

Note from the Editor

It is particularly appropriate that as post-apartheid South Africa celebrates its tenth anniversary of freedom *ARAS* should also mark the occasion. Raymond Suttner, Paul Nursey-Bray, Joan Wardrop, Eric Louw, Elizabeth Reid and H.E. Mr Anthony Mongalo focus our attention in very different ways on the New South Africa at the end of this first critical decade; while Yvette Pritchard and Lynette Simons' note on the April celebrations of former Sydney anti-apartheid activists will remind readers of the Australian contribution to the long struggle against apartheid. Together their articles, notes and reviews provide an overview of South Africa's achievements through the last ten years. They offer welcome insights into the nature of political change in South Africa over the past decade; and into the tensions between issues and loyalty that Suttner, Nursey-Bray, and Wardrop would suggest are a mark of an increasingly sophisticated electorate.

2004 also marks a tenth anniversary of a very different kind: that of the Rwanda genocide that the world still hopes will never happen again; a hope questioned increasingly as this issue goes to press in the face of the contemporary tragedy in Darfur, Western Sudan. Perhaps the most appropriate way to mark this second anniversary is to acknowledge more clearly the complexity of the underlying conflict. While readers will be aware of the large and important literature available on Rwanda I would like to remind them of Saskia van Hoyweghan's article in an earlier issue of *ARAS* (Vol XXIII No 2, December 2001). Her more recent doctoral study of Rwandese refugees in Tanzania reported on p. 107 (for which she has recently been awarded her degree by Leeds University, and for which we congratulate her) should remind us that the impact of that genocide flowed over Rwanda's borders and continues still to affect the Central Lakes region. Rwanda and Darfur might therefore give us further thought of the need to situate national histories in their regional contexts; an issue raised by Irma Taddia's guest essay on Ethiopian studies (pp.18-25) in this issue. William Tordoff's discussion (pp. 99-102) of the second Asante-British war a hundred years ago moreover should remind us of the historical relationship between war and state-making in Africa. David Dorward's review of Ruth Watson's recent book on the transformation of Ibadan over a hundred years 'from war camp into a modern African city' also reminds us of the enormous capacity of African society to 'reinvent and transform itself' and in the case of the 'drama of African agency and manipulation' through the colonial years of change. And last but not least the 'broad social and structural forces' that structure the behaviour of African

communities involved in HIV prevention programmes and which Elizabeth Reid discusses in her review of Catherine Campbell's new book (p. 88) are equally important at all levels of power and social change.

Two very welcome contributions on African culture in this issue are Graeme Counsel's paper on popular music in Guinea and Martin Mhando's discussion of African film. Edwin Odhiambo-Abuya's study of the role of interpreters in the determination of refugee status in Kenya has a significance that will not I think be lost on Australian readers. What is particularly important however for a journal like *ARAS* that encourages contributions across the whole range of African studies and across disciplines, (and for myself as [outgoing] editor) is an overlap of themes that provides coherence to the inter-disciplinary whole; and which also highlights the complexity of Africa's contemporary crises and raises questions that resonate across Africa. If as Helen Ware argues the problem is one of unrealistic expectations (as she sees them) as to what poverty-stricken African states can be expected to achieve in the short-term then perhaps we should heed her challenge (p. 43) to debate the reasons why.

Finally I must once again thank all the contributors, who, especially over the past three years, have supported the 'new look' *ARAS* and hope that you will all, along with many new contributors, continue to do so. There is still a good deal of work to be done to ensure that *ARAS* succeeds. I would also once again thank Curtin University for its support; and Karen Miller not only for her professional skills but for the pleasure of working with her.

On a more mundane but very important point, the AFSAAP Treasurer asks me to remind readers that AFSAAP membership subscriptions (which ensure that you receive the journal) for the calendar year 2004 fell due last January! So please if you have not yet done so renew your membership subscription now!

Cherry Gertzel