK, South African and Indian financial institutions in addition to local sources, yet keeping a tight family hold upon ownership, the firm has found more strongly placed to withstand the effects of recent trade liberalizations.

Manji's account is especially instructive for several aspects of the recently revitalised Kenya debate, as well as for the growing interest in the advance of domestic capital elsewhere in Africa. Most importantly, in describing the trajectory followed by one Asian family in moving


from trade to manufacturing, Manji places state practices at the centre of his account. For Manji, and against Himbara, it is the post-colonial state, with African politicians at the helm, which was developmental in as much as domestic manufacturing in which Kenya Asians predominated was encouraged and bolstered by state practices.

The account often misses the connection between encouraging domestic manufacturing and the commercialisation of smallholder agriculture as the centrepiece of the late and post-colonial developmental state. Nevertheless it proves a useful counterweight to the new consensus about African rulers as corrupt, plundering patrons who express not forms of class rule but merely personal predilections for acquiring wealth through the politics of the belly.2 Manji's need to portray himself as a moral capitalist, a generous employer, philanthropist and family man, also says much about the current drive to give accumulation a humane face, in Africa and elsewhere.

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In the middle of the third century AD a Carthaginian lawyer of mature years experienced conversion which he described in terms which have become familiar over the intervening centuries:

I myself was held in bonds by the innumerable errors of my previous life... I was disposed to acquiesce in my clinging vices, and because I despised of better things, I used to indulge my sins as if they were actually parts of me... But after that, by the help of the water of new birth... a second birth had restored me to a new man.

Cyprian gave his wealth to the poor, volunteered to assist victims of the plague, and denounced the involvement of bishops and priests in commerce. Despite his patrician background and his pious and principled behaviour, he was elected Bishop of Carthage. For ten years, until his martyrdom, he built the authority of bishops as against confessors, and formulated from a bewildering array of variant ideas the beliefs of Carthaginian Christians. He is known to us largely because he was literate, and that was clearly an element in his organisational ability and perhaps in his canonisation.

This episode from Professor Isichei's treasury (pp35-6) helps to define the Christianity of the Maghrib a century before St Augustine. That faith was gained by personal revelation and conversion, professed mainly by the poor, and beset by infinite schisms. Papal authority was not widely acknowledged, and bishops had to struggle with prophets, puritans and other enthusiasts to build durable institutions. No profound break separated north Africa from the rest of the Mediterranean world, and Christianity (like Judaism and other Levantine faiths) flourished freely through the Maghrib and Egypt into Meroe and Ethiopia.

Seventeen centuries later in Zimbabwe, at the other end of the continent, and in a very different relationship with Europe, Johanne Masowe had a life-threatening experience and emerged a new man, re-born full of evangelical zeal, another John the Baptist preaching among the poor, the young, and the colonised of East and Central Africa. Converts became Apostles, striving to capture the freshness and immediacy of Biblical time and conditions:

When we were in the synagogues [established churches] we used to read about the works of Jesus Christ... cripples were made to walk and the dead were brought to life... evil spirits were driven out... That was what was being done in Jerusalem. We Africans, however, who were being instructed by white people, never did anything like that... We were taught to read the Bible, but we ourselves never did what the people in the Bible used to do.

When Johanne died in 1973, however, his ageing Apostles sprinkled across central Africa were unable to stabilise their congregations or the elements of their creed (pp.255-6). Their personal faiths could not be translated into institutions, and there was no emperor Constantine to demand the codification of orthodoxy, let alone drive out heresies. These fruits of Professor Isichei's life-long immersion in the study of African Christianity are matched by dozens of equally arresting and provocative vignettes. Her research and teaching give particular resonance to her treatments of the early Maghrib and of modern West Africa, but this...
is a comprehensive and continental account, using secondary sources to recreate the full range of Christian experience from Basilides and Valentine to Alice Lembhima and Desmond Tutu. Few scholars could tackle a theme so broad and deep: even fewer could write with such limpid clarity.

There are, of course, dilemmas in encyclopaedic treatments, since the exclusion of every notable individual such as Joseph Booth, or an institution such as Dini ya Msambwa, means half a page less for analysis. By the later chapters, the author tacitly abandoned analysis in favour of inclusiveness. The Prelude offers an eloquent account of the methodological, interpretive and moral issues in such an enterprise: but the substantive chapters are so crowded with personalities and incidents that there is no room to accommodate the Prelude’s concerns.

Edward Gibbon, one of Isicel’s favourite writers, might have found themes with which to consolidate the material into a single thematic treatment; but Isicel wisely avoids both his ambition and his ornate language.

So diverse is the experience of a whole continent over two millennia that even Gibbon might have abandoned hope of synthesis. The effect of the present approach, however, is to leave the reader awed - but strangely dissatisfied. Christianity’s overwhelming appeal remains a mystery. African Christians number perhaps 200 or 300 million: the precise number is incalculable, since there can be no agreement about the defining features of that faith. Professor Isicel’s erudition and industry provide a vast smorgasbord of delicacies. They are periodised roughly into antiquity, early modern times, and the contemporary; but the linkages between one era and another, and between North and South, East and West, remain elusive. Perhaps there are no answers to such implicit questions, since conversion and the Christian experience is so often personal and incommunicable, while scholarship is attuned to understanding corporate rather than individual experience. But there is a limit to this reader’s capacity for even the choicest of morsels. This is an essential work of reference, and a book for infinite and pleasurable browsing, although it does not satisfy the analytical appetite which it arouses.

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Gillian Sted Eileren, Beissie Head: Thunder Behind Her Ears; Her Life & Writing, Cape Town
David Phillip, 1995; London: James Currey, Portsmouth: Heinemann, pp.312 paperback.

Gillian Sted Eileren presents a moving picture of the life and times of a tormented, creative genius, Beissie Head; a life which commenced in a psychiatric hospital where her mother gave birth, out of wedlock and across the colour line. Nobody knows the circumstances of her conception nor the identity of her father. Beissie’s volatile temperament, ranging from depression to euphoria, can be attributed to her mother. To her father must be attributed her dark skin and perhaps her capacity to weave such magical stories.

Beissie was adopted by a white family and was soon handed back because of her dusky tinge. She was then given into the care of the Heathcote’s, a coloured (mixed race) family. Beissie never questioned that Nellie Heathcote was her mother. At the age of 13, without explanation, she was removed from the only home she had ever known and sent to St Monica’s Home. The Heathcote home had been Catholic; St Monica’s was Anglican. So what? It’s all for the good of the child. The unilateral decisions about the life of a child, remind us of how Australia ‘took the children away’. Beissie was refused permission to go home to ‘her mother’ for the school holidays.

“That’s not my mother”, she was told, “Your ‘real mother’ was an insane white woman and your father was an African”. First she had to change religions; then she had to change mothers. Cut adrift from all her moorings, Beissie decided to ‘live with books’. She used St Monica’s to get the best education available to equip her for a life which promised nothing but unpredictability. She read widely, wrote stories, and managed to get a qualification which was inferior to her capacity but all that was available to her. She became an unsuccessful teacher and soon moved into journalism.

The first 27 years of Beissie’s life were lived against the backdrop of the change from colonial paternalism with racial discrimination to the institutionalised racism of apartheid. The coloured community, of which she was a part, chose to keep out of the political turmoil, seeing black nationalism more than white nationalist, hoping to be accepted as part of the white community. Although as a young journalist with Drum and Golden City Post Beissie flirted with black consciousness through the PAC (Pan Africanist Congress), she was always too much of an individualist to be totally committed to any one political (or religious) ideology. It was during this period that she married Harold Head. More as a refugee from a bad marriage than a refugee from the political situation, Beissie left South Africa in 1964 on an exit permit, with her two year old son, Howard, and landed in Bechwaland. She hoped that in a free African country she would find inspiration for her writing.

Life was not easy for Beissie in this huge, semi-arid British protectorate: not black enough, not political enough, a woman emotionally unstable, inadequately trained, she was not on the rapid road to success. Beissie discovered that survival depended upon her writing skills, the only shot in her locker. She turned her imagination and her pen to the people, the culture, the history and the landscape of Botswana for her inspiration. She lived in primitive conditions, writing by candle light in heat and dust and swarms of insects, often hungry. No fridge, no phone. But this inauspicious and sometimes boisterous milieu produced the ‘thunder behind her ears’ that fostered her best work. She made (and lost) many good friends who encouraged her, found publishers for her writings, funded her when she was totally impoverished and stuck to her at her most impossible. Her considerable output of books and articles, spanning 20 years brought her fame (though not fortune) and brought Botswana to the notice of the world. As Beissie’s reputation grew, she was invited to writers’ conferences in many parts of the world and was highly respected by her peers. She conducted a voluminous, lively and often acrimonious correspondence with friends and publishers. Five boxes of letters, carefully filed, record her joys and sorrows, loves and hates. She died in 1986 at the age of 49, never having returned to the land of her birth. Most of her life in Botswana was as a stateless person but she died as a Botswanan, buried on the sandy, arched plain overlooking Serowe, her grave unmarked. “Let there be no markings for a grave, when I’ve passed on”. Beissie had sung with Miriam Makeba as she typed away at her novels with the thunder behind her ears.

Eileren had recorded this tumultuous life with evidence of careful and caring research. The References, Bibliography and Index will encourage scholars to dig deeper into the life of a stormy petrel and the country which inspired her works.

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The final section of *Scrapiron Blues* consists of 'Fuzzy Goos's Stories for Children'. They are certainly not conventional children's stories and met with the disapproval of publishers who were unable to reconcile the child-like voice with the cynical and sarcastic older voice which permeates the pieces. 'Tony and the Rasta' has a shanty town setting and is a searing account of a brutal adult world.

Tony lives with his aunt because his mother and father were killed in the war. She is not really his aunt. She starves him. She beats him. She scolds him. She makes him do all the jobs around the house. It is not really a house. It is made of tins and plastic and mud. They live in a shanty town. It is very close to Harare (p. 213).

In the poems comprising 'Baboons of the Rainbow', Black and White Baboon eat Green Baboon who has attempted to stop them fighting. Green Baboon is eaten with garlic and chillies, and to the accompaniment of Beethoven's music.

"They sat down to eat. The moon was up, big and round. Black Baboon had put on a record on the gramophone. "Ah, Beethoven" sighed White Baboon, licking to the music (p. 232)."

Maracherwa often denied there was any strong historical element in his work. He mistrusted writing which used history as a vehicle for political propaganda. And yet in 'The Concentration Camp', an unfinished novel like prose work, Maracherwa engages his love of the liberation war. In the 'protected villages' or 'keeps' in which parts of the rural population were kept by the Rhodesian army during one stage of the struggle, the inmates, including children, are treated with unrelenting, grotesque acts of brutality which only seem to increase in their randomness and intensity as the position of the Rhodesian army becomes even more untenable. Alternating with scenes in the camp are those in 'The City of Anarchists' where Maracherwa projects his own anarchist inclinations onto a small group of bomb-throwing city fighters. Perhaps, ultimately Maracherwa was an anarchist whose work prime emphasis is given to characters who have dropped out - students and academics, prostitutes and drunks, who have failed in the system and who have little more than contempt for it.

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Vincent Maphai (University of the Western Cape) has edited the papers of a 1992 conference that launched South African branches of the Southern African Political Economy Series (SAFES) and the African Association of Political Scientists. This book, a product of SAFES' Post-Apartheid Project, aims to link “black scholarship inside South Africa and the intellectual culture across the African continent” and aid the revival of black writers still suffering from the grim effects of apartheid.

Leading black political thinkers give convincing arguments about the nature of the transition: Bernard Magubane gives a nuanced historical overview of class, race and franchise; Maphai surveys the politics transition, concluding that political stalemate was the main reason for rapprochement; ANC policy-maker Thozamile Botha discusses federation vs. Confederation; Sam Ntshangase cogently argues that post-apartheid South Africa is faced with narrowed foreign policy options in a world with narrowed political alternatives; Sethuel Seaila analyses employment problems; Blade Nzimande (Education Policy Unit, University of Natal and SAPC theoretician) provides an innovative view of the effects of violence on education.

Less famous authors present no less interesting chapters that are marked for their emphasis on practical solutions. Desiree Lewis (English, UWC), Nontako Gwagwa (Town Planning, University of Natal) and Thandabantu Nhlapo (Law, UCT) discuss gender. Lewis argues that South African women's groups have achieved a self-awareness of women's interests and that such “gender-registering” varies from First World patterns. Gwagwa focuses on gender and urban policy. Nhlapo presents a stimulating analysis of the differences between the emphasis on human dignity in “traditional” African societies and the emphasis on human rights and individuality in Western cultures, and how this is likely to continue to affect women. Eva Letsaloleti stresses that the rate of land reform will depend on government action, whilst Mulipha Mbongwa (Development Bank of Southern Africa), with the aid of numerous tables, argues that a new rural order must be based upon changed land ownership patterns. Job Mokgoro (Public Administration, UWC) proposes a model for restructuring the public service. Olive Shinda (Medical Research Council) presents strategies to aid the health sector.

Some hypotheses proposed at the 1992 conference have been overtaken by events, but other papers have been updated for this edition. Many authors anticipated the compromises reached between the ANC and state, rendering their analyses no less relevant to today's academic, media and political debates which continue to engage with the same basic issues. The book is useful then, not just as an insight into black scholarship, but also as a contribution in its own right to such debates.

Peter Limb
University of Western Australia
Rad Library

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The Water War: A film by Licinio Azevedo recording life in the dry interior of Southern Mozambique.

The war in Mozambique may be over but the struggle continues (or as they say here, “A luta continua!”). Reconstruction and development of the country will be slow given the degree of the destruction wrought by the war and the precarious state of the Mozambican economy. Throughout Mozambique, water resources, hospitals, health, posts, schools and roads are in need of rehabilitation.

The Water War is a real life story of a Matawa community in Chicorro Localita, Inhambane Province, in the south of Mozambique. During the war, most of the population fled the area when the interior part of the locality became a Renamo base. With the end of the war, people have returned to their land despite the fact that the majorities of the boreholes had been destroyed in the conflict. Chicorro Locality does not have permanent surface water and so when the wet season ends and the ponds dry up, the community is dependent on borewater and water stored in underground cement tanks and imboderro (baobab trees that have been hollowed out by specially trained people in the community to make a water tank in the tree without killing it). When the manual borehole pumps break down, tremendous hardship ensues until the pumps are prepared.

The film documents the lives of a small group of people, (men, women and children) within the community and vividly demonstrates the impact that inadequate water resources have on their lives. In this area it is not uncommon for women to have a three day round trip to carry 5 to 25 litres of water from a borehole to their homes. The film also shows the tenacity and ingenuity of the community by revealing the ways they have of tackling the problems they encounter; the construction of an imboderro; the utilisation of water that accumulated from dew; the sourcing of water from local plants; and the functioning of the pump maintenance committees.

Interpersed with the main plot, the documentary also provides rare footage of traditional hunting practices still in use and looks at the negative impact of people from outside the community who come to hunt game in Chicorro with guns (and there are still a lot of guns in Mozambique).

The film was made in 1995 by EBANO Multimedia, a Mozambican film company. It was directed by Licinio Azevedo who also directed “The tree of our forefathers”, a film which records the return of a refugee family from Malawi to Mozambique after the war and which has won international awards in Brazil, Italy and the U.K. The Water War was recorded in the local language, “Xitswa”, and the video carries English subtitles. A Portuguese version is also available. The video runs for 70 minutes.

The Water War would be of interest to students of African Studies, Geography, Environmental Science, Anthropology and Development Studies.

A copy of the video has been sent to the Editor of this newsletter. Further copies of the video (VHS) can be obtained from EBANO and your support would greatly assist a local and professional group of film-makers who continue to do quality work in Mozambique despite the difficulties associated with such undertaking. EBANO's contact details are:
Announcement of H-AFRICA

H-AFRICA is a network of electronic discussion groups and other services for scholars (including students), teachers, librarians, and others interested in the serious study of Africa, and especially the humanistic study of the entire continent. Part of the H-Net (Humanities-on-line) family of electronic networks, H-AFRICA encourages informed consideration of teaching and research about Africa at all levels of interests and complexity.

At the core of these activities is the H-AFRICA discussion forum for those desiring a source of regular and open communication of ideas and information regarding the study of Africa. Discussions are open in any language.

The H-AFRICA discussions forum welcomes research reports and inquiries, bibliographies, syllabi and course materials, listings of new sources, library and archive information, non-commercial announcements of jobs, books, journals, conferences, fellowships and funding options, as well as reports on new software, datasets, CD-ROMS, and other electronic information relevant to the study of Africa.

H-AFRICA also plans to inaugurate other discussion forums which will focus more specifically on African literatures, African arts and African political life.

There is now in place an H-AFRICA web page which organizes and archives information from the discussion forums and includes other information concerning the study of the entire continent. The H-AFRICA web page may be found at:

http://h-net.msu.edu/~africa

The H-AFRICA network (the H-AFRICA discussion forum) is currently edited by Mel Page of East Tennessee State University, Harold Marcus of Michigan State University, and Peter Limb of the University of Western Australia, who may be reached at:

Mel Page         africa@etsuarts.east-tenn-st.edu
Harold Marcus    ethiopia@hs1.hst.msu.edu
Peter Limb       plimb@library.uwa.edu.au

The editors, and their assistants, consult with an editorial board of international scholars broadly representative of the state of the discipline.

Subscription to the H-AFRICA discussion forum is free and open to professional researchers, teachers, and others concerned with serious scholarship about the continent. To subscribe, send an e-mail message to:

liistserv@msu.edu

with no subject and only this text:

sub h-africa yourfirstname yourlastname, your institution

Capitalization does not matter, but spelling, spaces and commas do. When you include your own information, the message will look something like this:

sub h-africa Harold Marcus, Michigan State U.

After sending your subscription request, the computer will send you a brief acknowledgement; please ignore it. The editors will send you a short questionnaire which must be completed and returned to confirm your subscription. The information requested in this questionnaire tells us about your professional interests and will serve as essential information for a directory of H-AFRICA subscribers.

If you have any questions or experience any difficulties in attempting to subscribe, please send a message to:

Africa@etsuarts.east-tenn-st.edu

Peter Limb
University of Western Australia
Reid Library
Research on ANC and SWAPO

Timothy Dauth

I am at present engaged in research for a doctoral thesis on "From liberation movements to ruling parties: the ANC and SWAPO of Namibia in transition" and have recently returned from nine months field work in South Africa and Namibia. The broad intent is to examine on a comparative basis realignments of political discourse in the ANC and SWAPO in the context of the 'triple transition': the transition from liberation movements to electoral parties, in the process of the national transitions to democracy, and in the context of dramatic shifts in global geo-politics.

The thesis takes issue with recent historiography that has either remarked on a rapid 'capitalization' of the socialist oriented ANC and SWAPO to the prevailing liberal-capitalist models, or has demphasized socialist influences on the organisations in the past; stressing that the organisations had always been 'pragmatic'. How real and how thorough has been the perceived 'overnight transformation' of the ANC and SWAPO? And, to what extent does wisdom after the event distort current discussion of past support for (e.g.) Nationalisation and a socialist transition (and the meaning of 'pragmatism')?

Another problem of historiography in this area is that not only the interpretation of source material, but also its quantity and quality can be significantly directed by the researcher. For example, wearing a white shirt and perhaps a suit to an interview one would discover an ANC and SWAPO that were never socialist and are now and always have been 'pragmatic' - supporting liberal democracy and a mixed economy. Wearing an ANC, SWAPO, or better still, a SA Communist Party t-shirt, one would find sources that have been and remain committed to a socialist future - but have unfortunately been forced to take a longer road to get there. Which is the more valid answer?

My intention is to argue that political discourse within the organisations has been and remains more or less dynamic, depending on a variety of organisational questions. The direction this discourse takes depends on where you look for it and on the way you look. In dealing with the question of their political orientation, most recent historiography has concentrated on the official face of government policy. This is an entirely valid approach, but it might also be observed that there is often only a tenuous link between party political discourse and government policy, and that the public profile of the parties will not often reflect debate amongst the ranks. By concentrating on the urban youth, student and union sectors of party membership - and most often wearing an SAPC shirt to interviews - the ANC and SWAPO 'discovered' was naturally different from that found by others looking at the parliamentary leadership or the rural membership for example.

I hope to demonstrate that certain sectors of urban membership and activists in the allied organisations were particularly important to the maintenance of organisational political culture. Exactly how important is another question, and depends on how political debate in both organisations is structured and on relations between party and allies. Comparative study becomes particularly useful in this instance. Some valuable observations, for example, are expected to emerge from discussions of the reasons why left debate is now apparently less vibrant in the case of SWAPO, which had in exile a stronger socialist rhetoric at its core, than in the ANC, which never adopted an explicitly socialist program. In both organisations socialist discourse has been submerged and shifted from the centre of the organisations - i.e., now the parliamentary inner circles - to the extra-parliamentary sectors with which I am more concerned. Understanding precisely what present and future influence this discourse may have over the movements as a whole and over government policy directions can be assisted by exposing aspects of difference in what were otherwise similar transitions.

University of Western Australia
History Department

The Cooperative African Microform Project (CAMP) CAMP is a cooperative based around the US Center for Research Libraries to promote the preservation of publications and archives on and from Africa and to make these materials available in microform to researchers. To this end CAMP acquires expensive microform sets and authorises original filming of unique research materials in North America, Africa and Europe. Materials collected in microform include selected newspapers, journals, government publications, personal and corporate archives, personal papers of scholars, government leaders and journalists, writings in European and African languages. Member libraries of CAMP can access the vast microform collections of data and primary source materials, especially newspapers and journals, and thus avoid the high costs of acquiring, cataloguing and storing. General information can be obtained from CAP's World Wide Web home page (http://wwwwrci.uchicago.edu/camp.html).

The Africa Division of the SOAS Library has now set up a subscription to CAMP for a one-year trial period. All members of the School will be able to utilise the service: staff at the Enquiry Desk, the Africa Divisional Office, and the IT Help Desk in the Library can help in accessing CAMP. For further information please contact Barbara Turfan or Beth Clark at the Library (Tel: 171-323-6104; Fax: (0)171-323-6220; E-mail: mt@soas.ac.uk) (Barbara Turfan).

The Information Bank on Somalia project was launched by the United Nations Development Office for Somalia (UNDOs) as one of several initiatives aimed at collecting and making available as much knowledge and information as possible accumulated on Somalia which may otherwise be lost. The Information Bank on Somalia is essentially a tool for policy-making, i.e. for designing and implementing development projects and programmes. Consisting of a database and processed information, it contains data and information on individuals and organisations which are operating or have operated in Somalia, as well as research, training and 'operational' activities concerning Somalia carried out by international and national actors over the past ten years. For full details on the resources available and on inclusion in the Information Bank please contact UNDOs, Documentation Unit, Nairobi, Kenya (Tel/Fax: +254-2-448123).

The Basler Afrika Bibliographien houses the only Namibia Resource Centre in Europe and the Southern Africa Library in Switzerland. Established in 1971 by Carl Schlettwein as a private research institution, today it forms part of a foundation whose aim is to encourage research on Africa in general and southern Africa in particular. The library's collection of books focuses primarily on southern Africa and publications originating from the region. Its holdings of publications printed in Namibia since the early 1950s are probably the most extensive outside Africa. The archives contain an extensive collection of materials on SWAPO. The Basler Afrika Bibliographien also publish scholarly works in its efforts to promote knowledge and encourage
research on Africa. For further information on collections and publications please contact Basler Afrika Bibliographien, Klosterberg 21, CH-4051 Basel, Switzerland (Tel: +41-61-271-3345; Fax: +41-61-271-3155).

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The Africa Book Centre in London has started a new quarterly that lists with notes books available from the Centre, plus news and a review or two. Book Review includes sections on new books from Africa and new books on Africa; subscriptions cost £12 within the UK, and £18 overseas. To subscribe please contact the Africa Book Centre, 38 King Street, London WC2E 8JF (Tel: (0)171-836 1973; Fax: (0)171-836 1975).

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People.
Dynamics and Status of Universities in Kenya  

Nicholas Twcoli

There was the time when Nairobi University was the only university in Kenya. The 1980s however when the pressure for more universities increased, saw significant expansion and today Kenya has five public (or state) universities (Nairobi, Kenyatta, Egerton, Moi and Jomo Kenyatta) and four fully accredited private universities (Bloomton, Catholic University, Day Star and United States International University for Africa, USIU). There are now (1990) about 36,000 full-time students enrolled in the state and about 6,000 in the private universities.

The upsurge in the number of universities in the 80s was in response to a high demand for education in this country as evidenced by a high enrolment and also by increased numbers of students going to universities abroad. For a long time, Indian universities have been taking quite a large share of Kenyan students, especially from average families, in economic terms. The attraction of Kenyan students to Indian universities can be regarded as two-fold. First was the low cost which was fairly cheap and second was their flexibility in entry requirements. This trend of going to India is however now beginning to be reversed partly because of the fall in the Indian currency, making university education in India quite expensive and partly due to the emergence of more opportunities in local private universities.

State universities are the more established institutions and offer a wide range of courses, from medicine to Bachelor of Arts. Because of their wide options they attract the cream of the candidates from schools. Pressure from politicians especially around 1990 made the enrolment swell to bursting limits, straining mainly the basic resources. For example, in hostels the students saw the introduction of double-decker beds: lecture rooms designed for 200 students were suddenly expected to hold 600 students, a situation which saw some students "kneeling through the windows". Thanks to the World Bank and other agencies whose intervention the situation can be reversed. Using their intervention the World Bank set limits to university enrolment to a total of not more than 10,000 students per year in all state universities. The rationale was simple, overstretch enrolment and sacrifice the quality of your products.

As in most parts of the world, gender inequalities are notable in Kenyan Universities, with Kenyan women conspicuously under-represented. It is estimated that only 30 per cent of university enrolment are women, most of them in poorly rewarding arts-based general degree programmes. Only a small minority get into the science-based and professional courses. Factors against women enrolment in universities have been linked to low achievement at school level, especially in maths and sciences, a high drop-out rate in secondary schools and to some sociocultural factors which discriminate against women. In an attempt to raise the percentage of women enrolment in universities, the government at one time proposed lowering entry points for women, but this caused such a heated debate that it had to be abandoned after only one year. Interestingly enough, most women spoke out strongly against such a gesture equating it to an admission that women were inferior to men in the world of academia.

*Dr Twcoli is Senior Lecturer at Kenyatta University, Kenya. From 1983 to 1986 he was a postgraduate student in the School of Education, Fizzlers University of South Australia, where he completed his PhD.

For a long time, state university education was free, in line with the then government policy to encourage and develop high level manpower the country needed since independence. But as the number of university graduates grew and over stretched job opportunities, this changed. As a form of compromise the state came up with the "cost sharing" policy where state and student were to be partners in funding the running cost of the universities. The university fee is about an equivalent of A$4000 per year per student. Those who can afford are encouraged to pay the whole amount, otherwise the government comes to the aid of these students from poor backgrounds by giving them loans, repayable after university education and preferably when they have found employment. The University Loan Board (ULB) is charged with the responsibility of determining who gets the loan and what percentage. Along with the cost sharing measures, students started paying for their meals directly, a system referred to here as 'pay as you eat' (PAYE). For the students, this meant having money in their pockets all the time. This re-arrangement however has hit many students hard, particularly the poor, who have found university life hard going. In their attempts to counter such effects, and therefore, cope with the changes, some students have turned to survival strategies, for example running small food kiosks in their rooms in hostels. It is interesting to note that similar students behaviour has been reported in Zairean and Zambian Universities, the key objective being 'survival in university life'. Those who cannot cope do drop out, and although the exact drop-out rate has not been computed, it is acknowledged that it is on the increase.

Any changes such as introduction of fees, PAYE etc. in the universities are not accepted by students without a fight. Students' initial reactions are of resistance to changes, followed by consultations with administration and when there is no favourable solution, as it often turns out to be, they start riots, which spill on the streets. Such reactions inevitably attract intervention by police, resulting in a long stand-off. More often than not such situations end up in universities closures, causing a disruption in the university calendar and delaying completion of courses. This explains why for example the basic undergraduate degree takes about six years instead of the scheduled four years and also why state universities have varying dates for academic years. Student riots have been blamed on the lack of democratic systems among the university administration. Students often argue that they are never consulted on decisions that affect their welfare.

University staff are both local and expatriate. Local academic staff would normally have trained locally for the undergraduate courses and gone abroad, especially in the UK, USA, Canada and Australia for the Masters and PhD studies. In the recent past Australia and New Zealand made a substantial contribution in this regard especially in the training of the scientists at PhD level. Most expatriate lecturers have come from the U.K., U.S.A., Uganda and India. Records show that the number is dropping, the root causes being linked with instability of university programmes (due to closures etc.), lack of industrial democratization and limitations to teaching and research facilities.

The introduction of SAPS in the early 1990s precipitated a crisis in the Kenyan Universities. The prices of commodities on the market shot up, making the life of lecturers (and others) unbearable. Lecturers here earn an average equivalent of A$400 per month before tax. Faced with this problem, lecturers responded by demanding greater industrial democratization, seeking collective bargaining with the university or the state. Using union representation approach, they formed a union UASU (University Academic Staff Union) which the government refused to recognize and register. As if this was not enough the union leaders were sacked and arrested. Naturally, despondency set in, morale went down and soon lecturers realized a sense of insecurity in their
jobs. This triggered an exodus of experienced lecturers from Kenyan public Universities to private Universities, to Southern Africa and to other African states. Fortunately, this has not visibly affected the academic programmes but one cannot fail to see the learning effects, for example, the multiple activities lecturers undertake in attempt to survive; the rate of junior lecturers struggling to put together a one hour lecture and the gloom that faces the academic standards which otherwise enjoyed a tradition of international recognition.

Recently there has been quite a protracted debate in the print media on the pros and cons of elected and appointed VCs and in general democratization in universities. I noted that the debate caught the interest of some Kenyans lecturing in Australia. I remember reading an article "why selected VCs are outbid" in a Kenyan newspaper by Dr Sam Makinda, a lecturer at Murdoch University, Australia. The debate is still on but the consideration of many Kenyans is that 'so long as the state continues to be the main financier of university education in Kenya, autonomy is still a far cry'. There is, however, one significant commendation on the VC's selection process, and that is, only experienced and top professors are usually appointed to such positions.

Following the government's decision to reduce its financial support to universities, there has been a call by the government to all state universities to examine ways and means of generating their own funds. In response to this call some institutions have set up material production units, consultancy bureaux and external courses to generate more funds. All these activities are in their formative stages and their impact is yet to be felt. Ideally, it is a welcome scheme which should eventually give some autonomy to institutions.

At present, it can be said that university operations in Kenya are at their lowest ebb, and will need great effort and sacrifice to raise their status to the expectations of most Kenyans. While it may be said that low economic levels and high population growth rates are to blame, some people would point a finger at the management structure. There is, however, some hope in their revival especially by the intervention of the World Bank and other donors who have been making plans to give material and moral support to most institutions in Africa, including Kenya. But from there on, the funding and running of universities in Kenya will have to be determined by Kenyans themselves.

The Archive of the Anti-apartheid Struggle of South Africa

Responding to an invitation from Professor André Odendaal, I undertook a special co-operative project from November-December 1995 in Cape Town as a Visiting Fellow at the Mayibuye Centre for History and Culture (University of the Western Cape). This work involved the archival arrangement, detailed cataloguing and editing of an inventory (published in 1996 by the Centre) of the Personal Papers of Dr Yusuf Mahomed Dadoo (1909-1983). Dadoo was a leader of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and in exile. He led the South African Indian Council, was Chairperson of the South African Communist Party and Vice-Chairperson of the African National Congress' Revolutionary Council.

The Mayibuye Centre is a unique organization. It influences a wealth of creative work on the history and culture of South Africa, encourages outreach projects (including an ambitious new Anti-Apartheid Museum on the Waterfront), hosts a museum, art collection and a living archive of the anti-apartheid struggle. The dynamic book/film publications section is led by Barry Fauber, a talented director and poet who previously worked with International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF). (I viewed his new film on the African painter George Pamla, later shown on South African TV). The Centre has re-released many IDAF publications and also inherited IDAF's vast photographic/film archive of the anti-apartheid struggle.

The hard-working Mayibuye Centre staff led by director André Odendaal and also including Gordon Metz (who in 1974 visited Australia), oral historian Rachi Molapo, (more recently appointed to University of Venda), audio-visual and photo librarians Anthea Josias and Graham Goddard, administrator Felicia Siegelz and organizer Shanaaz Issacs, have contributed to numerous successful exhibitions, conferences, government submissions and important historical documentaries. Due to funding shortfalls caused in part by the discriminatory history of apartheid education, the UWC lacks many library resources taken for granted in Australia. To help remedy such gaps, the Centre has called upon the assistance of a number of overseas specialists, including Dorothy Woodson (US) and Karel Roskam (Holland) who like myself, have contributed to cataloguing its archival treasures.

The archives, situated in the Institute of Historical Research, include the personal papers not only of Dadoo, but of other anti-apartheid leaders such as Ahmed Kathrada, Abie Sachs and Brian Bunting. Also held are: a large collection of official papers from the ANC London and Losaku offices; the records (sporting and political) of Robben Island prisoners; extensive clipping files; and many other valuable collections, not only of the ANC but of other political groups - in short a veritable archive of "the struggle" especially strong for the post-1960 period. The role of this archive in future historical research in South Africa must be stressed. Reading the visitors' book I was impressed to see not only the names of South African leaders but also of Australian postgraduates. It is to be hoped that other Australian researchers, librarians and archivists will be able to co-operate in assisting or making use of the facilities of this vital centre of history and culture.

I was also able to participate in the Conference on "The Beginning of the Armed Struggle in South Africa (The Launch of Umkhonto we Sizwe [MK])" held at the Mayibuye Centre in December 1995. Features included a lively opening address by Ronnie Kasrils, Deputy Minister of Defence, and papers by Vladimir Shubin (Assistant Director of the African Institute, Moscow) and by young black scholars and established academics such as Ian Edwards and Ian Phillips. Discussions aroused considerable interest among participants. Particularly fascinating were
panels comprising such MK veterans as Rusty Bernstein, Ben Turok, Andrew Masondo and Kasrils as they swapped reminiscences and analyses on the formative years and significance of MK. Two new publications of the Centre, Memoirs of a Saboteur by Natoa Bahlenia and Joel Jaffe’s The Rivonia Story were launched. The conference marked another successful venture of the Mayibuye Centre in bringing together political activists and academics to discuss the history of the anti-apartheid and national liberation struggle in South Africa.

I was also fortunate to be able to visit, with the assistance of the Centre, Robben Island and to view areas where Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners were incarcerated. The island’s bleak history bears more than a passing resemblance to that of Rottnest Island in Western Australia - and in a future issue of this Review I shall present a brief historical comparison of the two prison islands.

My visit was successful but I was reminded vividly of the continuing tragedy of the country when the brother of one of the staff of the Centre was murdered in the grim township of Khayelitsha, whose poverty-stricken shacks were only too visible from the window of my aircraft, sitting next to two young, white Afrikaner students jetting from Stellenbosch for a skating holiday in Vienna...

Peter Limb
University of Western Australia
Reid Library

50 Writers Gather in Malawi to Celebrate Malawi’s Democracy

For one week in July, 50 writers and literary critics, publishers and artists will meet in Blantyre, Malawi to celebrate Malawi’s emergence from thirty years of dictatorship to democracy and to promote literacy in a country with a high rate of illiteracy. Writers from Africa, Europe, Asian and the United States will converge on the French Cultural Centre in Blantyre on July 15, 1996 for a week of readings, workshops, seminars and performances. Students, writers and the public in Malawi will be invited to participate and will be given the opportunity to seek advice, engage in conversation, and submit their own writings to writer’s publishers, and critics for guidance and council.

Many of the writers coming to Blantyre will be Malawi Writers, forced into exile during the years of the Banda Regime, with those who stayed and suffered severe repression in order to continue Malawi’s transformation and bring the country out of its cultural and political isolation.

The Malawi Literary Festival 1996 will celebrate free expression and the writer’s role in a democracy society; it will encourage Malawi writers and artists to become actively involved with the emergence of a democratic society.

The Festival is sponsored by the Cuthbert A Chipasula Memorial Library Foundation which seeks to establish the Cuthbert A Chipasula Memorial Library and Literacy Centers with support from the government of Malawi and UNESCO. The Festival will be the kick-off event leading to the establishment of the library.

Festival organizer, Malawi Poet, Editor and Professor in the Black Studies, Department of The University of Nebraska at Omaha, Frank Chipasula is dedicating the Festival to his late brother’s memory, and commemorating his life with the foundation of the Cuthbert A. Chipasula Memorial Library. Frank Chipasula’s aim is to help “empower Malawi writers to reclaim their voices”.

ACFOA’s Recommendations to the Federal Government on Aid to Africa

Poverty is growing rapidly in Africa, whereas in all other regions it is reducing. The poorest 50 countries, mostly in Africa, have seen their incomes decline to the point where they now account for less than 2 per cent of global income. By the year 2000, it is expected that some 40% of the world’s poor will be in Africa. Furthermore, Africa is now in a situation in which debt reduction and increased investment is needed to enable resources to be mobilized for sustainable development. But that investment is not coming from the private sector; nor is much earned through trade; rather, what little is earned goes back out to service debt. So aid is essential to get development going.

Priorities for Assistance to Africa

The Coalition’s Foreign Affairs Policy, A Confident Australia, states that the purpose of Australian foreign aid is:

“To assist developing countries to help meet the basic needs of peoples and to assist in achieving a more secure and equitable international order” (p.29)

The bilateral development assistance to Africa in 1995-96 was $28.5 million - only 4.4% of the bilateral program.

(ACFOAS) Australian Council for Overseas Aid, welcomes this restatement of the purpose of foreign aid, in particular, the shift away from the emphasis on commercial and political objective. However, in order to increase the poverty focus of Australia’s development co-operation program, a greater proportion of the aid budget needs to be directed to regions with the largest concentration of poor people in Africa and South Asia. Globally, aid to Africa is also on the decline, and contributions are shifting to Eastern Europe, the CIS and South East Asia.

The Coalition’s policy states:

“In particular, there are two projects of importance which a Coalition Government will prioritise in our aid program to Africa:

- establishment of a special program to support post-war reconstruction and the transition from authoritarianism to democracy; and
- the establishment of a program for HIV/AIDS prevention and care in East and Southern Africa.” (A Confident Australia, p. 31)

ACFOA makes the following recommendations to the Government:

- that at least 10% of the bilateral aid budget should be directed towards long-term development assistance in Africa and that this level should be phased in over three years. Assuming the same real overall aid budget as in 1995-96, long-term development
assistance to Africa should be increased to $55.2 million, or 6% of the bilateral program in the 1996-97 Budget;

• the establishment of country programs for Ethiopia and Eritrea, to enable both these nations to build on the political stability achieved in recent years, and to continue relationship established and the assistance provided by the Government through Australian NGOs during the years of conflict;

• take a leading role in promoting increased understanding of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and encourage a more committed response by world leaders; and

• to make real increases in the aid program: increase the allocation for basic human needs, in particular, basic education, clean water and sanitation and programs to enhance the status of women and girls.

However, with an announced cut of $120 million from the aid and rumours of up to 25% per cent cuts to foreign aid, Australia’s foreign aid program will drop the OECD average for the first time ever - and this in the International Year for the Eradication for Poverty.

ACFOA’s Activities around Africa

ACFOA continues to lobby the Government on a range of development, human rights and environmental justice issues including the issues identified above.

ACFOA is in the process of collating information received from an annual survey conducted with member agencies which will enable us to provide information on Australian community support for overseas aid, as well as details of the geographic and sectoral spread of activities of our member agencies.

For example, the information from the 1994 survey showed that in contrast to the Australian Government, ACFOA member agencies directed the largest portion of funds, i.e. 43% of the 166.9 million total funds for overseas aid activities to the African region.

The majority of assistance to the African region in 1994 was for emergency relief but there was growing concern at the disproportionate amount of assistance being directed to emergencies at the expense of long term development needs.

ACFOA has also been active in lobbying the Government to ratify the International Convention on Desertiﬁcation and to provide financial support as well as technical assistance where appropriate, for National Action Programs to combat desertiﬁcation.

Rima Das Pradhan
Africa Committee Co-ordinator
Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA)

\* \* \* \* \* \* \*
1. Gabriel García Marquez (Colombian); 2. Tobias Wolff (American); 3. Antonine Maillet (Canadian); 4. Jorge Amado (Brazilian); 5. Toni Morrison (American); 6. Naguib Mahfouz (Egyptian); 7. Umberto Eco (Italian); 8. Mario Vargas Llosa (Peruvian); 9. Erik Orsenna (7); 10. Günter Grass (German).

As no Australian journalists were consulted one can only guess which authors would have been mentioned by someone from this part of the world. Would she/he have returned a narrow-macho-Englo-Eurocentric list? Or would she/he have compiled an interesting combination of literary talents including female and male writers of the five continents? It depends, of course, on who would have been consulted.

Overall, the compilation of names given by the eighteen journalists was as follow:

Colombian Gabriel García Márquez (mentioned by 13 journalists), Czech Milan Kundera (9), Italian Umberto Eco (6), American John Updike (6), English Salman Rushdie (3), Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa (4), Russian Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (4), American Paul Auster (4), Trinidadian V S Naipaul (4), German Günter Grass (4), American Saul Bellow (4) etc... Topping the women nominated was American Toni Morrison (3) and most popular among the African authors was Egyptian Naguib Mahfouz (3).

Jean Marie Volet
The University of Western Australia

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International Symposium to mark Great Benin Centenary Celebration, Benin City

Nigeria

About 100 years ago, British Troops attacked Benin City, Capital of the West African Kingdom of Benin and halted the independence of one of Africa’s most vibrant and dynamic cultures.

The Oba (King) of Benin, Omo n’Oba, Uku Akpolokpolo, EREDIAWU, CFR, with the approval of the Government of Nigeria, has set up a Committee to organise activities to mark the centenary of the events. The Committee’s programme includes an international symposium scheduled to take place in February 1997.

Scholars are hereby invited to send abstracts, not more than 200 words, on any topic relating to Benin, its past, present and future, not later than May 1, 1996, to:

The Secretary
Symposium committee
Great Benin Centenary Organizing Committee
C/- Benin Traditional council
P.M.B. 1025
Benin City, Nigeria

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Macquarie African Circle

The Macquarie African Circle was launched at a successful meeting held last 7 November 1995, attended by over 30 staff and students. The Circle comprises Africans and those interested in African affairs at Macquarie University. Macquarie Vice Chancellor, Professor Di Yerbury, addressed the inaugural meeting and spoke on her recent trip to South Africa. The Circle will be meeting on a monthly basis, and will discuss particular countries, regions and issues relating to Africa. Most recently, this May, this group met with Christine Njrie, a student from Kenya in the Graduate School of the Environment, who gave a very interesting talk about the situation in Kenya today. For more information, contact: Stuart Russell, tel. (02) 850-7861.

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African Seminar Series Launched in Perth

A new, regular forum for the interaction of ideas on Africa and African studies has been launched in Perth. Seminars are informal and inter-disciplinary, and rotate around the various Western Australian university campuses. They are open to all members of the public.

The first meeting, at the University of Western Australia, attracted a lively crowd of 17 and heard a panel (comprising Paul Omaji, Nil Wallace-Bruce, Tim Dauth and David Moody) discuss “The Crisis in Nigeria”, and the murder of the famous writer Ken Saro-Wiwa. A very stimulating discussion ensued.

The second meeting, at Curtin University, heard panelists Joan Wardrop, Tim Dauth, Jabulane Matsebula and Peter Limb discuss Transformations and Lack of Transformation in Southern Africa, which focused on Namibia, Swaziland and South Africa (see the article in this issue by Peter Limb). Discussion was again spirited and ranged over a number of issues, such as corruption, the viability of electronic services to Africans, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.

A third seminar in June will discuss “Sexuality and Gender in Africa”, and another meeting is projected on the politics of Eastern Africa.

Congratulations to Professor Gareth Griffiths for taking the initiative for this successful venture.

For more information contact: Professor Griffiths (UWA) or Dr Joan Wardrop (Curtin University) or Dr David Moody ( Murdoch).
1996 Meeting of The Canadian Association of African Studies (CAAS)

"Africa 1996 Afrique: Crisis and Renaissance et Crise"
1-5 May 1996, Montreal

Jointly organised by McGill University and the Université de Montreal, the Annual Meeting of CAAS was held in Montreal during the first week of May, 1996. The 1996 meeting was concerned with political conflict, within and between countries, its mediation and resolution, the search for new forms of governance through democratization, the growing international influence of South Africa under majority government, the effectiveness of structural adjustment policies and their environmental and social effects, responses to the agrarian crisis and debates over changing forms of property and land tenure, different trends in migration and population across the continent, trends in the spread of HIV and social and economic responses to AIDS, and the humanizing role of African arts, music and literature as expressions of the human spirit and of resistance to crisis.

The program included several plenary sessions on themes which crossed the experiences and interests of diverse participants. Samir Amin presented the keynote address on the African Crisis; other plenary sessions concerned the mediation of regional conflict, the role of the media in development and environmental and health implications of the agrarian crisis.

The meeting opened with the International African film festival, "Vu d'Afrique," a world famous event held each year in Montreal, to present a program of cinematic presentations and debates between scholars and filmmakers. This program especially aimed at the CAAS audience included two film series, on "Images of Subversion: alternative Views on Culture and Politics in Africa" and "The/Visioning Conflict: Media/ing Images of Africa."

The African Studies Association of the United Kingdom (ASAUK) Biennial Conference will take place at the University of Bristol from 9-11 September. The conference has no single theme, but a substantial proportion of the 24 planned panels will focus on the significance, or otherwise, of boundaries (real or imagined, present or past); the papers presented will cover a wide range of disciplines. The full programme and booking forms are available from Professor Richard Hodder-Williams, Department of Politics, University of Bristol, 12 Priory Road, Bristol BS8 1TU (Tel: (0)177-928-7898; Fax: (0)177-928-2133, E-mail: richard.hodder-williams@bris.ac.uk).

A two-day conference entitled The Marginalisation of Africa is to be held at Coventry University from 16-17 December. For further information please contact Mr R May (Tel: (0)1203-838256).

The Institute of Commonwealth Studies announces a two-day conference on Ethnicities and Governmentalities in Sub-Saharan Africa, organised by Professor Christopher Clapham (Lancaster) and Dr Michael Twaddle, to be held at the ICS from 5-6 December. For full details, please contact the Seminar Secretary, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 28 Russell Square, London WC1B 5DS (Tel: (0)171-580 3876; Fax: (0)171-255 2160).

The 1996 Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association will be held from 22-26 November at the Hyatt Hotel in San Francisco, California. The National Panels Chair for the conference is Toyin Falola of the University of Texas at Austin. The conference theme is The Challenges of Renewal in Africa, and invites attention to African realities and to consider how these have been anticipated or how they are to be understood in terms of the theories and assumptions developed in the various disciplines. For further details contact the African Studies Association, Emory University, Cudahy Union Building, Atlanta, GA 30322, USA (Tel: +1-404-329 6410; Fax: +1-404-329 6433; E-mail: africas@emory.edu).

The Open University Post-Colonial Literatures Group invites papers for a conference on South African Theatre and Intervention, to be held from 30-31 August at the Centre for English Studies, Senate House, University of London. The conference aims to explore the idea of intervention and welcomes wide-ranging approaches to a re-evaluation of South African theatre in the post-apartheid era. Papers are anticipated that will: investigate the conditions of representation of theatre as intervention, stage interventions in interpretations of South African theatre, and question the changing role of theatre as an interventionary vehicle. In addition to academic papers three playwrights from South Africa, including the Southern Arts Visiting Writer, Fatima Dike, will participate in a panel discussion and will give readings.

The Forum Against Ethnic Violence, in co-operation with the Centre for African Studies, plan to hold a one-day workshop on Trust and Accountability at SOAS on 19 October. The meeting will focus on problems re-establishing some degree of trust within and between communities driven by ethnic violence in Africa. Speakers will be invited from such disciplines as law, economics, political science, development, philosophy, psychology and urban planning, and from the Churches and other interested professions. Discussion will range over such substantive cases as Rwanda and South Africa as well as general considerations of trust and accountability in relations and institutions. Suggestions or inquiries should be addressed to the organisers (for FAEV): Tim Allen or Murray Last and Michael Rowlands at the Department of Anthropology, University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT (Departmental Secretary: (0)171-387 7050, ext. 2455).
The Centre of African Studies, University of London, will host a conference on Africa's Urban Past, to be held at SOAS from 19-21 June. Over the past decade the urban history of Africa has emerged as an increasingly prominent theme in historical research and writing in all parts of the continent. From the archaeological excavations of urban settlements in West Africa, to the politics of urban growth in South Africa in the mid-twentieth century, the social, economic, cultural and political history of towns and cities has come more sharply into focus. More than 80 speakers will address the conference, covering the wide geographical, chronological and thematic range of the African past, to offer a review of the current state of scholarship on Africa's urban past. The conference organisers are Dr David M Anderson and Professor Richard Rathbone of the History Department at SOAS.

The First Ghana International Book Fair will be held from 6-12 November 1996. For more information contact P C T Quarcoo, Exhibition Director, PO Box 111, Trade Fair Centre, Accra, Ghana.

The 1996 Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF96) will be held from 26 July-3 August in Harare, with the theme of Books for Business. The days of 26-28 July will be set aside for conferences and seminars; exhibitors will set up their stands on 29 June; the days of 30-31 July will be set aside for traders only; the fair will be open to the public from 1-3 August.

Catherine MacDonald, University of WA will present a paper on her recently completed PhD thesis topic, to the tenth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, to be held from June 7th to 9th, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The Berkshire Conference of Women Historians is a group formed to facilitate the exchange of ideas and to foster friendship among women historians in every field of scholarship which first met in 1930. In its current form, it has a conference every two or three years at various women's colleges in the Northeast of the U.S. This meeting in North Carolina is the first to be held outside the Northeast and reflects the desire of 'the Berks' to expand its horizons.

The 1996 conference is entitled Complicating Categories: Women, Gender and Difference. Panels will cover a wide range of subjects and include panels on African topics. There are several Australian participants but Catherine is the only Africanist among them. She will participate in the panel on Women and Colonialism in Africa, chaired by Susan Geiger, University of Minnesota, with a paper on Women-Headed Households: A Rejection of Patriarchy? Tanganyika 1920-1985.

The second paper in the panel will be on Gender Ideology and Portuguese Colonialism in Mozambique: Instruction for the Elevation of the African Women. Kathleen Sheldon, University of California, Los Angeles. Timothy Scammack, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, will comment.

Liz Dimock, La Trobe University, has been awarded her doctorate for her dissertation on Women and the Church Missionary Society in Uganda 1885-1933: Gender Relations in an Imperial Setting.

Parliamentary Enquiry into Australia's Political, Security and Trade Interests with Southern Africa.

At the time this Review and Newsletter went to the printer it was not yet known whether the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade would seek to resume this enquiry into Australia's relations with Southern Africa. Anyone interested in the status of the inquiry should contact Ms Joanne Towner, tel: 06-277-4629.