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Mission Statement

The Australasian Review of African Studies aims to contribute to a better understanding of Africa in Australasia and the western Pacific. It publishes both scholarly and generalist articles that provide authoritative, informed, critical material on Africa and African affairs that is interesting and readable and available to as broad an audience as possible, both academic and non-academic.

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

AFSAAP 2004

African Renewal, African Renaissance: New Perspectives on Africa's Past and Africa's Present

**Friday 26th to Sunday 28th November 2004
University of Western Australia, Perth WA, Australia**

This is the second call for papers and participation in the 27th Annual and International Conference of the African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific (AFSAAP) to be held at the University of Western Australia (UWA), Perth, Australia from 26th-28th November 2004. The conference convenor is Dr Jeremy Martens.

There will be a **Postgraduate Workshop** on the **25th of November**, and we encourage delegates to attend this workshop and offer their support to postgraduates studying Africa.

The aim of the conference is to facilitate discussion on a wide range of subjects relating to the study of Africa and the organizers invite proposals for papers on any aspect of Africa, as well as on comparative approaches. While the overall conference theme is broad, there is ample room for specialized contributions and papers reflecting the different disciplines and wide-ranging interests of academics, professionals, and postgraduates, as well as the wider diplomatic, government, aid/NGO, media, cultural, labour/business, and African communities in Australia and from overseas.

It is anticipated that some of the major subjects to be discussed will include:

- 'State of the Nations': Appraisals of the African Renaissance
- The Rainbow Nation ten years on: critical perspectives on the New South Africa
- 'Failed States, Rogue States and Dangerous States?': the state and conflict in Africa
- Sexual violence in Africa, past and present
- Africa's War on Terror: new realities in the post 9-11 world
- Disease, Health and Medicine in Africa: social, political and economic perspectives

However, it needs to be stressed that papers on any aspect of Africa are also welcome.

Conference Website: <http://sponsored.uwa.edu.au/afsaap2004>

Conference email address: jmartens@arts.uwa.edu.au

Submission of Abstracts: Please submit abstracts for the conference by 15 June 2004, but late entries will be entertained. Abstracts should be 600 words in length and should be emailed to jmartens@arts.uwa.edu.au

A Conversation with Raymond Suttner: Reflecting on a Decade of Freedom in South Africa

(Editor. Raymond Suttner is a well-known South African activist, was a long term prisoner under the apartheid South African state, and is the author of *Inside Apartheid's Prison*. He was a member of the first post-apartheid parliament from 1994-1997 and South African Ambassador to Sweden from 1997 to 2001. Currently he is Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Policy Studies in Johannesburg and Series Editor, 'Hidden Histories', at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities in the University of South Africa, Pretoria. On a brief visit to Perth, WA, in April, he was guest speaker at the Celebration of ten years of democracy and freedom in South Africa organised by the Perth South African Freedom Day Committee. He also spoke to a meeting of ASCWA and before that lecture he talked to me about the significance, as he sees them, of the changes that have been taking place in the course of the new South Africa's first ten years of democracy and freedom, starting with the 2004 elections which had taken place the previous week.)

RS. What is significant about the 2004 elections is first that ten years is an important milestone, in the sense that it shows the consolidation of democracy in South Africa. I am aware there is a body of thinking, primarily amongst some United States political scientists, which argues that democracy is not consolidated, since there is no possibility of a change of government in the foreseeable future. Now one thing that was clear in this election is that the ANC is there to stay for a long time because it received seventy percent of the vote and the opposition parties were very weak. Personally I think this obsession of some scholars with a 'circulation of elites' is dogmatic. It erects one single criterion for establishing whether democracy is stable, sustainable and consolidated or not and ignores that in South Africa one of the achievements of the last ten years has been that, apart from elections, you now have in place a number of other constitutional mechanisms which buttress democracy. You have a constitutional court, which sometimes has made decisions against the Government. And government has respected these. You have a body of legislation, which flows from the Bill of Rights and Constitution, which is one of the most progressive constitutions in the world.

It is gradually I think expanding the boundaries of our democracy, in particular having very gender sensitive legislation in regard to women's emancipation, freedom of choice in regard to abortion, things like that, but also freedom of sexual orientation. There is no discrimination allowed on the basis of being gay or not gay; and if you have a gay partner they are now entitled to the same pension benefits as in an ordinary marriage.

Second, there is another body of thinking about the elections that sees them as a 'racial census': one in which Africans vote for the ANC and whites vote for other organizations or parties. And that also is not true, because Inkatha, which won about seven percent of the vote, has a support base which is entirely African. The ANC support base is not entirely African. So it is quite a racist argument in fact, that people vote just by the colour of their skin.

I think the South African electorate is sophisticated, in the sense that it recognizes the character of the organization which brought democracy to South Africa. As in the rest of the continent, whatever happened afterwards, it was the liberation movement that brought democracy for the first time. The truth of the matter is that by getting rid of colonialism, or apartheid, the main agents for democratization in the continent were the liberation movements. People recognized that in South Africa in the case of the ANC. They also recognized that ninety-nine percent of the opposition parties were in one or another way associated with apartheid, or resisting democratization. And no opposition party is going to displace the ANC until one emerges which is associated with building the new South Africa and social transformation.

CJG. And you might add that there has been some considerable policy debate, and the emergence of new social movements critical of government's approach to transformation, all of which debate is an essential element of a democratic system. With this in mind would you like to say something about how the ANC has tackled the problems and priorities of transformation?

RS. Yes, but first of all I must say that it is very important how we address these questions, and the difficulty that I have with a lot of South Africa's critics is that they are not asking themselves what are the actual problems that are being confronted; and their failure to recognize the importance of democracy and of the agency of the state in transformation, in their pitting of socialism against representative democracy. So let me answer the question in those terms. And I think we need to start with what actually happened in 1994, and what did we undertake. That tells us against what criteria we can measure what has and has not been achieved. The starting point is to recognize, as I

was saying, that one of the reasons why people support the Liberation Movement, despite all the dangers that may have subsequently evolved, is that to gain the vote was an historically crucial event in South Africa. This meant electing a Government with a record of struggle and with a commitment to transformation.

Now when you look at transformation you can have an 'all or nothing' approach or you can ask what the South African Government inherited, and what did it undertake to do, and what have they done since then? Unevenly, sometimes unsustainably, sometimes imperfectly, but if you look at the way in which the budget has been used since 1994 a very large number of the people who never before had electricity now have electricity, water, housing and health care.

It is true that when people can't pay some of the arrears or they don't pay they have cut off water or electricity (in urban areas). But there is a basic amount that is provided free of charge. In rural areas, which tend to be neglected by scholars whose site of activity is the internet, people don't have meters, they have a water tap in the street. Now some of what are called new social movements have a valid concern with the failure to provide adequate basic services, and I think it is completely legitimate that people organize on that basis; to make it universal and to meet everyone's basic needs. And insofar as the Government has not related to them in a constructive way there is a problem. But this does not detract from the fact that if you go to the rural areas of South Africa and to some of these villages where in the past the electric wires would go from one white town over the townships, over the villages right through to the next white town, now it is very different. My parents-in-law used to go an hour's distance to Queenstown when they wanted to phone us; they had to drive their car there. Now they have a telephone in the house, they also have a water tap, not in the house but in the street. Now this has gender implications; it also has health implications. Gender implications because it was women who used to have to fetch the water from the river, health implications obviously because people can live more hygienically.

And there are implications for local government. People in the villages and especially women have been empowered. If you go to these villages you will hear people talking about things that were never part of their vocabulary before.

Again, there are irrigation schemes that were established during the Bantustan period which are now being used for the benefit of a much wider range of people. This does not detract from what the people are saying, that land distribution has been too slow, and that some of the schemes in the pipeline seem to concentrate on creating a black middle class, but I think that we have to look at what is viable, at what conditions make farming viable, what should have been done to assist small farming concerns. I think it is a complicated issue and I am not in complete agreement with what is being done.

When talking about new social movements we need to disaggregate them, in terms of the extent of their support base, but also how they relate to representative democracy. Some seem not to recognize the agency of the state in transformation, nor to acknowledge the importance of representative democracy. One leader of such a group has been quoted, saying 'we don't want the f-----g vote'. This is what I mean by an all or nothing position, because the unstated script is that we need socialism now.

Others have adopted a different approach, using constitutional mechanisms to achieve their goals. They recognize that important constitutional gains were made in 1994 but have some differences with government, especially over treatment of HIV/Aids. But in this case instead of seeing civil disobedience as a first resort or insurrection type approaches they actually use the constitution and they have got decisions against the Government. Having achieved a constitutional state it is important that we defend this gain.

CJG. Would you like to expand on that?

RS. Well, I think you have a situation where rightlessness has been replaced by rights. People have these small copies of the constitution. It is a little book about half the size of your *Review of African Studies*, it has about a hundred and something pages, and in the rural areas you will see, next to the Bible, a copy of the constitution in whichever language is spoken in that area. Now very often a local authority might do something and someone who does not actually read will come and say 'You cannot do this' and you will have the constitution brought out, and someone will then read or explain what it says.

As you know, a lot of people in Africa cannot read. A lot of priests can't read, but they preach. The constitution is now read in the same way as in the past they preached the gospel. Constitutional rights are now fairly widely known. Perhaps not known in a technical sense but people do rely on it and are empowered. We see the constitution as a nation-building document. Not only

in the way we have been discussing this afternoon, a document to which you can appeal when you are dissatisfied, but because what we are concerned about is to develop an awareness of constitutional principles in the manner that people own it as a crucial element of a society where racism is banished forever.

People also need to know what was entailed in transforming the law and that it was a lot of hard work. We entered Parliament in 1994 with a body of legislation in place; the ANC had first to remove that body of legislation, develop their own policies and translate them into legislation. Now you will know from the experience of other African states that a lot of problems set in at that point. Because a liberation movement, let's say in its purest form, having to drive a process of liberation and transformation, does not always have the specialists who can transform policy into legislation. Someone once said the question was whether the revolution would transform the state before the state transformed the revolution. Because when you come from an insurrectionary background like that of the ANC what preparation did we have for dealing with inherited parliamentary institutions, which were not suited to our purposes but which nevertheless had modalities which had to be observed in various ways? What experience did we have to deal with a civil service? To transform it but to ensure that it still operates according to professional norms? What capacity did we have to transform those professional norms into *democratic* professional norms? And to what extent has this been done? Now this affects a whole lot of things. For example, you have an intelligence service, police service, military service who are trained to perform acts of subversion against the majority of the population coming together with the liberation movement, which has been trained to overthrow the previous state. How do you bring them together? How do you build in them a new culture whereby all of these services are respected by the population? So it has been a very slow and difficult process.

CJG. So to pick up on just one institution in which you have been involved, what kind of changes have been made to parliament as an institution?

RS. Yes, I was, as you know in the first parliament for three years. We immediately set about transforming it; in my view not adequately but we transformed the committee system. Committees in Parliament used to be unimportant, they used to meet behind closed doors and they used to be rubber stamps. Today all committees meet in public unless there is some special reason why they should be in private and this is usually in terms of some national security issue related to intelligence. I think the intelligence

committee meets in private. But what happens then is that when legislation is pending the public is invited to make representations and they do. However some sections of the public are better equipped than others to do it. Business for example is very well equipped to make representations. But the Congress of South African Trade Unions, COSATU, is also very effective, they have a parliamentary office and if you go to their web site www.cosatu.org.za you will see that over the years they have made a body of representations that amounts to an alternative development strategy and a critique of the current macro-economic policies of the government. Now whether they have been effective or not in terms of changing things is debateable. Sometimes the Government listens and sometimes it does not listen. Nevertheless COSATU have used the parliamentary system as a forum and this is important.

As for Parliament itself and the way it operates, personally I am not convinced that it's been effective. Let me say that it operates in a very similar way to the Australian or British Parliament, and that does not make me happy. I feel that is a stylized debate. You follow a list of speakers in a particular order and it is hard to engage in real issues as they arise. Then when a Minister comes with legislation, and you have a party caucus, the main thing is that, whether or not the parliamentarians develop expertise, the member of the caucus has to abide by the caucus decision. That is still the case and I think that even if a parliamentary committee develops special expertise, it would be very hard to have it win the day against a decision of the government or organization. It's not going to happen.

Parliament is still in terms of its products very, very important. Look at the character of the legislation that it has produced and how it has changed things. You can go through social welfare, law, water, health care and other areas of social development and you will see a whole lot of changes that have been put in place, Nonetheless. I think parliament gets a very undeservedly bad public image. The television cameras focus on personalities and people sleeping. Personally I still feel the need for it to be reformed more if it is to overcome this bad publicity. For example on the question of a quorum, in the Greek Parliament you don't need quorums. In my view we should downplay the importance of the formal sittings because the formal sittings are not really constructive debates. I don't think everyone in parliament agrees with me however.

We have another problem beyond that. You may put legislation in place but do you have the capacity to implement it? I have no doubt that we have a capacity problem in some areas; and not just in government but outside areas

also; managerial capacity. In areas like that I would suggest that it is important for Australia to offer short courses. Our people don't think it is such an honour to come to Australia that they will come for two years or more, so if you could have six week courses where someone could learn, let's say, practices of governance – management and accounting. There are a lot of cases where people are accused of fraud where technically it is fraud because the money was used for a purpose that was not permissible but the person did not actually know what this meant. Nor was the person actually enriched. So it is a case of improper use of funds due to ignorance or something like that. These are the sorts of things that can happen but would be averted with more training than we are able to provide.

The question has other ramifications. When you inherit a situation like 1994 where the profile of a country was white, if you went to embassies in 1994 the leadership was white; this was the case with the leadership in the civil service in general. When you change the profile you have to be very careful not to set people up for failure. We have to find ways of ensuring appropriate training for whatever the job may be and while that is not simply a question of whites transferring skills there is a skills gap. If it is not dealt with then some people will be set up for failure if they have not been properly trained in what is required. For example, because the 'Bantu education' system was an inferior system new operatives may have difficulty in writing well. So if you are in foreign affairs, the police services, the intelligence services the people who might be best able to write reports are existing bureaucrats. But theirs are not the reports you may really want. You want a report from the new operatives. It is a problem in general that has to be addressed, reporting skills, analytical skills. I agree completely with affirmative action in South Africa but we have to find ways of developing appropriate training for whatever the job may be.

CJG. Could I take you back finally to last week's elections, which were it seems a good deal more peaceful than in the past? How would you sum up the key elements of the political environment as this first decade comes to an end?

RS. It's very important to remember that in 1994 the elections took place amidst widespread violence. There were bombs going off in the centre of Johannesburg at the time of the elections. The white right wing was a problem and there was random violence on the trains in Johannesburg, people getting into a train carriage and shooting people. In KwaZulu Natal there was a virtual war, there were more killings in that period I think than in the 1980s. What is important about the present is first that the right wing has been marginalized. The capacity for violence may still be there in the sense that white miners

have been working with dynamite for a long time and they have probably stored a lot of industrial explosives so they do have the capacity if they are motivated to cause harm, so they have to be watched. Secondly as regards Inkatha what is interesting is that although Inkatha was thought to be a dangerous factor and they have just been defeated in the recent elections, we do not fear a serious outbreak of violence. Up until this election the ANC was in an alliance in KwaZuluNatal with Inkatha and I think one of the reasons given by the ANC for this was to secure peace in those parts. I think the ANC provincial ministers all performed well and the Inkatha ones did not. So they lost the elections but Inkatha now feared, unlike in an earlier period, that they would not have the support of the population if they tried to engage in violence. So peace has been managed.

However there is still a very high crime rate in the country and there is quite a high level of violence in South Africa. Historically the way in which disputes were resolved under apartheid was through violence. People have learnt that the way to deal with a problem is by the application of force one way or the other and I think this has been a practice which inserted itself into the consciousness not only of people who are apartheid supporters but also the population in general. There is a high sense of aggression, road rage and all these sorts of things, so there is a fair amount of danger in South Africa. But what is encouraging is that steps are being taken to combat this. For example in the centre of Johannesburg and the centre of a number of cities they now have video cameras so if someone tries to highjack a car immediately it is captured on video and the police are radioed and they apprehend the person/s. There is also a much larger police presence. Something like ninety percent if not more of the crimes committed in the city centre have been successfully stopped for about two to three years now. Business has been involved in financing this clean up of the inner city which, given the movement of people out of the centre of Johannesburg, has all sorts of implications for the future.

So the crime thing is very important. But in terms of the political environment I want to return in what time remains to something you said in the beginning about the question of policy debate. I think it is very important that we know what South Africa has in common with the rest of Africa and what is unique about South Africa. One of the things that I think is important in this respect is that we have what I call a 'national liberation model' which you find throughout the continent whereby a liberation movement becomes Government and depicts itself as representing the people as a whole; so the 'CPP is Ghana and Ghana is the CPP'; 'One Zambia, One Nation'; and so on. 'ANC is the nation'.

Now in the face of colonialism that was a unifying slogan. But it is also a slogan that is hostile to pluralism and we have to unpack what it means. In the context of South Africa, I think multi-partyism is really important, although I don't agree that this must mean a change of power very soon; not until there is an organic process developing a democratic opposition, if that needs to happen. But the ANC like the other liberation movements comes from a tradition which is hostile to pluralism, and one consequence I think is that the ANC has not handled these so called new social movements in a constructive way. I think the ANC in the past has viewed it as a hostile act to create a movement that is outside their sway. So ANC is a new convert to pluralism. ANC has to recognize that first of all the consolidation of democracy in South Africa and the representation of the people of South Africa is not the job of the ANC alone; and that no liberation movement can be sufficiently wide to incorporate all interests for every person in the country. That is why the existence of the Democratic Alliance, however abhorrent to some people, is important for the consolidation of democracy. Equally, the right of people to organize in whatever form they like, within or outside ANC aegis, hostile or not hostile to ANC, is their right and must be encouraged as part of democracy.

Furthermore ANC is a different organization from most liberation movements on the continent because it still has a mass base. It came from a mass base and it still has a mass base, which is found in a number of different spheres, and bringing all those spheres together has been very complicated. One of the questions that has not been properly understood is what happened when the ANC became Government? What is the relationship between Government and the organization? And this is again something you will find in Africa, that there is a tendency for the organization not to drive the process but the process to be driven first by the cabinet then by the president and what this means in our case is new questions about who is important to the government? The government now represents the nation as a whole. Is the ANC as government constituted as it was before? Or what weight does it give to different constituencies from before? If we say the apartheid ruling bloc was the white capitalist class, white workers and other collaborationist groupings, how is a new ruling bloc being created? What processes are in motion, what weight is being given to the working class, what weight to the emerging African bourgeoisie?

Secondly the ANC is an alliance, has been an alliance for a long time with the SACP and COSATU. Now if ANC as an organization is being weakened, who

are the traditional allies relating to? Are they relating to ANC as an organization or the ANC as government? Now if they are relating to ANC as government are they relating as equals? What is interesting is yesterday's enemies have become today's allies in some respects. Yesterday's allies are not enemies but are sometimes in antagonistic relationships, for example ANC issued a circular to branches attacking COSATU and SACP, accusing them of ultra leftism in 2002. What is interesting about all this is the discourse is a Marxist discourse on both sides and the conservative macro-economic policies are defended by quoting Lenin against the allies! So the political environment is a complex one, and it is I believe important to recognize that fact.

Some Reflections on Ethiopian Studies Today

Irma Taddia*

Introduction

There has been an increasing scholarly commitment to Ethiopian studies through recent decades in Europe, the United States, Africa and Asia, reflected in the great bulk of Ethiopian research on social issues that appears in the papers given at international conferences: Kyoto in 1997, the Addis Ababa conference in 2000, and the most recent meeting, the XV International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, in Hamburg in July 2003. These conferences have been a major achievement as this consolidated area of research has in this way reached a wider audience in many countries of the world. Many scholars were present most recently in Hamburg, an impressive organisation was set up, scholars offered new themes of discussion, a great debate on ongoing research and new suggestions for the future. The occasion was a good opportunity to acknowledge what is now the world wide recognized Ethiopian historiography; a very particular area of African research, very well established and with its own rules and methodologies. We deserve to make such a tribute to the many scholars in the field of modern Ethiopian studies, the area of study in which I have been involved for many years. Besides this it should not be overlooked that Ethiopia is an African country with its own well-developed historiography on a national basis. Ethiopian national conferences in the field of humanities deserve our attention as well as the international conferences. National conferences are well structured, and the History Department at Addis Ababa University has consolidated its research over the years in cooperation with the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, an important and recognized institution. So there is no doubt that Ethiopian studies are now a very well established and solid discipline in contemporary historiography, in a national and international context.

* Irma Taddia is Professor in Modern Africa History at the University of Bologna, Italy. This article is a revised, shorter version of her paper given at the 2003 Hamburg conference referred to below. She has written and travelled extensively in the Horn of Africa mainly conducting research on Colonial Eritrea. Her main publications are: *L'Eritrea colonia Paesaggi strutture uomini del colonialismo 1890-1952*, Milano, Fangeli, 1986; *La memoria dell'Impero*. Autobiografie d'Africa orientale, Bari Lacaita editore 1988; *Autobiografie africane: Il colonialismo nelle memorie orali*, Milano, Fangeli, 1996. She edited a number of documents dealing with Amharic/Tigrinian sources in three volumes published by L'Harmattan Italia (1997, 2000, 2004). She has organized several international conferences including 'The Horn of Africa between History, Law and Politics' (*Proceedings* to be published in a special number of *Northeast African Studies*, Michigan State University, forthcoming, in collaboration with F. Guazzini, Tekeste Negash, M. Papa).

While history is one component only of this area of studies it is with Ethiopian history that I am concerned here. Discussing the development of Ethiopian history has been recently a real historiographical exercise. The discipline defines Ethiopian historiography as a separate field of research within the domain of African history, and it is the implications - in both positive and negative sense - of this approach that I want to consider here. We have also to consider the recent separation of Eritrean studies as an independent branch. I tend to develop a critical discourse on these two different domains and Eritrean studies are included in my perspective given the impossibility from an historical point of view of separating the two regions.¹ At the same time Ethiopian studies is in many respects a completely separate field of research in the African panorama. The discipline has developed its own themes and has peculiarities that seem difficult to extend into other areas. Technicians in Ethiopian studies require a high level of competence and knowledge; the knowledge of written languages especially being a prerequisite. On the one hand this might be seen as an advantage, on the other this might highlight a gap in Ethiopian studies. With this in mind I would like to organize some reflections around three main themes of discussion: the need to relocate Ethiopian history in a regional context; oral history as a critical issue; and the question of a new political history.

The need to relocate Ethiopian history in a regional context

First, I would like to stress the importance of investigating wider regional areas sharing common historical and political backgrounds that cannot be limited to colonial history. I believe that Ethiopian studies need to work alongside other different and not homogeneous African historiographies. This field must be opened to other relevant areas of research in tropical Africa in order to find a common ground and a common interest. Ethiopia shares many issues and historical events with other African countries. For example Donald Crummey's perspective in the recent volume *Land, Literacy and the State in Sudanic Africa*², which is a result of a conference held in Urbana Champaign in 1993 that opened a new field of research based on a genuine interdisciplinary approach, considered a wide geographical/historical area. This view analyses modern African history from a broader perspective, taking into consideration not the contemporary African states but a complex and integrated area like Sudanic Africa. We should not consider the present state boundaries in the Africa continent, basically inherited from the west, but we must widen our

¹ See the recent analysis offered by Christopher Clapham, 'Rewriting Ethiopian History', *Annales d'Ethiopie*, XVIII, 2002, pp.37-54.

² D. Crummey (ed), *Land, Literacy and the State in Sudanic Africa*, Trenton, Red Sea Press, 2004.

research to a wider geographical and historical area of relevance before colonialism. We should not forget that colonialism is a recent event. African history requires a far deeper background. A serious attempt to reopen this kind of research must now be made, and I would like to stress the importance of this new oriented work.

The Horn of Africa as a whole from this point of view is an interesting area of research, a regional and historical entity that colonialism divided and integrated artificially into different colonial states. The Horn of Africa as an historical entity embraces many different societies, a complex historical heritage, a heterogeneous social background.³ My reflections here challenge the concept of national conferences as a separate area of studies. I would like to question and to dispute the role of Ethiopian studies on the one hand and the role of Eritrean studies that has recently emerged as a separate field of study, as a counterpart. (I have already emphasized this peculiarity and outlined my own thoughts on two separate occasions, during the Addis Ababa conference of 2000 and the Asmara conference of 2001).⁴ It is pointless to split up academically this important field of research that must have many themes in common and many fields of interest to be discussed together. No division between historical Ethiopia and Eritrea must be made in modern history. History should be analysed on a regional basis, and we cannot speak of two distinct and separate histories. The entire area needs to be analyzed as a component of the history of the Horn of Africa. In many respects national historiographies need to challenge this trend and face this problem, putting the modern history of both countries into a new context: the context of a critical research into the past.

It is thus imperative to investigate the Horn of Africa as a single historical entity and, as I have already emphasized, this area must be confronted against a larger historical entity and put in the wider context of tropical Africa. Not only Ethiopian history should be studied within the Horn of Africa, but the Horn of Africa itself must, in turn, be analyzed in the context of sub-Saharan Africa. Africa as a whole has many characteristics in common from a historical point of view. Moreover, the disintegration of the Ethiopian Empire and recent political developments have offered new insights and questioned the 'great

³ See Clapham, 'Rewriting Ethiopian History', on the 'search for a unifying history of the Horn', an article that I have had the opportunity to read after the Hamburg conference where I originally gave this paper, and many of the views expressed there I share.

⁴ See I. Taddia, 'Notes on the recent Italian studies on Ethiopia and Eritrea', *Africana*, 2003, pp 165-71.

tradition' of the independent and unitarian state.⁵ Modern history must challenge contemporary boundaries and engage a common debate, confrontation, interrelations. Scholars need to explore many different historical contexts and Ethiopian studies must be more flexible and more open to exchange with scholars of other areas. This is the beginning of a new trend: national historiographies in Africa had an historical importance for the new nations but in many respects they have concluded their role in nation building and do not have any new legitimacy in contemporary Africa. I hope future research in Ethiopian studies will develop this trend, and I am optimistic that the old pattern of contemporary African historiography will be broken.

Oral history as a critical issue

My second reflection concerns the main characteristics of Ethiopian social studies that have emerged in the historiography. We have developed a very solid pattern of research based on different fields of studies, disciplines and regional areas. If we look at the historical viewpoint, this seems to be concentrated in the Amhara-Tigrayan areas where written documentation is historically important and represents the main source to help us in reconstructing the past. History and written sources are two aspects that have for many years played an important role in Ethiopian studies. Anthropology on the contrary appears to be limited to an area without written records, i.e. secular and religious documentation.

The North therefore belongs to history, the South to anthropology, a characteristic outlined a number of years ago by historical research and scholars in modern Ethiopia.⁶ No significant systematic research has been done on the core of the Empire, the Amhara and Tigrayan areas, regarding the transmission of tradition in general and oral tradition in particular. There is no Vansina in Ethiopia; I mean no codification of oral sources in the above mentioned areas. This seems neither banal nor trivial. To underline the limitations of this past trend in Ethiopian historiography means to develop a pattern of research that includes interdisciplinarity, combining disciplines, cross references, and the contributions of different scholars. So we need to investigate the role of oral tradition in a literate culture like Christian Ethiopia. Is it too late for this? Everybody knows how hard it is to work with oral tradition today, and Ethiopia probably has missed the opportunity to develop

⁵ See A. Triulzi, 'Battling with the Past: New frameworks for Ethiopian Historiography' in W. James, D. Donham, E. Kurimoto, A. Triulzi, *Remapping Ethiopia: Essays in Social Anthropology and History*, Oxford, James Currey, 1986.

⁶ See particularly D. Donham and W. James (eds), *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia: Essays in Social Anthropology and History*, Oxford, James Currey, 1986.

this discipline and this area of study scientifically.⁷ Few scholars have investigated orality in northern Ethiopia and the role of oral tradition in a literate culture; research has been basically oriented towards an historical and philological approach, whereas orality has long been an underdeveloped subject.⁸ The division of the studies between the North and South of Ethiopia must be recomposed and reframed seriously and definitively for further studies.

When speaking about orality and oral research in Ethiopia it is surprising to find an interesting and really innovative essay in the Italian colonial literature that I would like to mention here. I am referring to the article written by the Italian anthropologist Giovanni Ellero that deserves a few words. We should note here his important contribution published in 1941 'Importanza della tradizione orale per l'etiopistica' (The importance of oral tradition for Ethiopian studies) which anticipates the discussion on the value of oral sources in writing history.⁹ Ellero explores the value of oral tradition as a body of linguistic, ethnographic, religious, ethnological, legal and historical knowledge useful to scholars and considered as a unique source of knowledge. All these aspects taken together help to build up a picture of Ethiopia.¹⁰ The real benefit that Ethiopian studies can now gain from oral tradition is probably limited, given the extreme difficulty, today, to collect oral sources in a profoundly and totally changed country. This is a serious matter to be considered by contemporary historiography.

Towards a new political history?

The third reflection is organized around a new aspect of historical work. Social history in many respects represented an important turning-point in

⁷ See D. Crummev, Shumet Sishagne, and Daniel Ayana, 'Oral tradition in a Literate Culture: the Case of Christian Ethiopia', in S. Pilaszewicz and E. Rzeqwski (eds), *Unwritten Testimonies of the African Past. Proceedings of the International Symposium held in Wjrzanovn, Warsaw on 7-8 November 1989*, in *Orientalia Varsoviensia*, Warsaw, 1991, pp. 137-149.

⁸ 'Language, Power and Society. Workshop on Orality and Literacy in the Horn of Africa', London SOAS, 16-18 July 2003, organized by Cedric Barnes (proceedings forthcoming).

⁹ G. Ellero, 'Importanza della tradizione orale per l'etiopistica', in *Archivio per la raccolta e lo studio delle tradizioni popolari italiane*, XVI, 1941, fasc. I-II, pp. 27-36, now republished in G. Ellero, *Antropologia e storia dell' Etiopia* (ed. by G. Lusini), Udine, 1995, pp. 55-64. The Italian civil servant Giovanni Ellero worked in the political office from 1936 to 1941 in Eritrea and Ethiopia. See for more details: G. Dore and I.Taddia, 'I documenti inediti di Giovanni Ellero sull' Etiopia', in *Africa*, Roma, XLVIII, 1, 1993, pp. 21-46.

¹⁰ I would like to mention that the important Ellero manuscript collection is available at the Department of History at the University of Bologna and the catalogue has been published by L'Harmattan Italia, Torino in three volumes. Uoldelul Chelati Dirar - A.Gori-I.Taddia, *Lettere tigrine. I documenti etiopici del Fondo Ellero*, L'Harmattan Italia 1997; Uoldelul Chelati Dirar-G. Dore, *Carte coloniali. I documenti italiani del Fondo Ellero*, L'Harmattan Italia 2000; G.Dore, I.Taddia, *Quaderni del Walqayt. Fonti per la storia sociale dell' Etiopia*, L'Harmattan Italia 2004.

contemporary historiography, offering a break with traditional historiography. While this has not only been in African studies, African historiography has been noticeably dominated for quite a long period by the domain of social history. Social studies have been the characteristic of at least three generations of scholars in Ethiopian studies. Contributions in this field of study have been important to Ethiopian historiography and have given us many suggestions which need not be developed here. It is time today nonetheless to reconsider the role of political history in African studies. Given the extremely important background highlighted by social history, there is a need to re-read the old-fashioned area of research represented by political and diplomatic history and put new data in a new context. Social history can be the background for our work. The work done by many scholars in social studies is, today, the prerequisite for a new historic discourse. The social background is now a consolidated acquisition, but we now have to go on and pass this phase. What I suggest is the need to go back to a political history, in a new context of studies, and while this is not intended as a provocative statement certainly the sources for writing history need to be re-read.

This insight came to me when reading - recently - Berhanou Abebe's essay on the 1916 Ethiopia coup d'état¹¹ just to speak of Ethiopian history. I also have in mind Nicolosi's essay on the diplomacy of the mad Mullah in British Somalia, an essay based not merely on diplomatic history, but a history focused on the importance of international diplomacy and its impact on society and Federica Guazzini work on the diplomacy of borders in Eritrea.¹² I am in fact convinced that there is a lot to investigate in the field of political history today.

I am wondering which kind of political history? I am speaking of political history in a wider sense, not merely diplomatic history, but a history focused on the interrelations between power and institutions. We need to focus our attention on the importance of political power as a source of changing the life of people, not only the destiny of the country and not only in the international context. We have to investigate the role of political power and the role of institutions as the main agents of change in history and in people's lives. The role of political power as a source of control, restrictions, limitations but also the role of political power as an active and main agent in promoting and developing human destiny.

¹¹ See Berhanou Abebe, 'Le coup d'Etat du 26 septembre 1916 ou le dénouement d'une décennie de crise', in *Annales d'Ethiopie*, XVII, 2001, pp. 309-360.

¹² G. Nicolosi, *Imperialismo e resistenza in Corno d'Africa*, Rubbettino editore 2002.

We need to concentrate our attention - again - and we have to go back to the high sphere of politics. A lot of work has been done on a history made from the bottom up. We now need to relocate and rediscuss the role of the highest institutions. Power as an agent of consolidation but power also as an agent of destabilisation. This double origin of power is the source of the precarious condition of humanity. History is a result of a process, I believe, basically controlled from the top and moving from the top downwards. The role of a new investigation into political history must be twofold: on the one hand it should study the effects that power has on society, on the other it should be the task of political history to analyse the interrelations and the responses of society in the face of a political power that comes from above. Each individual element of the internal dynamics of political power is useful in the reconstruction of the complex events that make up history.

Conclusion

Finally, let me return to the Hamburg conference. The XV International Ethiopian Studies conference was a special occasion for me when I developed the suggestions dealt with here in a special panel devoted to Ethiopian studies in Poland, introduced by Donald Crummey, and where Prof. Joanna Mantel Niecko, of the Institute of Oriental Studies Department of African languages of the University of Warsaw, was special guest. So this conference offered us another great opportunity to recognize, among many outstanding contributors, her role and her career in the field of history and linguistic studies in Poland but not only in her country. In many respects her work is in line with the scheme I have underlined for Ethiopian historiography. Joanna is an esteemed scholar whose ability to coordinate a philological and rigorous work with many themes in social and political research concerning a country deserves a special role in African historiography.¹³ Her role in Polish academics and in international scholarship, her ability to put Ethiopian history in the context of present issues, as well as her command of Ethiopian sources is well recognized. Finally the role of her many students in Ethiopian studies and their presence in Hamburg at the international conference is a sign that her work will continue.

¹³ See the Plenary Session, Ethiopian Studies in Poland; Joanna Mantel Niecko, *Ethiopian Studies in Poland and the Knowledge of Ethiopia in Poland*. Prof. Joanna Mantel Niecko was from 1977 to 1988 Director of the Department of African Languages and Culture. She is a member of the International Organizing Committee for Ethiopian Conferences, Founding Member of the Polish Association of African Studies and very active in publishing *Africana Bulletin*, Warsaw. She is presently working on social changes in Ethiopia in the 19th and 20th centuries and on the political situation of the Horn of Africa. Joanna gave me a lot of insights for writing this paper and I would like to recognize her work as a source of inspiration for me.

In many respects Professor Niecko's work reflects the challenges for Ethiopian historiography today that I have outlined in this short essay: and which I think deserve our attention; and so I would like her path to be a prototype in dealing with the main issues of Ethiopian research: first the need to relocate Ethiopian studies in the wider field of African studies; second the importance of oral research in a literate society; and finally the focus on a new wave of political studies or political history in the sense I have outlined above.

Popular Music and Politics in Sékou Touré's Guinea

Graeme Counsel

The West African nations of Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal and The Gambia, all of which formed part of the Empire of Mali (see figure 1), have since independence sought to revitalize and invigorate their traditional arts and culture.¹ Their cultural policies helped form one of the most vibrant music scenes in Africa, and authors such as Waterman, Schulz, and Charry have offered an examination of the origin of the musical styles.² As exercises in the relatively new field of 'urban ethnomusicology',³ they concern themselves with the music of Africa's cities and urban centres and underscore how music, as an aspect of culture, informs us about the nature of the society which created it. This paper, which examines the revitalization of traditional music in Guinea under Sékou Touré and the political role of musicians, in contrast examines how music can also fail to inform us.

The background can be set out briefly. In 1898, after a prolonged insurgency, Guinean resistance to French colonial forces collapsed with the defeat of Almami Samori Touré, the nation's resistance leader. By the end of the century the French had colonized the greater part of what constituted the Empire of Mali and French Guinea, as the nation was then known, was incorporated into an administrative region known as French West Africa. Some sixty years later in 1958 Guineans voted in a referendum on whether to join other West African nations in a French confederacy. Spurred on by Sékou Touré's famous statement that 'We prefer freedom in poverty to riches in chains', they voted decisively against the proposal and shortly thereafter Guinea became an

¹ This paper was originally presented at a seminar at the African Research Institute, La Trobe University, on the April 9, 2003. It is based upon fieldwork conducted in West Africa from May-October 2001 as part of my larger doctoral research, in addition to the primary and secondary documentary sources cited. The focus of my fieldwork was to locate and interview members of Guinea's orchestras who were active during the Presidency of Sékou Touré, and to access sound archives in the region

² See Christopher Alan Waterman, *Jùjú. A Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1990; Dorothea Schulz, 'Praise without enchantment: Griots, broadcast media, and the politics of tradition in Mali', *Africa Today*, 44 (4), 1997, pp. 443-464; Eric S. Charry, *Mande Music. Traditional and Modern Music of the Maninka and Mandinka of Western Africa*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2000.

³ Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology*, U.S.A, University of Illinois Press, 1983, p. 346.

independent state. The French, humiliated by the vote, began an immediate withdrawal, removing not only all furniture and cutlery, but also the telephones, medicines, medical equipment and blueprints to the electricity grid and sewerage systems.⁴ Guinea was left isolated, both politically and economically. The French had accomplished little in terms of advancing Guinea's standard of living; much less than they had realized in other African nations. At independence just 1.3% of children were receiving a primary school education, and Guinea was left with just six university graduates⁵ from a population of approximately 4,500,000. The French had achieved even less in promoting Guinean arts, and Sékou Touré, the newly elected President, and his political party, the Parti Démocratique de Guinée (PDG), were determined to put the colonial era behind them and to restore their nation's pride and place in the modern world.



Figure 1: Current political map of West Africa with approximate limit of the empire of Mali, ca 1500 CE
<http://www.guiageografico.com/africa-fotos-viagem/mapa-africa.gif>

⁴ Kabral Blay-Amihere, 'Guinea: A case for optimism?', *Index on Censorship*, 20 (1), 1991, p. 29; Miriam Makeba and James Hall, *My Story*, London, Bloomsbury, 1987, p. 168; Andrew Warshaw, 'Guinea dreams', *The Gettysburg Review*, 3 (3), 1990, p. 526.

⁵ Richard Trillo, *West Africa. The Rough Guide*, London, The Rough Guides, 1995, p. 480.

In Guinea, as in other West African nations, music and politics are inextricably linked. Using the popular music of Sékou Touré's Guinea I propose that the rise of Guinean musical groups in this early post-colonial period closely mirrored the burgeoning dominance of Guinea's independent political parties. Government cultural policy was directed at the *griots*, the hereditary bards, who, given their unique historical relationship with the traditional rulers, were considered the ideal choice for the dissemination of political doctrine. The *griots*, as I shall illustrate, were thus central figures in the creation of new musical styles in Guinea in the early independence era and beyond.

The *griot's* social role and status in Mande society

Founded in the 13th century by Soundiata Keita, the Empire of Mali reached its height in the 15th century. Those who trace their ancestry to that empire are commonly known as Mande, and the term applies to such language groups as the Malinké in Guinea, the Bamana in Mali, and the Mandinka in The Gambia and Senegal. The term 'Manding' is equally applicable, as is the term 'Mandingo', although the latter is now considered *passé*. There are currently over twenty-five Mande dialects with over seven million speakers. Mande society was and still remains highly stratified, consisting of three main strata – the horon, who are regarded as the 'noble' class and are considered freeborn, or uncasted; the nyamakala, who are often referred to as the 'artisan class', and which include the *griots*, leatherworkers, wood carvers, and blacksmiths; and the jon, who are the descendants of slaves. These classes are generally endogamous, although marriages between different strata members are becoming more common.

Oral methods of retention such as story-telling and songs have been the primary methods by which the history of Mande society has been passed down through the generations. The *griots* have always played a central role in this retention, for as the hereditary musicians of the Mande, as the oral historians, they have been largely responsible for the preservation of their culture's history. In recognition of this *griots* have been referred to as 'the guardians of the word',⁶ for their knowledge of history is indisputable.

The role of a *griot* in Mande society is however a highly complex one and they fulfil multiple tasks. They are most commonly described as bards, and are also widely referred to as singer-historians. Specifically, they act as genealogists, praise-singers, and entertainers. In the pre-colonial era they were the court

⁶ Camara Laye, *The Guardian of the Word*, trans. by James Kirkup, New York, Aventura, 1980. Camara, author of *The Dark Child*, was exiled from Guinea in 1966. His account of the *griots* was one of the first by an indigenous author.

musicians, serving not only as bards for the nobility but also as ambassadors for the king - delivering the king's words to the subjects and also acting as interpreters. An important aspect of their role is that of genealogist. At weddings, funerals, naming days, circumcisions, and other important ceremonies, a *griot* is called upon to situate the event within its historical context. At these proceedings a *griot's* responsibilities can include officially and publicly naming the child, with the *griot* proceeding to name the child's relatives and provide the child's genealogy to those present. A *griot* is able to expand upon genealogical lineages by recounting the deeds and events pertaining to a family's history; which may include such events as those surrounding a family's migration from one region to another, or that of a particular family's role in historical conflicts, or descriptions of the lives of family members who died many generations ago. This role is facilitated by the historical alignment of certain *griot* families with others who belong to the noble (horon) class.

A *griot's* repertoire of genealogies, political conflicts, and major events is related on important ceremonial occasions, and together these form part of an important body of epic narratives. The oldest of these narratives is known as *Soundiata*, named after Soundiata Keita, a warrior-prince, who founded the Malian empire over 700 years ago. The epic is but one of dozens which describe the lives of famous people and major events in Mande history. There are narratives which describe battles against the French in the 19th century,⁷ that espouse the valour of brave soldiers in the founding of the empire,⁸ that detail regional conflicts,⁹ that tell of the lives of kings¹⁰, and other epics which serve as moral tales.¹¹

⁷ 'Almamy Samori Touré'. For recorded versions see Bembeya Jazz National, *Bembeya Jazz National présente 'Regard sur le passé'. Le premier grand concert musical Guinéen*, Syliphone, SLP 10, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1969; Alhaji Fabala Kanuteh, *A Search for the Roots of the Blues. Volume 1*, Sonet, SNTF 666, 33.3 rpm disc, 1974.

⁸ 'Chedo', 'Duga'. For recorded versions see Kouyaté Sory Kandia, *L'épopée du Mandingue. Volume 1*, Syliphone, SLP 36, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1973; Jali Nyama Suso, *A Search for the Roots of the Blues. Volume 1*, Sonet, SNTF 666, 33.3 rpm disc, 1974; *L'Orchestre National 'A' de la République du Mali*, Bärenreiter-Musicaphon, BM 30 L 2605, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1970; Fanta Damba, *Première anthologie de la musique Malienne. Volume 6. La tradition épique*, Bärenreiter-Musicaphon. BM 30 L 2506, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1970.

⁹ 'Keme Bouréma', 'Taara'. For recorded versions see Orchestre de la Garde Républicaine, *Ière et 2ème formation*, Syliphone, SLP 6, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1967; Amadu Bansang Jobarteh, *Master of the Kora*, Eavadisc, EDM 101, 33.3 rpm disc, 1978; Banzoumana Sissòko, *Musique du Mali. Volume 3. Le vieux lion. Volume 2*, Bärenreiter-Musicaphon, BM 30 L 2553, 33.3 rpm disc, 1970; Kanté Manfila and Salif Keita, *Dans l'authenticité. Volume 2*, Badmos, BLP 5032, 33.3 rpm disc, 1979.

¹⁰ 'Da Monzon'. For recorded versions see 'Orchestre Régional de Ségou', *Les meilleurs souvenirs de la 1ère Biennale Artistique et Culturelle de la Jeunesse (1970)*, Bärenreiter-Musicaphon, BM 30

These epic narratives are widely known amongst the Mande and are usually sung or delivered in a combination of singing and recitation. Musical instruments, whether solo or ensemble, accompany the performance of the narrative, and traditionally were limited to the kora (a twenty-one stringed harp-lute), the ngoni (a plucked lute), and the balafon (a xylophone). In modern times, particularly in the post-independence period, other instruments have been incorporated, most commonly the guitar. Men are usually the instrumentalists while women often sing in the role of either main vocalist or accompanying vocalist. As the story of each epic narrative is well-known throughout the Mande, the appeal for the listener depends on the ability of the *griot* to render the story interesting – whether it be through narrative ability or musical skill. Particular *griots* become famous not only for the quality of their story telling but also for the way that they sing. Similarly, as each piece has a set story, it can also have a set melody, and some *griots* are capable of highly complex musical improvisation upon these standard themes.

The *griots*' royal court tradition indicates their important cultural role. Of the social contexts of a *griot's* performance mentioned previously, the most common situation within a modern context is that of a *griot* performing for a patron. On these occasions the *griot* performs for payment, and will receive a gratuity according to the generosity of their patron. Payment is usually given during the actual performance and can be very generous. *Griots* are renowned for being able to move their audience to heightened emotional states. When listening to the *griot* singing of the glory of his ancestors, for example, the patron may be inclined to reward the *griot* richly, and gifts to *griots* in modern times have included large amounts of cash, gold, houses, and even a jet plane.¹²

The erosion of socio-political structures under French colonial rule had a profound impact on the status and role of the *griots*, the import of which is still being felt to the present day. To consolidate their control the French sought to limit the power of the Mande nobility by replacing the traditional leaders with loyalists who were appointed by the local French governor. They abolished the

L 2601, 33.3 rpm disc, 1970; L'Ensemble Instrumental National du Mali, *Dah-Monzon ou l'épopée Bambara*, Mali Kunkan, KO 77.04.11, 33.3 rpm disc, 1977.

¹¹ 'Mali Sadio', 'Toutou Diarra'. For recorded versions see Orchestre Régional de Kayes, *Les meilleurs souvenirs de la 1ère Biennale Artistique et Culturelle de la Jeunesse (1970)*, Bärenreiter-Musicaphon, BM 30 L 2604, 33.3 rpm disc, 1970; *Mory Kanté et son ensemble*, Sako Production, SP 002, 33.3 rpm disc, 1981; *Sous nouveau d'une nation nouvelle: La République du Guinée. Présentation haute-fidélité les rythmes de l'Ouest Africain*, Tempo, 7008, 33.3 rpm disc, 1961; Malamin Jobarteh & Dembo Konte, *Jaliya*, Stern's, 5021, 33.3 rpm disc, 1985.

¹² Lucy Durán, 'Savannah sex wars', *The Wire*, 114, 1993, pp. 42-44.

highest symbols of Mande authority, whilst recognizing only individual forms of power at the expense of collective institutions of rule. The title of ‘king’ was abolished and supplanted by ‘chief’, and those chiefs who opposed the colonizing power were replaced whilst others had their authority reduced. The French also created new administrative precincts which failed to correspond to pre-existing political boundaries. The chiefs of these new precincts were not necessarily chosen according to their ancestral lineage to the traditional rulers. The colonial power delegated its authority only to those who were officially registered. Those eligible included civil servants with a good record of performance, soldiers of outstanding merit, and ‘notable natives, literate if possible, who have rendered services to the French cause’.¹³ As many of these new chiefs did not represent traditional authority they did not always command the respect of their constituents. Many were regarded as *fonctionnaires* – mere spokesman for the colonialists.

The monetary economy installed by the French had the immediate effect of preventing the Mande rulers, now paid a form of salary or wage directly by the colonial governments in lieu of the income obtained from their constituents, from obtaining taxes through traditional means. This eliminated a major source of revenue for the Mande leaders and a significant loss of income for the noble classes, with the result that many of the *griots*’ patrons could no longer afford the *griots*’ services. Whereas in the past a *griot*’s whole family may have been supported by a patron, sometimes on a permanent basis, this meant that many of the musicians now had to travel more frequently and much further in order to seek new patrons.

With the link between the nobility and the *griots* broken, the role of the *griot* in Mande society was being transformed. Of particular note was the increased role of praise singing. Formerly, the *griots* had reserved their praise songs for their immediate patrons. Now, in seeking out new patrons, they were increasingly characterized as mere flatterers who would sing the praises of anyone who had some spare change. Whereas before colonial rule they had occupied a unique position in Mande society, in the 1950s the French scholar Raymond Mauny would describe *griots* as:

members of a despised but feared caste of musician-genealogist-sorcerer parasites existing in a large number of West African

¹³ Michael Crowder, *Colonial West Africa. Collected Essays*, New Jersey, Frank Cass, 1978, p. 201.

peoples, living at the expense of chiefs for whom they sing praises and recite genealogies.¹⁴

This transformation of the *griots*' role would continue in the post-colonial era, aided by the cultural policies of the newly elected independent governments.

Cultural policy and its impact on popular music in Sékou Touré's Guinea

In the West Sékou Touré's presidency may well be remembered for his iron-fisted rule, his anti-imperialistic stance, and for the oppression of his political opponents. Little is known about his contribution to African arts, although under Sékou Touré Guinea was the first nation in Africa to actively pursue a cultural policy aimed at the modernization of their traditional musical and artistic forms. The President endeavoured to strengthen and instil pride in Guinean culture, insisting that

(Guinean) music should rise up from a world which once degraded it through the practice of colonial domination and [it should] assert the full rights of the people.¹⁵

Through his direct involvement Guinean music would become one of the most influential and popular styles in West Africa, with many groups awarded major prizes at pan-African competitions.

One of the first acts of Guinea's new cultural policy came into effect in 1959 - only a few weeks after independence - when Sékou Touré forcibly disbanded all dance orchestras in Conakry. None of these were playing indigenous Guinean music, rather they were performing 'slavish'¹⁶ renditions of French *chansons* and dance numbers void of local musical characteristics. In addition, all French and Western music was banned from the radio. In order to reinvigorate and modernize Guinean music Sékou Touré established instead a network of over thirty orchestras throughout the nation, each representing an administrative precinct. A typical line-up of a Guinean orchestra included two guitarists, a bassist, a brass section of saxophones, trumpet, and trombones, conga players, percussionists, a keyboard player and backing vocalists. All orchestras were supplied with new instruments, with the equipment being

¹⁴ Thomas A. Hale, *Scribe, Griot, and Novelist: Narrative Interpreters of the Songhay Empire*, Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1990, p. 35.

¹⁵ Guinean National Commission for UNESCO, 'Cultural policy in the Revolutionary People's Republic of Guinea', *Studies and Documents on Cultural Policies*, Volume 51, Paris, UNESCO, 1979, p. 83.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 80.

purchased in Italy by one of the *chef d'orchestres* at substantial costs.¹⁷ Prominent musicians from the pre-independence era were then assigned the task of organizing the new groups and training the musicians to play their new instruments.

Before independence, many of Guinea's popular folk songs dealt with the struggle for self-rule, paying tribute to the PDG and Sékou Touré whilst denigrating the opposition.¹⁸ Of Sékou Touré, one song proclaims:

Listen to the story of Sékou.
Sékou alone can do nothing,
Just as no one can act alone.
All the councillors are against him,
As are all their henchmen.
All the important people hate him.

Listen carefully,
The elections are not yet validated.
If you want the trouble to end
Give the chiefdom to him who merits it,
So the trouble ends.
For the trouble has long antennae
Which will cross your path
When you least expect them.¹⁹

Sékou Touré, a Malinké by birth, was born into the noble or freeborn class, the *horon*, and thus retained powerful backing and the unqualified support of the *griots*. Many of the musicians chosen soon after independence to form the first Guinean orchestras were Malinké. The seeds were thus sown for Malinké music to dominate the music of Guinea during Touré's presidency, and for the Malinké *griots* to play a significant role. The PDG, which over time would become increasingly autocratic and Malinké dominated, turned to the *griots* and encouraged them to write new songs. These were often based on the old

¹⁷ Balla Onivogui, the *chef d'orchestre* of Balla et ses Balladins, was flown to Italy to purchase the first instruments. From an interview with Balla Onivogui, August 14 2001. According to Almamy Oumar Laho Diallo, a musician and former *Secrétaire Général Chargé des Collectivités Décentralisées*, the instruments were renewed every two years. From an interview with Almamy Oumar Laho Diallo, August 23 2001.

¹⁸ See Ruth Schachter, 'French Guinea's RDA folk songs', *West African Review*, 29 (371), 1958, pp. 673-681; Djibril T. Niane, 'Some revolutionary songs of Guinea', *Présence Africaine*, 29, 1960, pp. 101-115.

¹⁹ Schachter, 'French Guinea's RDA folk songs', p. 675.

melodies from the epic narrative tradition, which the musicians arranged for their new electric ensembles. Melodies that had once been played on traditional stringed instruments, such as the kora, were now adapted to the electric guitar, the saxophone, or other western-style instruments. This music proved to be enormously popular and very influential throughout West Africa.

As the 1960s progressed the PDG's cultural policies were broadened, with the party imposing on the orchestras 'a sacred obligation to draw their inspiration solely from the wealth of epic and popular folk traditions'.²⁰ In accordance with Guinea's socialist policies, the orchestras' musicians were declared civil servants, receiving wages and entitlements as would any other government employee. The groups performed at state-owned venues and broadcast their songs on Guinea's radio network, which was also state-controlled. There was only one recording studio, which was operated by the government, and only one recording label, Syliphone, which was again fully controlled by the PDG.

Popular music becomes the voice of the State

During Sékou Touré's presidency Syliphone produced a total of eighty-two long play albums and seventy-five singles in the period from approximately 1967 to 1980 – a catalogue of over 800 songs. Whilst a broad spectrum of song topics is in evidence, several themes recur, namely: songs which espouse various government initiatives; interpretations of epic narratives in a 'modern' style; and praise songs to Sékou Touré and the PDG. In circa 1971, for example, the Horoya Band recorded a popular song called 'Alphabetisation'.²¹ The song promoted a national literacy campaign which was organized by the PDG. Literacy in Guinea during this time was approximately five percent and increased literacy was a major priority of government policy. 'Alphabetisation' advertised the benefits of the PDG's campaign and was warmly received by the government, who recorded it and released it on a Syliphone LP. Similarly, the song 'Senero' invited 'all the people of Guinea' to enjoy agricultural work.²² Les Amazones de Guinée, an orchestra which consisted entirely of female police officers, recorded 'Salimou', which warned 'those who choose alcohol go on the road of folly'.²³ Through songs such as these the policies of the PDG were being broadcast to the nation via popular recording artists. Traditional

²⁰ Guinean National Commission for UNESCO, 'Cultural policy in the Revolutionary People's Republic of Guinea', *Studies and Documents on Cultural Policies*, Volume 51, Paris, UNESCO, 1979, p. 80.

²¹ Horoya-Band, 'Alphabetisation', *Trio federal du pointe*, Syliphone, SLP 25, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1971.

²² Syli Authentic, 'Senero', *Dans l'arene*, Syliphone, SLP 57, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1976.

²³ Les Amazones de Guinée, 'Salimou', *Au cœur de Paris*, Syliphone, SLP 76, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1983.

authority was engendered in the music, for most members of the bands – particularly the lead singers – were *griots*.

In addition to the advocacy of PDG policies there are many examples of songs whose praise is directed at the party itself. Little is heard however of party repression, although under Sékou Touré Guinea had rapidly evolved into a one-party state. By the late 1960s the PDG had extended itself into all facets of daily life via the establishment of a vast network of committees and councils. As the power of the PDG grew, however, so did the pressure to become a party member. A refusal to join could result in more dire consequences, such as imprisonment, torture, and execution. Some four million people became members of the PDG, and the party exercised rigid control. Women were encouraged to deny sex to their husbands if they did not become members of the party.²⁴ In the 1970s the nation's economy began to slide and the PDG assumed control of buying and selling all goods to the public. The crime of smuggling became punishable by death, though this radical policy ended abruptly in 1977 when market-women throughout the nation rioted. The Syliphone label makes no mention of any of these events, nor is reference to them found in the recordings. In fact we hear quite the opposite, with numerous examples of praise songs to Guinea's sole political party in evidence. The song 'La Guinée Horoya', for example, is concerned with 'the independence of Guinea, the united nation with precise objectives, [and with] the victories of the People whose heart is committed to a National Party'.²⁵ Another song, 'I Dyoloooro', explains that 'The PDG is the party of reason, of justice, and of national unity'.²⁶ A further example is found in the song, 'Yahadi Gere', which tells the story of a young radical who proclaims: 'the revolutionary war is realised in the invincibility of the PDG'.²⁷

Of particular note is a recording where Kouyaté Sory Kandia, arguably the most popular singer in Guinea at the time, performed a nineteen minute homage to the PDG.²⁸ In addition to this recording, two albums of poetry written by the President which exhorted the values and righteousness of the

²⁴ Warshaw, 1990, p. 527.

²⁵ Liner notes to *Horoya Band National*, author's translation, Syliphone, SLP 41, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1972.

²⁶ Liner notes to *Keletigui et ses Tambourinis*, author's translation, Syliphone, SLP 30, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1972.

²⁷ Liner notes to *Pivi et les Balladins*, author's translation, Syliphone, SLP 31, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1972.

²⁸ *Kouyaté Sory Kandia. P.D.G. Horoya Band de Kankan. Boloba*, Syliphone, SLP 17, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1971.

PDG were released.²⁹ Sung by a soloist or by a chorus, one of the President's poems includes the following lyrics:

[The PDG] destroys the evil and reinforces the good in any work
.... It enriches the poor one and impoverishes the rich person on
the anvil of equity O river which does not dry up! Fruit
without bitterness! Fire which does not die out! The PDG gives
life reason and substance ...³⁰

The breakdown of traditional patronage under the colonial regime, a practice which Sékou Touré exploited, meant that *griots* in Guinea were no longer acting as the voice of kings, but as the voice of the state. Moreover Guinea's cultural policy was directed against those *griots* who still maintained allegiance to traditional rulers:

During an initial phase aimed at bringing about a change of attitude, which ran from 1958 to 1968, a relentless struggle was waged against all the after-effects of the domination that generated the colonial complex Our artists grappled with these phenomena, which took the form of religious mystification, polygamy, ignorance, alcoholism, dissolute living, lying, laziness, theft, the rural exodus, parasitism, intellectualism, the undue power of griots, etc. These problems were vigorously combated by the arts companies at all levels...While engaged in the eradication of the vestiges of colonialism, artists explored pre-colonial history in depth and rehabilitated the great figures from the years of resistance to foreign domination and the rulers of old Africa, such as Almamy Samori Touré, Alpha Yaya Diallo, El Hadj Oumar and Soundiata Keita. Famous epics, virtually forgotten during the period of repression, were brought to light The masters of the old verse chronicles, the chroniclers who served as living libraries, storytellers of all kinds, men of learning who had jealously preserved the authentic African culture, were appointed honorary militants and are now engaged in reconstituting the inexhaustible heritage of Africa.³¹

²⁹ *Poèmes militants*. Syliphone, SLP 13, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1970; *Appels au peuple*, Syliphone, SLP 26, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1971.

³⁰ *Kouyaté Sory Kandia*. P.D.G. Horoya Band de Kankan. *Boloba*, author's translation, Syliphone, SLP 17, 33.3 rpm disc, 1971.

³¹ Guinean National Commission for UNESCO, 'Cultural policy in the Revolutionary People's

Sékou Touré's policies were thus directed towards destabilizing the traditional ties that had been established between the *griots* and the nobility. Whilst the French had demoted or replaced Guinea's traditional chiefs, Sékou Touré not only maintained but actually strengthened that policy. The Fula chieftaincy, which represented a large political bloc that threatened the PDG's power base, were targeted.³² Fula chiefs were publicly assaulted, and their houses and crops were burnt down.³³ It is pertinent to note that one of Sékou Touré's first acts as leader was to abolish all the chieftaincies in Guinea, replacing them with PDG administrators. The party's policy was designed to fragment opposition, and Touré actively continued this strategy in order to strengthen the constituency of the PDG and of his own position as head of state.³⁴ The president's neo-colonialist policy of erasing the chieftaincies was also focusing on those *griots* whose allegiance to the PDG was considered questionable.

Recorded songs on the Syliphone label illustrate how, via the narrow selection of willing *griots* who promoted government ideology, Guinea's cultural policy under Sékou Touré sought to re-invent and re-figure Guinean history and culture. From the epic narrative repertoire we find a famous example of the song 'Duga', which had now been modernized and re-named 'Armée Guinéenne',³⁵ a praise song to the Guinean army. There are also numerous modernized versions of other epics, such as the epics of Soundiata, Almami Samori Touré, Toutou Diarra, and Bakari Dian. Almami Samori Touré is a national hero in Guinea, and is one of the greatest figures in their modern history. The greatest praise of all however was reserved for the President himself. Nearly every Syliphone recording featured a praise song to *Le Secrétaire Général et Responsable Suprême de la Révolution*, as the President was officially referred to, or celebrated his political party, the PDG.

By the late 1960s, with the Syliphone label expanding rapidly, Bembeya Jazz National released their influential recording 'Regard sur le passé' which single-

Republic of Guinea', *Studies and Documents on Cultural Policies*, Volume 51, Paris, UNESCO, 1979, p. 74.

³² See Ruth Schachter Morgenthau, *Political Parties in French-speaking West Africa*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1964; Claude Rivière, *Guinea. The Mobilization of a People*, trans. by Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, London, Cornell University Press, 1977; Roderic Knight, 'Manding / Fula Relations as Reflected in the Manding Song Repertoire', *African Music*, 6 (2), 1982, pp. 37-47; Lansiné Kaba, 'A New Era Dawns in Guinea', *Current History*, 84, 1985, pp. 174-178, 187.

³³ See Claude Rivière, *Guinea. The Mobilization of a People*.

³⁴ Lansiné Kaba, 'Guinean politics: A critical historical overview', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 15, 1977, p. 29.

³⁵ Bembeya Jazz National, *Armée Guinéenne*, Syliphone, SYL 504, 45 rpm disc, ca 1968.

handedly transformed Guinean music.³⁶ A product of the *authenticité* campaign, a cultural policy directed towards ‘unearthing the positive values of the past for the edification of a modern society’,³⁷ before its release no other orchestra had been so audacious as to compose a song that ran for over thirty-seven minutes – over both sides of the LP – and none had tackled or tried to encapsulate Guinea’s history in quite the same way. Innovative musically and thematically, ‘Regard sur le passé’ was the benchmark for Guinea’s bands, and was, perhaps, never surpassed.

Thematically, the album described the life of one of Guinea’s national heroes, Almami Samori Touré, who led a prolonged insurgency against the French in the late 19th century. An epic narrative (one of the most recent) was constructed in honour of Samori Touré’s achievements, and ‘Regard sur le passé’ presented a modern version of the epic. Bembeya Jazz National’s version of the epic concludes with the following lyrics:

They did not die, these heroes, and they will not die. After them,
daring pioneers once again took up the fight of national liberty
which finally triumphed under the direction of Ahmed Sékou
Touré, grandson of Samori.³⁸

Sékou Touré’s rise to power was undoubtedly enhanced by his widely publicized lineage from Almami Samori Touré, and his presidency was given ultimate legitimacy through recordings such as ‘Regard sur le passé’ which supported the contention. The *griot’s* traditional role as praise singer is in strong evidence here, with their role being to create a personality cult around their leader. Many authors and historians, however, disagree as to the question of whether the President was in fact the grandson of Samori or merely a close descendant:

³⁶ Bembeya Jazz National, *Bembeya Jazz National présente ‘Regard sur le passé’*. *Le premier grand concert musical Guinéen*, Syliphone, SLP 10, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1969. The album was later re-released (Syliphone, SLP 64, circa 1977). A live version was also released as *Inoubliable gala télévisé du Bembeya Jazz National. Pris sur le vif ‘Regard sur le passé’ avec les étudiants Ivoiriens* (Janvier 1972), Syliphone, SLP 34, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1972.

³⁷ Wolibo Dukuré, *La Festival Culturel National de la République Populaire Revolutionnaire de Guinée*, Guinée, Ministère de la Jeunesse des Sports et Arts Populaires, 1983, p. 26, author’s translation.

³⁸ Lansiné Kaba, ‘The cultural revolution, artistic creativity, and freedom of expression in Guinea’, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 14 (2), 1976, p. 214, author’s translation. The song also compared the president to other nationalist leaders including Soundiata Keita.

There was no scarcity of direct descendants of Samori Touré who made a practice of taking wives everywhere in his extensive travels. The mantle of succession fell upon Sékou Touré at least in part because he consciously emphasized the historical parallel of resistance against alien rule In the later phase of his life when his power waned and he was under heavy siege from the Europeans, Samori's victories decreased and his name became associated with acts of cruelty still remembered by the descendants of those Africans who suffered. Similarly, descendants of those captured by Samori's wars remained resentful. 'You will not sell us into slavery?' asked some of the older villagers of Sekou Touré during his first campaign in the forest ...³⁹

There is little doubt, however, that Sékou Touré used his ancestral relationship with Samori Touré to ennoble his origin and to validate his own position as head-of-state. Thus, to 'look at the past', which is a literal translation of 'Regard sur le passé', was a strictly controlled view, a Malinké view, which was dominated by the ideology of the PDG.

The Syliphone label released more praise songs to Sékou Touré than to any other figure, including Soundiata Keita, the founder of the Malian empire. 'Mandjou', for example, a song later made famous by Salif Keita,⁴⁰ is a celebration of the Touré lineage, with the lyrics stating that 'Sékou Touré you have the confidence of all the people ... thank you for what you did and continue to do for us.'⁴¹ Bembeya Jazz National perform a song called 'Touré' which tells us more about the President: 'You are honest, you are good, you are that which the people of Guinea need.'⁴² One orchestra even wrote a song in praise of Sékou Touré's wife, Andrée.⁴³

In light of these praise songs the brutality and repressive nature of Touré's presidency must to be taken into context. Under his rule twenty-five percent of the population, a figure representing approximately 1,500,000 people, fled the country in order to escape both political and ethnic repression. Tens of thousands of people were imprisoned, tortured or executed. Many others

³⁹ Ruth Schachter Morgenthau, *Political Parties in French-speaking West Africa*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964, p. 112.

⁴⁰ Les Ambassadeurs Internationaux, *Mandjou*, Badmos, BLP 5040, 33.3 rpm disc, 1978.

⁴¹ Keletigui et ses Tambourinis, *Mandjou*, Syliphone, SLP 30, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1972.

⁴² Bembeya Jazz National, 'Touré', *Le défi*, Syliphone, SLP 59, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1976.

⁴³ Syli Authentic, 'Andrée', *Dans l'arene*, Syliphone, SLP 57, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1976.

simply disappeared. Among those executed was Fodéba Keita, the founder of Les Ballets Africains, who was convicted of treason in 1971 and died in prison. Guinea's Minister for Justice, and the first Secretary-General of the OAU, Diallo Telli, was also arrested and died in prison. Marof Achkar, Guinea's United Nations Ambassador, was secretly executed. During Sékou Touré's era more than fourteen coups and plots were attributed to insurgents. The 'teachers' plot' of 1961, for example, was followed by the 'market traders plot' in 1965. A medicine shortage in 1972 was allegedly part of a 'physicians' plot'. In 1973 a cholera epidemic was deemed to be part of a plot, as was Guinea's defeat in the 1976 African Soccer Championship. These plots, with their mass purges, arrests and imprisonment, eventually gave way to the 'perennial plot', and Guinea closed its borders and was effectively cut off from the rest of the world. Sékou Touré's public appearances had now become rare.

This is not the Guinea that is portrayed in the material produced on the Syliphone label. There were no songs released which made mention of the plethora of plots, the economic conditions, the riots, the political repression, or of the exodus of one quarter of the population. Rather, what is presented are songs that speak of 'the happiness of the people, and of the youth'⁴⁴ and which invite the listener to 'imagine victorious warriors [are] dancing their success' to the music.⁴⁵ Notwithstanding Guinea's government was extremely repressive during the 1970s, such was the domineering nature of the party's rule that there are no examples of songs of dissent, rather quite the opposite.

Perhaps where Guinea's music of the period was most unrepresentative, however, was in its failure to give voice to non-Malinké musicians and groups. In Guinea the major language group are Fula, who represent forty percent of the population, yet the majority of the orchestras were dominated by Malinké musicians. Even though orchestras were created in major Fula centres such as Pita, the third largest city in Guinea, the local orchestra⁴⁶ failed to record a single song for Syliphone. The recording output of the entire Futa Djallon region (which represents the Fula heartland) was negligible, with no significant releases until 1980.⁴⁷ Furthermore, there were very few recorded examples of epics from the Fula traditional repertoire. This underscores the suppression of Guinea's ethnic groups during Sékou Touré's rule, who collectively

⁴⁴ Liner notes to 'Dia Doni', Camayenne Sofa, *A grand pas*, Syliphone, SLP 56, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1976. Camayenne Sofa were originally named 'Kakilambé Jazz de Conakry II', after their precinct in Conakry. They later became 'Les Sofas des Camayenne', taking their name from the term for a soldier who fought under Samori Touré ('Sofa') and a residential quarter in Conakry ('Camayenne').

⁴⁵ Camayenne Sofa, *A grand pas*, *Op Cit*.

⁴⁶ Kinkon Jazz (originally 'Fetoré Jazz').

⁴⁷ Télé-Jazz de Télémelelé, *La fête au foutah*, Syliphone, SLP 74, 33.3 rpm disc, ca 1980.

represented the PDG's main political opponents during his presidency. The ethnocentrism of the Syliphone label contradicted the policies of the PDG, which regarded itself as a party of the masses. The PDG pursued nationalism as its ideal, and sought to portray Guinea, through musical and theatrical performances, as a cohesive and fraternal nation. The PDG's cultural policies were directed towards a similar ideal, yet the reality was a different matter altogether. What is clear is that a Malinké cultural paradigm dominated the arts, with the President and the PDG as the chief patrons.

Conclusion

From circa 1967 to 1983 the Syliphone label produced a great wealth of inventive and original music which was an inspiration to audiences throughout Africa. During the era of Sékou Touré, Guinean music was the *avant garde* of African music, and it pioneered the concept of a return to the source for inspiration. It was truly ahead of its time; and according to Métoura Traoré, the *chef d'orchestre* of the Horoya Band National, 'was like the lighthouse to music in Africa. And yet they said it couldn't be done – to modernise African music.'⁴⁸ Guinea's orchestras, via their releases through the Syliphone label, proved the sceptics wrong, and the music continues to inspire listeners all over the world. Popular interest in the Syliphone catalogue has remained steady, and several music companies⁴⁹ have been re-releasing the original material on compact disc, with over thirty CDs currently available. The cultural policies of Guinea may be considered a success in this regard, in that a great volume of music was produced of a very high standard.

The music, however, told only half the story. Guinea had shown that her ancient musical traditions were still vital and appropriate to the modern world and that their dignity had been fully restored. Accordingly, Guinea's cultural policies were lauded by other governments, including those of Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Côte d'Ivoire, who introduced similar models with differing degrees of success. The cultural policies of Guinea failed, however, in their stated policy to 'assert the full rights of the people', for they effectively silenced opposition ethnic groups whilst establishing a personality cult around President Touré and the PDG.

⁴⁸ Interview with Métoura Traoré, August 21 2001.

⁴⁹ Syllart, Mélodie, Stern's, Sonodisc, Popular African Music, and Bolibana.

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Syliphone discography

A complete discography was first published by the author in 'Music in Guinea's first republic', in Jan Jansen (ed.), *Mande-Manding. Background Reading for Ethnographic Research in the Region South of Bamako*, Leiden: Leiden University Department of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology, 2004, pp. 284-301. A copy is available from the author on request.

The World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategies and Africa: Realistic Expectations and Civic Engagement

Helen Ware

Current World Bank policy emphasizes poverty reduction as the central objective of its development assistance and works through national Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes (PRSPs) to direct and coordinate national development plans and Bank/IMF and donor inputs. Some thirty poor African countries have as a result now gone through the travail of producing formal PRSPs. For the most part these PRSPs have not had the time to have had a significant impact on the poverty crisis. They have been strongly criticized, especially by radical critics of the Bank's dominant economic neo-liberalism and of the widespread assumption amongst donors that there is only one path to economic development since the demise of the USSR.¹ This short article does not enter into that debate rather taking the vices and virtues of the Bank's economic policies as givens.² The PRSP process is based *inter alia* on the Bank's premise that previous structural adjustment programmes have failed due to the lack of a 'genuine' government commitment and the lack of focus on the impact on the poor. This paper adopts a different perspective. It questions and seeks to generate debate on the reasonable expectations of what can be achieved by African Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC), given the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, and on the role of 'civil society' in defining those expectations and how they should be attained. In this way it hopes also to introduce possibly unfamiliar readers to the African PRSP experience and to the vast data base which is being built up in the process on the causes and cures of poverty in Africa

The background to PRSP: linking debt relief to poverty reduction

The PRSP Process developed through the 1990s out of the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) initiatives for debt-relief. In 1996 the international community agreed for the first time to allow some debts to the World Bank and the IMF to be written off. Then in September 1999, pressured by international concerns that the world's poor received more lip-service than aid, the World

¹ J. Morgan 'The upside down world of neoliberal economics' <www.glovesoff.org>

² This paper is a revised version of part of a much longer paper given at the 2003 AFSAAP African Studies Conference in Adelaide in October 2003 which will be published in the *Proceedings* of the Conference, forthcoming. A further paper is in progress on the conflict between World Bank conditionalities and state sovereignty.

Bank announced that all governments hoping to receive concessional financing or debt relief would be required to develop their own Poverty Reduction Strategy in the form of a PRSP. Instead of macro-economic stability and growth being the sole focus as under previous structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) the rhetoric moved the goal of reducing poverty to centre stage. PRSPs were to be: country driven and nationally 'owned'; results oriented; comprehensive; partnership oriented and based on long term perspectives. Whilst all countries receiving concessional funding would ultimately be required to prepare PRSPs the immediate pressure was on the HIPC's who could not receive debt-relief until they had done so. In November 1999 the HIPC Initiative was 'enhanced' to allow debt reduction to reach ninety percent, or more if necessary, to achieve sustainability in repayments defined as annual payments no greater than 150 percent of exports (terms harsher than those imposed on Germany after World War II). The end result was that previous economic performance conditionalities were joined together with commitments to poverty reduction strategies. Some twenty-eight out of the thirty countries with bigger debts eligible for enhanced HIPC relief were in Africa.³ As of April 2004 only ten of these African HIPC's had actually achieved debt relief, while fifteen were in limbo, trying to qualify but yet to satisfy the IMF that they met financial management criteria agreed to in their interim/final PRSPs; the urgency being that the HIPC Initiative currently expires in December 2004.

Great expectations: but what can be *reasonably* expected?

One common problem with almost all examinations of the lack of economic progress and poverty reduction in Africa has been their failure to consider what would be a realistic expectation. Many African countries (covering a third of the total population of the continent) are afflicted by civil war and internal revolts which blight the most basic of economic opportunities. The prescribed economic solutions also require suffering at first and do not deliver rewards quickly enough to make them easy for governments, most especially struggling democracies, to stick to.⁴ Donors want 'good governance' by which they certainly mean democracy (alongside financial transparency etc.) but democracies, and especially nascent African democracies, find it very hard to deliver economic reforms.⁵ As the OECD's paper on reconstruction in the Democratic Republic of the Congo exemplifies there is a clear conflict between trying to insist on rigid

³ J. Sachs 'Resolving the debt crisis of low income countries' *Brookings papers on Economic Activity* 2002, 257-279.

⁴ For a detailed exploration of these issues see on Ghana see E. Hutchful, *Ghana's Adjustment Experience, the Paradox of Reform*, Washington, World Bank Institute, 2002.

⁵ R. Abrahamsen, *Disciplining Democracy: Development Discourse and Good Governance in Africa*. London, Zed Books, 2001; A. Leftwich, *States of development: on the primacy of politics in development*, Cambridge, Polity, 2000.

economic orthodoxy, and trying to envisage ways of bribing or motivating men, who have spent their lives fighting, to disarm.⁶ The outcome is an implausible document which requires the government to be at once spendthrift and frugal and envisages the private sector riding to the rescue of the Congo through the establishment of export manufacturing zones. A country at war, both internally and with those on its borders, is thus required to achieve economic miracles beyond the capability of its neighbours who are at peace!

We need therefore to ask what achievements can reasonably be expected of an African HIPC in the space of say a decade? In terms of improved economic standards for society as a whole? Would raising the average per capita income from a dollar a day to two dollars a day be a reasonable goal? This has been achieved within a decade by some developing countries but not by HIPCs unless, like Equatorial Guinea, they discover oil.⁷ The one advantage of being a HIPC is that the base is so low that some progress should be relatively easy to achieve. This has to be the hope for countries such as Mozambique, where peace has come, progress is possible and there are not the lootable (e.g. diamonds) or blockable (e.g. oil) resources which so encourage civil disorder elsewhere.⁸

Much of the Bank's planning for development in Africa is based on the premise that if countries get their policies right investment will follow. Yet Africa is not, and will not readily become, a good place to invest.⁹ Some thirty-nine percent of African private wealth is held abroad. From the mid-1970s investment rates in Africa indicated that per capita income growth should have continued rather than stagnating for a quarter of a century. Yet Botswana is the only country in Africa to have experienced high private investment rates and high growth.

Botswana, alongside its 'responsible' economic policies has been uniquely blessed by peace, diamonds and ethnic unity. Botswana being too rich to be eligible for concessional finance does not need to be a PRSP country. Yet it is far from being Africa's only paradise. It has a sad world record adult HIV infection rate of thirty-six percent¹⁰ which darkens the country's longer term prospects. It

⁶ OECD 'Economic reconstruction in post-transitions; lessons for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)', Development Centre document 26/2003. OECD, Paris.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ M.Ross, 'Oil, drugs and diamonds: the varying role of natural resources in civil war' in R. Ballentine and J. Sherman (eds), *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance*, Boulder, Lynne Reiner, 2003.

⁹ R. Lensink and H. While, 'Does the revival of international private capital flows mean an end to aid? An analysis of developing countries' access to private capital', *World Development*, 26 (7), 1998, pp. 1221-1235.

¹⁰ UNAIDS *The Least Developed Countries Report*, 2002.

also has a third of its population still living on less than a dollar per day.¹¹ At the other extreme is Gambia, with minimal natural resources and rapidly growing poverty levels, with a population of 1.5 millions - only half of whom can grow/afford basic food supplies or are literate. The Gambia's PRSP was written in haste by a consultant. It fails to provide a realistic description of the country's meagre resources and prospects. Indeed, the whole PRSP process takes the external economic conditions for African countries as granted and unchangeable. Terms of trade and their economic consequences for the African economies are not open to discussion.

Apart from failing to define a reasonable destination PRSPs fail also to define an achievable time-table. Expectations are always that positive change in Africa should be rapid. Whilst this fits the time-tables of donors who are bound by their own budgeting and electoral cycles it is totally unrealistic on the ground. Economic management of inflation and the current account can be changed quite rapidly but this may not have an early impact on poor women semi-subsistence farmers in under-serviced rural areas. The PRSPs list indicators which can be monitored on annual basis. While this is reasonable for some measures such as the number of children in school or clinics equipped with medical kits it is quite unreasonable for outcome measures such as infant and child mortality or employment levels which can only be expected to show gradual improvement.

It would be very useful to have estimates of the range of per capita costs of delivering the most basic of education, health and security services to the population of a poor African country. Far too much of the discussion of budgeting in the PRSPs is in terms of what the government will spend – not in terms of what the cost of full coverage would be. To take an illustrative example from 1990 to 1995 Zambia averaged US \$118 per capita per annum in aid. Assuming that the average wage for a teacher/ nurse was \$750 and that wages represent eighty percent of education/health costs then if spent only on education and health, aid inputs would have covered universal teacher pupil ratios of 1:20 and an extremely well-staffed and supplied health service. There are a set of international targets for developing countries in education, health etc. known as the UN Millennium Development Goals. It would be possible to use these as the basis for national 'business plans', but this would show that not even total debt relief would pay for the basic services needed.¹² WHO has shown that for sub-Saharan Africa to extend essential health services to two-thirds of the population would require health budgets to rise from four percent of GNP to thirteen

¹¹ For a different view see L. Lawson, 'Globalisation and the African State', *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 41 (3), 2003, pp. 37-59.

¹². Sachs *op cit*.

percent. Cancelling all debts and spending all the money on health would still leave a gap of four to five percent to be filled by donors. Since this will not happen, even for health, African governments will not have the resources to provide for basic needs by 2015.

The PRSP participation/consultation process

In almost every area the Bank assumes that social or economic change is much easier and more rapidly to be achieved than is realistic or plausible. Thus a key feature of the PRSP process is the strict requirement that the design of the programme be a participatory process. There is an expectation that the rural poor can be immediately empowered to enable them to play an active role in the policy process; so that 'One of the main objectives of the PRSP process is to bring the voice of the poor to the negotiating table and to involve all stakeholders in designing and implementing poverty reduction activities'.¹³ The Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) did succeed in extending the PRSP consultation process by six months, in involving 'civil society' in the thematic working groups, and in increasing PRSP elements in the budget so that one reviewer concluded 'Despite logistical problems and uneven depth, this has been the most participatory policy process in Malawi to date.'¹⁴ The complexities of consulting with the rural poor are however enormous as workers have described for Sierra Leone.¹⁵

This is a requirement for democracy not as expressed through parliament and other elected governmental bodies but for the participation of 'civil society' which implies some mistrust of democracy. World Bank staff move forwards and backwards between describing 'civil society' as participating in or being consulted in the drafting of PRSPs without recognizing the differences between the two modes.¹⁶ Nowhere is there a discussion of how conflicting views are to be dealt with nor by whom. Parliaments are seen as existing to endorse PRSPs and incorporate them in their budgets.¹⁷

There is no process for examining the representativeness of members of 'civil society' who have enough understanding of the economic issues to participate in

¹³ R. Longo 'An IFAD desk review of the PRSP process in Eastern and Southern Africa', Rome, IFAD, 2002. Longo, *op cit*.

¹⁴ Longo, *op cit*.

¹⁵ S. Archibald and P. Richards 'Converts to human rights? Popular debate about war and justice in rural central Sierra Leone', *Africa*, 72 (3), 2002, pp. 339-368.

¹⁶ S. Wagle *et al*, *Participation in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers* (Summary of Submissions) Washington, World Bank, 2002.

¹⁷ K. Hubli and A. Mandaville, 'Parliaments and the PRSP Process' Washington, World Bank Institute, 2004.

the consultations. The kinds of consultations associated with the PRSPs (groups travelling around the countryside and thematic working groups) do not work well in drawing up budgets because each interest group promotes its own area of interest and there is no arena for trade-offs between groups; so that one observer concluded that ‘Most of the strategies contained in the PRSP are simply the sum of sectoral strategies and few countries have adopted clear and transparent criteria for the prioritisation of activities’.¹⁸ Tanzanian experience shows that richer regions have profited from their greater skill in putting forward their cases for assistance.¹⁹ If the interests of the poor are to be reflected in the PRSP this will almost inevitably be through some intermediary group, yet trade unions and co-operative groups have been barred from the prioritizing meetings as ‘special interest’ groups.²⁰ In Malawi the local trade unions were strongly involved in discussions on spending priorities but were not allowed to participate in the working group on ‘macroeconomic and poverty targets’.²¹ The PRSP process is thus based on a remarkably a-political view of life in which people and groups do not hold irreconcilable differences or views over goals or priorities. There is an assumption that ‘civil society’ represents an unambiguously progressive space but little questioning of the internal power relations or of the relationship between ‘civil society’ and national governments.²²

While African governments are being asked to add another layer of complexity through consultations with a wide range of groups such a process can only work if there are alternatives to be discussed which involve policy and budgetary choices; such as should the government focus on A or B. One disadvantage of the present consultative framework is that its solutions are based upon what people intuitively believe will work even if previous experience in the same region strongly suggests that such solutions have never worked in the past. Many of the proposed Malawian solutions are in the form of ‘educated people earn more therefore if there are more educated people the national income will rise’; or ‘farmers who grow tobacco have higher incomes therefore tobacco growing should be encouraged’ (even in place of food crops?). As the PRSP itself details, Malawi has had a very poor history of success with micro-credit, yet here too micro-credit is once again to be the saviour – with the additional possibility of farmers being newly able to totally ruin themselves and their families by using

¹⁸ Longo, *op cit*, p. iv.

¹⁹ R. Alonso and R. Utz, ‘PRSP process and pro-Poor Budgeting in Tanzania’. Poverty Day presentation, 2003.

²⁰ ICFTU, Submission to the IMF/World Bank Review of the PRSP Process, International Federation of Free Trade Unions, Washington, 2001.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² T. Kesall, ‘Governance, democracy and recent political struggles in mainland Tanzania.’ *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 41 (2), 2003, pp. 55-68.

their land as security for debt.²³ National protein consumption is falling because of over-fishing of the lake – yet as consequence of consultations there are proposals for yet more fishing. Consultation would need to be much deeper and more intensive to resolve problems of the commons such as this.

One valuable role for consultation can be in informing people about how the government works and how within limited finances choices do have to be made. For Zambia there is now some invaluable information about how ordinary people actually understand politics.²⁴ The researchers asked groups of people for the criteria used to evaluate the new government. On the positive side were free speech, availability of basic commodities, the food-for-work program during the drought and the increasing availability of drugs in clinics and desks in schools. But the overall impression was more negative with high inflation and unemployment leaving families who had formerly bought maize-meal in twenty-five kilo bags scraping to buy one-litre tins. Yet only some of the office-workers believed that the government could achieve changes. The farmers had given up hope. Most respondents had no idea where the government's money came from, raising the question of just how much public education would be required before consultation over a PRSP could have real meaning.

A genuine consultation process would offer people alternatives and choices to debate. That this does not happen with the PRSPs is in part because the economic framework on which they are based is not allowed to be debated (the twenty criteria of the Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment are non-negotiable) and this existence of an economic policy no-go area has a pernicious effect on the whole process. As a result the real debate for example in Malawi and Zambia is about whether to have a PRSP at all, and therefore little attention is devoted to making the PRSP as pro-poor as possible. A debate over priorities might raise questions such as whether a country which has a national pupil to qualified teacher ratio of 114:1 (since the introduction of 'free' primary education in 1994) should make special education a priority. (Indeed, does special education appear in the PRSP because a special education group attended the consultations or because this was a concern of one of Malawi's donors or because special education is on some World Bank check list?).

²³ J. Copestake *et al.*, 'Assessing the impact of micro-credit: SA Zambian case study', *Journal of Development Studies*, 37 (4), 2001, p. 81.

²⁴ M. Bratton and B. Liatto-Katunda, 'A focus group assessment of political attitudes in Zambia', *African Affairs*, 93 (373), 1994, pp. 535-564.

AIDS and the reduction of poverty

Finally it is impossible to discuss expectations of the direction in which African economies are going without considering the impact of AIDS. Zambia and Malawi are good examples. It is possible to show for Zambia that if all aid had gone into investment and investment had yielded an average growth pay-off (an Incremental Capital-Output Ratio of 3.5) then Zambia's per capita income by 1995 would have reached \$20,320. Instead it declined to around \$600 or thirty-four times less!²⁵ In relation to its PRSP Zambia and the IMF have continued in an on-and-off relationship over economic management requirements relating to public sector wages and bank privatization. Malawi is an extremely resource poor country burdened, like Zambia, by its landlocked location; heavily populated and with very few options. Aid represents more than twenty percent of Malawi's GNI and more than a third of the total public budget is donor financed. Malawi's PRSP is one hundred percent politically and ideologically correct by World Bank standards and probably eighty-five percent unachievable by any realistic standard. It scores very highly in terms of consultation (although it is unclear how many of the twenty-nine percent of citizens who are desperately poor or even the further thirty-four percent of the simply poor were actually involved). Few Malawians own beds, tables or chairs while some eighty-one percent of the expenditure of the rural poor is spent on food – these are subsistence farmers and still they go hungry because their plots are too small and they cannot afford fertilizers. Security is so poor that people have given up raising animals simply to see them being stolen.

Both countries face the devastating consequences of the AIDS epidemic. Both are afflicted by rising infant mortality while life expectancy at birth in Zambia has now fallen from forty-four years in 1990 to thirty-three years in 2000. Much empathy is required to imagine what it would be like to plan one's life with little expectation of living beyond the age of forty. Half of all children under fifteen in Zambia have lost at least one parent to AIDS. Inevitably, the practical results of AIDS are felt in every sphere. For example, in Malawi, the agricultural extension services lose nine percent of their trained workers each year. In Zambia some 1,600 teachers train annually whilst 1,300 die with HIV/AIDS. 'Civil society' is expected to combat and deal with the disease, but there is little discussion of the impact of the disease upon civil society's ability to participate in good governance. Even in relatively rich South Africa 'civil society' organizations are coming under pressure to leave pro-democracy work aside in favour of joining in the unending struggle to assist those affected by AIDS.²⁶ UNAIDS argues that

²⁵ Easterly, 'The quest for growth: how we wandered the tropics trying to figure out how to make poor countries rich.'

²⁶ R. Manning 'The impact of HIV/AIDS on civil society, assessing and mitigating impact: tools and

‘the organizational survival of civil society institutions is under threat, with a corresponding impact on democracy’.²⁷

Even without AIDS thirty-eight percent of children in Malawi are underweight and sixty percent are stunted. How soon can a World Bank ‘B’ score for economic management deliver more food into the mouths of Malawian toddlers? Yet in the PRSPs ‘HIV/AIDS is not considered as a cross-cutting issue for rural development but is purely addressed as a health issue.’²⁸ Where AIDS is so widespread it becomes necessary to *start* from a life expectancy of thirty-three and ask what can be done and where resources can have a real impact and whether indeed training agricultural extension workers should have priority.²⁹

Conclusion

It would be a mistake for anyone with an interest in contemporary African economics or politics to ignore the questions raised by the realities of today’s African environment in which the PRSPs have to be implemented. Africa needs more informed debate on the whole PRSP process itself and the results it produces. The PRSPs moreover provide a vast and rich accessible body of information from which to start. The World Bank could do far more to recognize the realities of politics and set out some real options/issues for democratic debate to resolve before things fall apart. As for those countries with apparently insuperable difficulties some kind of international trusteeship is now increasingly discussed with some even concluding that ‘some system of supervision of “failed” states as a precondition for receiving aid looks inevitable’.³⁰

models for NGOs and CBOs’, Health Economics and HIV/AIDS Research Division (HEARD), University of Natal, Durban. And see also Elizabeth Reid’s articles in *ARAS* June 2002, December 2002 and in this issue.

²⁷ UNAIDS 2001, para 8.

²⁸ Longo 2002, *op cit*, p. v.

²⁹ UNAIDS 2001, *op cit*.

³⁰ R. Skidelsky, ‘A Janus-faced world. The breaking of Nations: Order and Chaos in the 21st Century’ *New Statesman*, 132 (4664) pp. 47-50. November 17th 2003.

South Africa Ten Years On: The Tensions Between Issues and Loyalty

Paul Nursey-Bray

As President Thabo Mbeki said on the day of the election, ‘The politicians have been doing a lot of talking ... it’s now time for the people to speak.’¹ Speak they did on April 15, to such good effect for the African National Congress (ANC) that it won a landslide victory, securing just under seventy percent of the vote nationally and thus, for the first time, a two thirds majority in the National Assembly. This would allow for constitutional change, although President Mbeki has rejected any such idea. Whether this resolve will become weaker as his second and constitutionally final term moves towards its end is a question for the future. For the present the ANC dominates the South African political scene as never before. It has secured a majority of seats in all but two Provincial Assemblies, Western Cape and Kwazulu-Natal. Importantly it outpolled Mangosuthu Buthelezi’s Inkatha party in the latter Province, the latter’s home territory, and with the minority parties formed a new Provincial government.² In fact Inkatha’s vote was down across the country to a low of seven percent and Buthelezi lost his cabinet post of Minister of Home Affairs.

Party	2004		1999	
	No. of Seats (400)	%	No. of Seats (400)	%
ANC	279	69.75	266	66.50
DA	50	12.50	38	9.50
IFP	28	7.00	34	8.50
UDM	9	2.25	14	3.50
NNP	7	1.75	28	7.00
Others	27	6.75	20	5.00

Meanwhile the New National Party, successor to the organization that both created and oversaw the ending of apartheid, became virtually a political nonentity, polling a mere 1.7% of the vote, a significant fall from the 20.4% the National Party polled in 1994. It managed a little better in its stronghold of Western Cape where it polled sufficiently well (9.4%) to maintain its role as the ANC’s partner in government. It should be noted however that even here its

¹ <http://www.sabcnews.com/features/elections_2004/>

² *The Mercury*, 26 April 2004, Archive, <<http://www.themercury.com.za>>

vote represented a distinct decline from 34.4% in 1999, which in itself was down on the 56.2% it achieved as the National Party in the 1994 election when it formed the Provincial Government in its own right.

All of this suggests that, beneath the overarching dominance of the ANC, there are some important changes in the South African political landscape. The most interesting of these has been the continued rise of the Democratic Alliance, headed by Tony Leon. Having announced its growing political presence and strength in the last municipal elections, it secured 12.4% of the vote in 2004 for a total of fifty seats, an increase of twelve over its 1999 total when it was the Democratic Party. This has meant that it continues in its role as the official opposition, a role that it inherited from the New National Party in 1999.

The other seventeen parties contesting the election won a total of twenty-seven seats which were divided among only eight of the total. Significantly none of the parties that might be seen to be the bearers of more extreme views from a previous era, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania and the Vryheidsfront Plus for instance, polled more than 0.9% of the vote. It is also significant that the election was conducted peacefully and harmoniously even in hotly contested areas such as Kwazulu-Natal, a political arena that, in 1994, witnessed fierce clashes and many deaths.

This was South Africa's third successful multi-racial, multi-party election. It was also, of course, an election held in a new century and one that marked the end of a ten-year period for the New South Africa. As is the way with human kind the decadal moment is always one for reflection and review for a nation as for an individual. Political commentators have, as a result, been engaged in prolific analyses and discussion of both what has been achieved and, perhaps more importantly, what problems remain to be resolved, while at the same time reading these findings back into a commentary on the election results. Was the ANC returned so overwhelmingly because of its successes or because there was no alternative? Does it command loyalty as a political party or does its hold on popular support still flow from its status as the liberation movement that orchestrated the struggle for freedom? Is it possible, as some have suggested, that, despite its success, there is disaffection among the populace?

Figures have been produced to show that only 56% of all eligible voters cast their ballots. More than six million eligible voters, apparently, did not cast their ballots. On this basis it can be shown that only 36% of the total voting population voted for the ANC, which detracts somewhat from the landslide view of the victory. Certainly the national voting turnout has decreased since

South Africa's first 'one person one vote' election.³ In 1994 19.4 million people voted, in 1999 just over 16 million; and in 2004 under 16 million, a figure that must be set against a substantial rise in South Africa's population. Dale McKinley, an activist with the Anti-Privatization Forum (APF), has argued that these figures imply a rejection of the election by a disaffected electorate disappointed with ANC policies. 'The lack of participation,' McKinley argues, 'confirms the huge potential that exists for South Africa's social movements, along side the rank-and-file of the organised working class, to fill the political vacuum and build a visible and radical people's power alternative to the ANC.'⁴ But this point of view has, unsurprisingly, been contested, particularly by those within the ANC, who assert that the 2004 election saw poor and working class voters supporting the ANC in even greater numbers than in 1999. The main constraint on voting in the townships, asserts Michael Sachs, a national research coordinator for the ANC, 'was the inability of the Independent Electoral Commission to supply adequate resources to accommodate the large numbers of voters who were prepared to queue long into the night to exercise their democratic rights.'⁵

What can this be taken to mean? Sachs argues that it was 'among whites, the middle class, those dwelling in formal housing with access to services and urban residents that McKinley is most likely to find his elusive constituency of the politically apathetic. Both voter turnout and the level of ANC support', he argues, 'were significantly higher among the rural poor, residents of informal settlements and the unemployed than in the rest of the population.'⁶ Does this suggest that the election was contested on the basis of traditional loyalties rather than on the question of policy issues? Or is this simply another way of saying that there was no alternative to the ANC? Such a view is challenged by the evidence of people changing their allegiances, with clear shifts from the Inkatha Freedom Party to the ANC across the country, most significantly in Kwazulu, and with a continued fall in support for the NNP.

None of this alters the monolithic character of the ANC, a character that some commentators see as a problem for the operation of a successful multi-party democracy in South Africa. The history of the African struggle for independence provides us with abundant evidence of the difficulties that successful liberation movements find in forming themselves into political

³ Dale McKinley, 'New power to the people', *Mail and Guardian*, 16 May 2004, Archive, <http://www.mg.com.za>.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Michael Sachs, 'The poor believe in the poll', *Mail and Guardian*, 21 May 2004, Archive, *op.cit.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

parties able not only to contest elections but to lose them. This is not a question of manipulative politicians, although there are plenty of instances of the liberation card being played to good effect. The antics of Robert Mugabe spring readily to mind in this regard. But such is the strength of the liberation inheritance in South Africa that without overt manipulation the ANC's history and standing can mobilize voters and overwhelm its opponents. Thus, even with an exculpation of ANC leaders of manipulative intent, the fact of the ANC's monolithic presence, its genuine status as the agency of change in the extreme conditions of apartheid, inevitably create the virtual one party system that currently characterizes the South African political system.

It is a question of importance to the future of South Africa as an open and vibrant multi-party system as to whether issues about policy alternatives have become submerged beneath group loyalties, whatever the credibility of such loyalties. In this regard it is heartening to note the dissenting views reported above. The fact that the apparently overwhelming success of the ANC this year can be criticized and questioned points to a forum of ideas that can host critical and alternative views. It also points to the existence of a vibrant and critical free press and an openness regarding political debate unusual for Africa. Certainly this was one of the things that impressed me last year when I spent a month attached to the University of Natal (now Kwazulu Natal following a merger) in Durban. It was also obvious that there were clear areas of difficulty and dispute, where ANC policies were constantly being subjected to scrutiny and criticism. It is useful to examine these areas as a way of showing that issues do count, and as a way not only of gauging the successes and shortcomings of the ANC political programme, but of highlighting challenges that the government will face during its third term of office. These key areas of policy debate are those associated with poverty and unemployment; with AIDS; with crime; and with the land issue. Here the main focus will be on the issue of poverty and unemployment with the other issues given a briefer review.

Poverty

South Africa, as is well known, has an economy distorted by the policies of apartheid. It is a distortion that persists despite the end of a racially organized system and the emergence of a black middle class and remains a dominant feature of the economic and social landscape.

In many ways South Africa has the profile of a developing country. It ranked as the world's 34th largest economy by GDS in 2002 according to World Bank

figures⁷ with manufacturing making up 1/5th of the total GDP. Currently there are seven local car assembly plants with Toyotas being exported to Australia and BMWs to Europe.⁸ Local firms are involved with Saab in the manufacture of the Grippen fighter while the weapon imaging system on the pilot face-plate of the Eurofighter is being sourced in South Africa. Over the last ten years there has been a movement of economic activity from mining and industrial towards service and information rich industries, a trend mirroring that in the OECD countries.⁹

Suggestions have recently surfaced that South Africa should compare itself to OECD countries and not to other African states, in order to get the most applicable measure. There is much to be said for this viewpoint as providing a better benchmark for measuring South Africa's progress since it is, in African terms, a colossus that makes nonsense of comparative measures within the Continent. Yet despite the developed character of the commanding heights of South Africa's economy the problems of real poverty remain. While these are largely the results of the distortions of the apartheid years they are also a product, or at least a reciprocal, of the government adherence to neo-liberal economic policies encouraged by the World Bank and World Trade Organisation, involving privatization and deregulation. As with other countries where neo-liberal economic policies have been adopted, like the USA, the UK and Australia, the result has been an increase in total wealth, but a growth in the differential between rich and poor. For South Africa, where the poor start from such a low base, the effect has been dramatic in terms of unemployment, poverty and distress. In fact at the bottom end of society very large numbers of people live outside the formal economy. Official figures put unemployment at thirty percent, but it is generally agreed that forty percent is more accurate. These are the shanty dwellers; people who, like a flight of human locusts, can appear overnight from rural areas in their thousands, and through scavenging and improvisation create a new neighbourhood.

One of the best accounts of the poverty and wealth differentials ten years after the initial election has been provided by Sampie Terreblanche, Emeritus Professor of Economics at the University of Stellenbosch. On October 9 last year he gave a paper at the Black Management Forum entitled 'Reflections on South African Democracy – the First Decade – Socio-Economic Environment'.¹⁰ The views presented reflected the findings of his book *A*

⁷ < <http://www.worldbank.org/data/databytopic/GDP.pdf>>

⁸ *The Mercury*, Business News, Oct 7 2003, Archive, *op.cit.*

⁹ Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Profile, *South Africa*, 2003, (London, The Unit, c1986-)

¹⁰ Reported in *This Day*, Thursday October 10, 2003, News Section, p. 4.

History of Inequality in South Africa 1632-2002.¹¹ Terreblanche calls South Africa a 'three class nation' or a 'three nation nation' with the non-working underclass that has, he argues, been very much neglected by the government. 'The socio-economic position of the underclass is not only problematic but has become critical', he states.¹² Citing a recent Human Rights Commission report, Terreblanche notes that seventeen million people live below the poverty line. 'The people of the underclass', he says, 'are voteless, voiceless, pathetically powerless and even faceless'.¹³

There have of course been dramatic changes in the distribution of wealth in South Africa over the last thirty years. Even before the end of apartheid a black economically empowered class was emerging and was encouraged to do so by the then National Party government. As a result the whites' share of total income declined from seventy-one percent in 1970 to less than fifty percent today. The top twenty-five percent of blacks enjoyed a forty percent rise in income from 1975 to 1994 and a further thirty percent since 1994. At the same time, Terreblanche notes, the poorest forty-five percent of blacks have seen their income decline by fifty percent from 1974 to 1994 and a further ten percent since 1994,¹⁴ with a key factor being unemployment, increasing from twenty percent in 1970 to forty percent today.

In a simple but effective model Terreblanche argues that the South African population of forty-five million could be roughly divided into three socio-economic classes of roughly fifteen million each. The first group comprises a rich middle class of about four million white and eleven million black people whose position has 'improved spectacularly over the last ten years'.¹⁵ The second group is made up mainly of blacks who are poor, but not desperately poor. Basically they have access to employment either full-time or part-time, casual or permanent, with their wages and conditions supported by the powerful ally of the ANC, the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

It is the bottom fifteen million blacks who form the underclass, the unemployed, the disempowered. According to Terreblanche the government empowerment programmes have benefited the black middle class but have not altered the lot of the impoverished lower class which has in fact become worse

¹¹ *A History of Inequality in South Africa*, Durban, University of Natal Press, 2003.

¹² *This Day*, *op. cit.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

off. Terreblanche's important conclusion is that while South Africa has successfully carried out a remarkable political transformation it has not achieved the same success in the eradication of poverty; and that while this substantial underclass continues to exist the process of transformation must be seen as incomplete. Indeed, one can go further, as do a number of political commentators on the South African scene, and suggest that a failure to deal with poverty will ultimately be a fact that could destabilize the political system.

Terreblanche's criticisms have sparked some sharp responses from the ANC. Mbeki let it be known, through a minister, that he thought that Mr Terreblanche might be trying to defeat 'the process of transformation'¹⁶ and that he has underestimated the effect of the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme begun in 1994. There have indeed been signal achievements by the government in the past ten years. 1.6 million new houses have been built for the poor; seventy percent of households have been electrified; nine million people have been given access to water. All this has been achieved with a stable economy, low inflation and a growth rate of between 2.5 - 3%.¹⁷ There has also more recently been the Black Economic Empowerment Programme aimed at encouraging black entrepreneurs. Generally welcomed, critics of the programme, among them Professor Sampie Terreblanche, worry that it tends to benefit the already favoured middle class rather than the really needy. Indeed the United Democratic Movement (UDM) leader Bantu Holomisa has claimed that ANC members have been specifically favoured.¹⁸

In the aftermath of the election President Mbeki has unveiled a number of policies that seek to address the issues of poverty and unemployment. One hundred billion rand (\$US14.82 billion) has been pledged over the next five years with the aim of halving the level of unemployment. 'We committed ourselves to move our country forward decisively towards the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment in our country, taking care to enhance the process of social cohesion', Mbeki declared.¹⁹

The questions facing Mbeki and the ANC are the same central ones that starkly confronted them in 1994. In brief how is the question of poverty to be

¹⁶ 'Nettlesome', *The Economist*, Feb 27 2003 <[http://www.economist.com/cities/Printer Friendly.cfm?](http://www.economist.com/cities/Printer%20Friendly.cfm?StoryID+1606233338)
Story ID+1606233338>

¹⁷ Bamaby Phillips, 'South Africans stay loyal to democracy', *BBC News*, 15 May 2004.
<<http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/>>

¹⁸ Bantu Holomisa, 'Empowering the Chosen Few', *Citizen* 25/9/03, p.3.

¹⁹ 'Mbeki Outlines War on Poverty', *Business Week* Monday 24 May, 2004.
<<http://www.mmegi.6w/2004/May/Monday24/1272685691995html>>

confronted without adopting redistributive measures that will alarm the international finance sector, weaken the rand, discourage foreign investment and perhaps lead to a flight of capital? This is a kind of dilemma that reflects the international economic checks and balances of a globalized world geared to neo-liberal economic policies. The ANC has done well. It has lifted the growth rate from zero to three percent; it has seen overall wealth grow. But the dilemma exists because the population growth has kept pace with the growth of the economy, meaning that unemployment has not been diminished. At the same time, while the Reconstruction and Development programme has achieved great results, the effects of neo-liberal deregulation and privatization has meant, as Professor Terreblance has argued, that the 'per-capita income of the poorest two thirds, inevitably almost only black people, has dropped in the past eight years'.²⁰

Economic and social policy for the ANC is thus involved with an intricate balancing act. A strong economy, high levels of foreign investment, low inflation and good growth are all essential ingredients for a successful South Africa, but somehow they must be welded to measures for reducing the poverty that can appear as having disruptive potential for the overall operation of the economy. As can be seen over the past ten years the removal of poverty, while not ignored, has been a secondary priority rather than a primary one. Much will depend on the future balance. It is a balance that is under review particularly within the triple alliance of the ANC, Cosatu and the South African Communist Party (SACP), from whence pressures come for more redistributive policies geared to social justice.

During the Cosatu conference last September there was a concerted effort by the Unions, with clear background activity by the SACP, to influence ANC policy in the direction of social justice and redistribution. As the *Sunday Times* reported 'The government's failure to meet its own macroeconomic targets and the continued rise in unemployment and inequality here ... weakened the ANC leadership's hand in its ideological battle with Cosatu and the SACP.'²¹ In the event the ANC and Mbeki cracked the whip and its alliance partners fell into line and united with the ANC in the lead up to the election. But the policy issues remain and the pressures from Cosatu and the SACP will continue to be exerted.

²⁰ 'Nettlesome', *op. cit.*

²¹ S'hembiso Msomi, 'Friends will be friends – for now', *Sunday Times*, 21 September 2003, p. 21.

AIDS

AIDS is an issue of major significance for South Africa, not simply as a pandemic that is causing unacceptable human suffering, but as an economic factor that impacts negatively on the government's ability to deal with poverty and manage the economy. Indeed AIDS is reciprocally involved with poverty since high poverty and low education levels lead to more risk taking and increased numbers of people willing to undertake commercial sex work. The HIV positivity rate is put at roughly twenty-five percent for the country although estimates vary.²² Generally it is accepted that South Africa has one of the highest levels of HIV positivity in the world. The Treatment of AIDS Campaign (TAC) run by Zachie Achmat reports that there are 1500 new cases of AIDS a day, while 600 die from AIDS. Thus it follows there is a 900 per day increase in the incidence of AIDS.

AIDS is now seen as progressing to its 'third wave' effects. The first wave is the entrance of HIV, often a silent and undetected entrance. The second wave follows with the onset of AIDS, and the third with the social and economic effects of the disease. Disability and death remove professional expertise and workplace experience from the workforce, while insurance and disability claims represent a large additional negative economic impact. The large increase in disability claims has already led to increases in monthly premiums paid by contributors. It will, one insurance analyst warns, soon become unaffordable.²³ There is also the impact on both informal and formal social support infrastructure. It is estimated that HIV/AIDS is likely to result in a reduction of the GDP by about one percent.²⁴ Obviously all this has a disastrous impact on South Africa's capacity to generate new jobs and bring down unemployment.

The ANC's record in this area is both puzzling and poor. For a considerable period of time Thabo Mbeki has denied a link between HIV and AIDS, relating this to a rejection of the West's characterization of Africa as the source of the problem. While he has now resiled from this position as recently as last September he stated in an interview with the *Washington Post* that he did not know of anyone who had died of AIDS. His position has not been helped by the support of the largely unpopular Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-

²² Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Profiles, *South Africa*, 2001, (London, The Unit, c1986-), p. 8.

²³ Nauaal Deane, 'Disability claims rise and productivity falls...', *Mail and Guardian*, September 26-October 2, 2003, p. 10.

²⁴ 'AIDS in South Africa', <http://www.aids.org.za/aids_south_africa.htm>

Msimang, whose own contribution was to recommend home based care based on African traditional medicine.

Thus, although South Africa won an important battle with the major pharmaceutical companies regarding the production of cheap anti-retroviral drugs, the drugs were not released for a considerable time. Happily they were given a general release at the end of 2003 and the new government seems to be endorsing policies that will fight AIDS. On 21 May President Thabo Mbeki pledged that 113 AIDS health centres would be fully operational by next March, treating 53,000.²⁵ On a less bright note, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang was reappointed to the new Cabinet. Clearly a solid performance in this area is needed to redress a very real degree of foot-dragging.

Crime

Another key area of concern is the level of crime. It is a constant and unsettling problem that has become one of the major causes of migration, particularly of white professionals. But it is, in truth, a problem that affects all sections of society. Indeed, the more affluent, relatively secure beyond their razor wire fences and their computerized connections to professional security organisations, are at their key point of vulnerability when traffic light muggings are in the offing. But the mass of the population are constantly at threat from muggings, rape often gang rape, assault and robbery. Most crime is in fact black on black. No more eloquent testimony to the situation can be offered than the worried comments made to me by taxi drivers in Durban last year. A good number spoke of their constant fear, and of their recent knowledge of the robbery or even death of colleagues. This is a crime wave that can be seen as a reciprocal of the problems of poverty and AIDS, further fuelled by the ready availability of firearms in the aftermath of the struggle against apartheid and the reactive arming of the whole population that this produced.

At the end of September 2003 the police released crime figures showing an improvement in all categories of crime. These figures were treated with derision by many commentators including the official opposition, the Democratic Alliance, which presented its own figures showing that either the decreases claimed were exaggerated or that in key areas like attempted murder, assault with intent to commit grievous bodily harm, common assault, burglary and aggravated robbery there had been actual increases.²⁶ The South Africa

²⁵ 'Mbeki promises water and power', *BBC News*, 21/05/2004 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/africa/3736045.stm>>

²⁶ 'Minister 'sexed up' latest crime statistics, DA charges', *The Mercury*, 24 September 2003, p. 6.

Against Crime Action Group (Saacag) described the official police statistics as 'a joke'. Saacag chairman Kobus Hermitage said, 'The constitution no longer ensured the safety or rights of law-abiding citizens instead protecting criminals ...'²⁷ Public protests and rallies have been held in all major South African cities to unify the people against the crime wave. Thabo Mbeki used his first state-of-the nation speech in part to inveigh against crime. 'Legislation ' he asserted 'will also be introduced to ensure that we deal mercilessly with all crimes involving guns, including the illegal possession of firearms, the killing of police officers, corruption within the criminal justice system and the intimidation of witnesses.'²⁸

Land

Land reform is the last key issue. The seizure of the land of the African people by the apartheid regime was one of its most notorious features. The thirteen percent of the territory allocated for African occupation was the subject of protest and song. In truth of course this dispossession was one that marched in step with all experiences of settler colonialism, whether in South Africa or Zimbabwe, North America or Australia. With the end of apartheid it was a problem that needed urgent address. This was particularly important, not only from considerations of social justice, but because the land issue is intimately associated with unemployment and poverty in the rural areas.

The land reform program was one of the main promises made by the ANC when it came to power. It has three main planks. Firstly it seeks to restore land ownership or to compensate those whose land was appropriated during the apartheid years. Secondly there is a redistributive component which aims to redress past discrimination by giving access to land to the poor and disadvantaged. Finally there is the aim to secure tenure for all South Africans, particularly tenants who work as farm labourers.²⁹ The land reform programme is based on a 'willing buyer - willing seller' basis, as was the original scheme in Zimbabwe.

The conclusion regarding the success or failure depends on to whose account you give credence. Land Affairs Minister Thoko Didiza is enthusiastic about the results, arguing 'enormous progress had been made under our flagship "Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development" programme'.³⁰ A large

²⁷ Carol Hills, 'Official crime figures "a joke"', *The Citizen*, 25 September 2003, p. 3.

²⁸ CNN: 'S Africa's new leader Mbeki calls for crime crackdown'
<<http://www.cnn.WORLD/africa/9966/25.safrica.mbeki/>>

²⁹ IRIN news.org.<http://www.irinnews.org/webspecials/landreformsa/South_Africa.asp#top>

³⁰ IRIN news.org, *op cit*.

number of questions however remain. According to the Land Research Action Network as of the end of 2001 less than two percent of land had changed hands from white to black through the land reform programme. 'Of 68,878 land restitution claims received, only 12, 678 had been settled, benefiting less than 40,000 predominantly urban households, more than 40% of which received monetary compensation instead of land redistribution.'³¹ In short there was, according to this account, a clear failure to meet the requirements of the Reconstruction and Development Programme's planned transfer of 25.5 million hectares.

Also of concern was the finding that those benefiting from the land reform programme were not the landless poor, but a new class of commercial farmers. In other words there was a rural parallel to the urban disparity between the newly affluent black middle class and the unemployed and impoverished. A report on land reform by the University of Western Cape's programme for Land and Agrarian Studies, entitled 'Evaluating land and agrarian reform in South Africa', published last year, stated that, 'Land reform is not on target to deliver at scale to the poor.' While it found considerable achievements had been made, it concluded that:

progress has been disappointing in areas such as the transfer of agricultural land to historically deprived people and the creation of sustainable rural livelihoods.... It is unlikely that the total amount of land transferred to black ownership ...over the first ten years of democracy will amount to more than 3% of total agricultural land – one tenth of the official target.

The overall conclusion was that the land reform programme was now aimed at the creation of a new class of commercial farmers.³²

One sign of rural discontent is arguably the number of farm killings associated with farm invasions, muggings and rapes, sixty percent of the targets being white farmers and their families, which has been an area of concern and contention in recent years. An independent committee of enquiry reporting last year into such farm attacks found that the motives were principally criminal rather than political and racial and that the attackers were 'young, black men from dysfunctional families aged between 18 and 35 and with little

³¹ Land Research Action Network, 'Backgrounder_Land and Agrarian Reform in South Africa', January 21, 2003 <<http://www.landaction.org/display.php?article=60>>

³² Christelle Terreblanche, 'Landless poor losing out to new class of farmer, say researchers', *The Mercury*, Thursday, October 9, 2003, p.2.

education.... Only with rare exceptions were farm workers involved.’³³ Despite this assurance many commentators remain sceptical and see farm attacks as a symptom of something else, and something very political.

The government, however, remains very upbeat. Agriculture and Land Affairs Minister Thoko Didiza stated in May this year that she is confident that all outstanding land claims will be settled by December 2005.³⁴ This of course raises questions about the definition of land claims and what this means in terms of the overall picture regarding land reform. Clearly there are many complex issues that remain to be resolved.

Conclusion

From the survey of issues above it is clear that a landslide to the ANC does not indicate a lack of interest in issues and a blind loyalty to the ANC as a liberation movement. Issues are important and are debated across all sections of the population. That they engage popular attention is shown by the number of social movements that exist and which recruit large numbers of supporters, for instance the Treatment of Aids Campaign (TAC) of Zachie Achmat, the Anti-Privatisation Forum, the South Africa Against Crime Action Group, and the Landless People’s Movement. The existence of such social movements also demonstrates that those wishing to express critical political opinions can find alternatives to the ANC, alternatives that may, at some future date, manifest themselves as political parties and electoral alternatives.

The vote for the ANC then cannot simply be dismissed as a blindly loyal vote for a successor party to a liberation movement. Rather it suggests a high degree of informed loyalty. People are not unaware that the ANC has not fulfilled all its promises and that there are a number of areas of concern. But clearly the mass of people feel that the ANC has performed at a sufficiently adequate level to justify being given continuing support. It is not blind loyalty but justified faith in an organization that has engineered the most remarkable political, constitutional and conciliatory change in South Africa in the face of momentous odds. It is faith in a party that has delivered many of the promised benefits since 1994 while managing a strengthening and stable economy, a stable currency and a low inflation regime. There are clearly dissatisfactions and a burgeoning wave of criticism. The ANC has clearly recognized the problems involved. As is always the case in electoral policies, the proof of the

³³ Marianne Merten, ‘Robbery, not politics, behind farm attacks’, *Mail and Guardian*, September 26-October 2, 2003, p. 8.

³⁴ *Bua News*, ‘Much Progress in Land Redistribution’, 25 May, 2004.
<<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200405250036.html>>

pudding will lie in how digestible, nutritious and sustaining the policies are that are followed. Clearly the ANC has still a strong bedrock of support, importantly of informed support. Yet even such a strong base can be eroded by what is viewed as an inadequate performance. The test for the ANC is to deliver in some of the key policy areas, most particularly in the areas of wealth distribution and unemployment. A failure to do so could see what is at present contained criticisms and resentments emerge as open opposition, not only in social movements but in new political parties geared to the black vote. In such a situation the ANC, it would be hoped, would be able to resist the authoritarian turn that has so frequently bedevilled other dominant African political parties unable to square the development circle.

Refugees and Their Interpreters: The Kenyan Experience

E. Odhiambo-Abuya*

J'ai déjà demandé de l'argent de quelqu'un [à Nairobi] pour la nourriture. Parce que j'en avais assez de la vie, j'ai décidé d'acheter du poison de rat. J'ai voulu le prendre pour enlever toute cette souffrance mais j'ai décidé d'attendre l'entrevue de sécurité. Mais je ne vois toujours pas comment je pourrai voir ce jour avant que le peuple qui me recherchent m'ait attrapé.¹

Introduction

During the southern summer of 2002/2003 (November to March 2003) as Kenyans were soaking in the heat of the third multi-party general elections, the author was engaged in research on Kenya's refugee status determination (RSD) procedures. Kenya hosted more than 200,000 refugees at that time, yet, it still lacked domestic legislation to protect refugees and asylum seekers.² The research project examined different models for determining refugee status with a view to proposing a system appropriate to Kenya's situation. The main research hypothesis was that the current UNHCR status determination procedures were inadequate in terms of fairness, efficiency and accuracy within the constraints of the rule of law. Thirty-one detailed qualitative interviews were conducted with asylum seekers and refugees³

* Faculty of Law, Moi University Eldoret, Kenya; Law School, University of Sydney. E-mail: Edwina@keller.law.usyd.edu.au. Many thanks to UNHCR staff (Nairobi, Dadaab and Kakuma), Refugee Consortium of Kenya, Ministry of Home Affairs (Kenya), for the assistance provided during this research. I dedicate this article to the victims of war and persecution in Kenya. A short discussion of the issues discussed in this article was published in (2004) 19 *Forced Migration Review* 48.

¹ Translation: 'I once begged for money from someone [in Nairobi] for food. Since I was feeling annoyed because of my life, I decided to buy rat poison. I wanted to take it to remove all this suffering but decided to wait for the security interview. But I still do not see how I will be able to see that day before the people who are looking for me have caught me' (Pierre, refugee from Rwanda).

² It should be noted that Kenya is party to the 1951 *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* ('*Refugee Convention*'), its attendant *Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees* of 1967 ('*Refugee Protocol*'), and the *Organisation of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa*, 1974 ('*OAU Refugee Convention*').

³ 'Refugee' refers to any person who has fled their home state for reasons of persecution or armed conflict. See articles 1(A)(2) of the *Refugee Convention* and 1(2) of the *OAU Refugee Convention*. This article defines asylum seekers, or claimants, as persons who have come to Kenya to seek refugehood but are yet to be accorded this status.

covering topics including their experience at the RSD process; their expectations; whether they understood the processes they were taken through; whether they thought they were treated fairly; the problems they faced (if any); and if these problems were dealt with to their satisfaction. Interviews with UNHCR, NGOs, and officials of the Government of Kenya canvassed a similar set of issues, but concentrated on tapping views about how far this procedure meets the international legal standards, its merits and what legal or policy changes were needed to improve the current system in operation.⁴

A vast majority of claimants seeking asylum in Kenya are from the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region. The languages in these neighbouring and nearby States are several and vary from one region to another. The main languages that I found requiring interpretation were: French (for Congolese, Rwandese and Burundians), Kinyarwanda (for Rwandese), Kirundi (for Burundians), Lingala (for Congolese), Arabic (for Sudanese, Somalis and Ethiopians), Amharic and Tigrenga (for Ethiopians), and Somali (for Somalis). Since few asylum seekers have a good grasp of either English or Swahili (Kenya's official languages) the need is for interpreters to facilitate communication between Eligibility Officers and asylum seekers, without which the proceedings would be a 'babble of voices'⁵ with a linguistically disadvantaged claimant unable to understand the precise nature of the evidence against him/her. UNHCR Eligibility Officers who conducted RSD interviews were themselves limited in the number of languages in which they could communicate fluently. For the most part they used English, and sometimes Swahili, to conduct interviews.

This article argues, on the basis of my findings, that although interpreters play a fundamental role in the RSD process they can become obstacles instead of a link between Eligibility Officers and asylum seekers; and that eventually this adversely affects not only asylum seekers but also the entire RSD regime. In what follows the article looks first at the role interpreters are expected to play in RSD interviews before identifying three situations where interpreters have instead become obstacles in RSD interviews. UNHCR standards with regard to interpreters are then outlined before specific policy and legal changes that would improve interpreter-aided dialogues in RSD proceedings are proposed.

⁴ The Officials, asylum seekers, and refugees whom I interviewed for the purposes of this research were well qualified to speak on the matters about which they were interviewed and spoke on condition of anonymity. The interviews, to which references are made in this article in their original version, were all recorded in long hand and copies of the Interview Reports are in my office at the Law Faculty, University of Sydney.

⁵ See, *United States ex rel. Negron v New York* 434 F.2d 386 (2d Cir. 1970) at 388 (per Kaufman J).

The interpreter's role: an overview

It appeared that all that is required of an individual to be an interpreter is the ability to speak English and additionally, for the most part, any native language, French or Arabic. Formal qualification if at all it exists in the first place is immaterial. In any case, since most refugees lose their documents during flight it would be unwise to require proof of academic qualification. The lack of formal qualification does not however necessarily equal incompetence. Arthur Brise, a one-time Anglo/Russian interpreter during the pre-and post-Second World War era, argues persuasively in his memoirs that interpretation was more a matter of experience rather than academic qualification and the interpreters whom I used, despite their minimal levels of education, performed their roles to my satisfaction:

Experienced interpreters take all the demands made on them in their stride. Some of these, as I was to learn, are exacting. Hours of work are often long and tiring, there are the difficulties of finding the appropriate equivalents in one language of what has been said in the other, and such equivalents have to be accurate and complete, and must convey the exact meaning of the spoken expression; and they must be found with the least possible delay, preferably in the least split of a second. Then, the interpreter must ... not allow outward circumstances to disturb him. [They] must have self-assurance as regards [their] work, and no fear of [their] chief, whose mouthpiece [they] are. Should [they] be unlucky enough to provoke a rebuke, for slowness or any other reason, [they] must ignore it.

Such attributes are gained by training and experience.⁶

Furthermore as a guidebook to interpreters published by the Australian Refugee Review Tribunal argued, one of the hallmarks of a 'professional' interpreter is possessing 'current' knowledge.⁷ This requires interpreters to be informed not only of the past and current affairs of a claimant's state of origin, but also the vocabulary associated with these affairs. In other words, as Gile claims: an expert interpreter 'must be able to grasp not only the basic informational meaning of texts but also fine shades of meanings as expressed

⁶ Arthur H. Brise, *Memoirs of an Interpreter*, London: Michael Joseph, 1967, p. 106.

⁷ Refugee Review Tribunal, *Interpreters' Handbook*, Canberra: RRT, 1996, p. 4.

by subtle choices of words and expressions, as well as by their rhythm, music, and images.⁸

The work of an interpreter, nonetheless, is quite demanding. Dixon, Hogan and Wierzbicka contend:

Different languages are spoken in different worlds. Transferring messages from one such world into another is impossible - but far from being a simple technical operation it is a difficult and sophisticated art. To be well done, it requires not only linguistic sophistication and sensitivity to 'minor' linguistic details (which may be correlated with vast differences on conceptualization), but also an intimate knowledge of the cultures associated with the language in question, of the social and political organization of the relevant countries, and of the world-views and life styles reflected in the linguistic structure.⁹

In sum, the function of an interpreter in refugee claims is to place the non-English or Swahili speaker 'as nearly as possible in the same position'¹⁰ as an English or Swahili speaker.

In the proceedings I observed most Eligibility Officers conducted an ice breaking session to create an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect to enable a claimant to feel comfortable and respond with ease to the questions that were posed. At this session, Eligibility Officers introduced themselves and everyone else in the interview room to the claimant and explained reasons for each person's presence. The general purpose of the interview was then explained to a claimant, as were its principal objectives and what was expected of him or her. The claimant was then requested to divulge all the information within their knowledge, with the assurance that what they share will be treated confidentially. In addition to protecting and providing security to a claimant, UNHCR confirms that this reassurance is 'indispensable' to make claimants 'feel that it is safe to talk openly about past experiences and events'.¹¹ Claimants were then asked if they objected to the presence of any individual in the room and only if they raised no objections did the interview commence.

⁸ Daniel Gile, 'Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training', Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995, p. 4.

⁹ Robert M.W. Dixon, Alan Hogan and Anna Wierzbicka, *Interpreters: Some Basic Problems* Victoria: Clearing House on Migration Issues, 1980, p. 2.

¹⁰ See Justice Kenny in *Perera v Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs* (1999) 92 FCR 6, p. 18.

¹¹ UNHCR, *Interviewing Applicants for Refugee Status*, Geneva, 1995, p. 15.

Competent and incompetent interpreters: the ‘omniscient’, the ‘distortional’ and the ‘nought’

Interpreters play a fundamental role in the RSD web, and refugees and asylum seekers alike appreciate the assistance they offer. In Kenya they are normally bi-lingual refugees, all speak English and a second or third language. Introducing a third party who has an excellent understanding of the claim is seen by both officials and refugees to be to the claimant’s benefit. Baigana,¹² a refugee from Uganda, confirmed this:

One major problem [with the status determination procedures] is [Eligibility Officers] are educated and have no experience of fleeing. They are Kenyans not refugees. If they had refugees alongside them at the interview, it will help because a refugee will know the tune of the problem.

Practice however as I found demonstrates that this is not always the case. Three situations and categories of interpreter behaviour in turn are evaluated.

The first involved what I call the ‘omniscient’ or know-all interpreter who puts words in the mouths of claimants, or significantly filters what is stated. Eligibility Officers, both in Nairobi and at the camp level, admitted that in some instances when they would pose a question to a claimant who would respond in a couple of words the interpretation was overwhelmingly much longer. When I asked an interpreter for an explanation of this disparity the response was simple: ‘I know what the claimant wished to say’. This goes against the basic principle requiring interpreters to be impartial throughout the conduct of proceedings. As Alan Crouch argues: ‘a first class interpreter should never allow anything of his own opinion to manifest itself in his interpreting, and this will remain strictly impartial in relation to both clients’.¹³

Apart from this covert but unfortunate intrusion some interpreters abandoned their role and actively took part in the RSD interview. Maariam’s case is a classic example. In the interview with Maariam it was noticeable that she was totally deaf in one ear and partially deaf in the other and the interpreter had to shout at the top of his voice. Instead however of taking a passive role the

¹² The names of all interviewees have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

¹³ See Alan Crouch, *Interpreters, Translators and Legal Services: Towards a Better Understanding* Victoria: Clearing House on Migration Issues, 1980, p. 3. Crouch is a one-time Officer-in-charge, Interpreter Services Bureau of the Community Services Centre of the Victorian Premier’s Dept, Australia.

interpreter opted to play an active part in the interview. Listen to the words of Maariam sharing her experience:

I cannot say I was totally confident with the interpreter. We were just shouting like we are now. There was misunderstanding, because of my hearing problem, between the interpreter and me. I blame myself for this. Sometimes I did not understand what [the interpreter] said. One thing he said which I still remember, [when I explained my hearing problem] is, ‘you are pretending that you are deaf but you can speak or answer; that means you are lying’. When I asked him to be patient with me he asked, ‘where are your people to assist you?’ I said I have no one to assist me. I even asked the interpreter to sympathise with me as a Muslim. He responded: ‘do your job; you have to be attentive, you are the one getting the [Ration] Card’. He said eventually, ‘you are disturbing us’. All this happened at the beginning of the interview. Initially I hoped to get a Card but after this exchange, I did not think this would happen.... When I compare this [the interview with the author] with that one, this one is not an ‘exam’. That one was difficult, you are asked more questions and are expected to give exact answers. Some questions whose answers you do not know. The interview was hopeless.

As Crouch warns, the role of an interpreter is not to:

depart in any way from what is being said, or to leave things unsaid, however irrelevant, illogical, or indeed abusive they may appear to him.... [The] prime concern should be to render accurately the entire sense of what is to be conveyed without adding to it or detracting from it.¹⁴

The second category are the interpreters who misconstrue statements made by claimants. I call them the ‘distortional’ of whom refugees and asylum seekers alike expressed the concern that sometimes interpreters failed to ‘do a good job’. I found that not all Eligibility Officers inquired from claimants if they required the assistance of an interpreter or not; despite UNHCR’s clearly worded Eligibility Interview Form which required Eligibility Officers to ask claimants, *inter alia*: What language(s) do you speak?; What language do you prefer for the interview?¹⁵ However a claimant, Fathia, for instance, was asked

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁵ See UNHCR, *Eligibility Interview Form*, Checklist.

if she knew the interpreter and answered in the negative. Other Eligibility Officers assumed for instance, that all Somalis are unable to speak or communicate effectively in English or Swahili and so were forced to speak through an interpreter: Aasha, for instance, well able to maintain a conversation in English, pointed out:

I was not asked whether I needed an interpreter or not. I just found him in the interview room and when he asked questions, I responded. Even so, I was happy with him because there was no wrong. But still I think I would have performed well because I have enough speech, which I can communicate with the foreign people. Though sometimes the interpreter made mistakes. For instance, I told him I arrived in Kenya in '1999' he interpreted it as '2000'. I corrected him but I am not sure he made the interviewer aware of this.

Aasha's case does not stand in isolation. Similarly, Likambo, despite his fluency in Swahili, expressed how he was 'helpless' and had to speak through an interpreter because the interviewer 'insisted' on calling a 'Congo' man 'maybe to verify' that he came from Congo. The point being made is that as far as possible the conversation between a claimant and interviewer should be direct: it saves time - a precious commodity in asylum claims; it is bound to reduce instances of misinterpretation especially where it is problematic to find an English or Swahili equivalent of a word or phrase used by a claimant; and it instils confidence in the mind of asylum seekers. Ntibatinganya, from Burundi, expressed the following views in this regard:

I did not like the interpreter because he do not express well the idea I want to give. Better I fail myself. There are some [French] words, which lack an English equivalent.

Kimbareta, a Congolese national fluent in Swahili but whose interview was conducted with the aid of a French interpreter expressed similar sentiments. This is not to advocate the complete exclusion of interpreters in the RSD process, but rather that interpreters should only be used once an Eligibility Officer verifies that a claimant lacks a reasonable command of English or Swahili.

Finally there are instances where 'interpreters' have been found unable to speak in any language with the claimant. The practical option is for the interpreter to admit their inability to perform the task, step down, and for the

proceedings to be adjourned until a competent interpreter can be found. However, despite the undesirable results of conducting proceedings without the aid of a competent interpreter, nonetheless some interviews were conducted with the ‘aid’ of incompetent interpreters. This is inconsistent with UNHCR standards, which requires an Eligibility Officer to ask a claimant if they ‘can understand the interpreter’.¹⁶ Makele’s experience is a classical case:

I was not harassed during the interview. But the interpreter did not speak or express my feelings well in interview. Leave alone English, he cannot even speak Amharic, my mother tongue well. He is Oromo and I am Tigrenga. I was not happy. When I am talking to him, he cannot [understand] me very well.

UNHCR standards and possible solutions

Notwithstanding its non-involvement in status determination, the Government of Kenya has also expressed concern with regard to the role of interpreters. I met a Ministry of Home Affairs Official, the Ministry in charge of Refugee affairs, in whose opinion part of the problem facing the UNHCR status determination process is ‘interpreters who are very fast and interpret their own things’. Overall such situations highlight instances of the breakdown in communication between claimants and Eligibility Officers; the claimant may not understand or receive the exact question an Eligibility Officer asks, the Eligibility Officer may not receive a correct answer, but an answer is recorded. The end result is unfortunate to the entire RSD regime. Two UNHCR policy documents are available to assist and train interpreters in their roles, the 1995 ‘Interviewing Applicants for Refugee Status’ and the ‘Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status’ of 1992 (‘UNHCR Handbook’). In particular, paragraphs 190 and 192, of the UNHCR Handbook, remind decision makers that:

[A]n applicant for refugee status is normally in a particularly vulnerable situation. He finds himself in an alien environment and may experience serious difficulties, technical and psychological, in submitting his case to the authorities of a foreign country, often in a language not his own. His application should therefore be examined within the framework of specially established procedures by qualified personnel having the necessary knowledge and experience, and an understanding of an applicant's particular difficulties and needs. These basic requirements [include]: ...

¹⁶ This is one of the ‘check list’ questions asked by UNHCR. See UNHCR, *Eligibility Interview Form*.

(iv) The applicant should be given the necessary facilities, including the *services of a competent interpreter*, for submitting his case to the authorities concerned.¹⁷ [Emphasis added.]

Clearly these UNHCR status determination standards are not always maintained.

These communicational barriers require Eligibility Officers to be vigilant during RSD proceedings. In Mariam's case, for instance, an attentive Eligibility Officer would have easily noticed the exchange between Mariam and the interpreter, intervened and inquired of its details. Misinterpretation, on the other hand, may be difficult even when it is detected.

In addition three specific solutions are proposed. The first is the hiring of Kenyan Eligibility Officers who can speak asylum seekers' languages - Somali, French and Arabic. Effectively, this erases interpreters from the picture turning the interview into a direct dialogue. Alexis, a national of a Francophone country, affirmed the positive practical ramifications of this proposal on the RSD process while Ntibatinganya (see above) expressed comfort and satisfaction with the second interview because both parties spoke French, 'therefore it was easy to understand' the proceedings.

The second proposal involves retaining the interpreters but using individuals who have no interest in the outcome of the interview, such as refugees in the resettlement process. This proposal admits that it is difficult to find Kenyan nationals who have a good grasp of all indigenous languages spoken in the neighbouring and nearby States. Thus for cases involving asylum seekers from Lingala, Kinyarwanda, Tigrenga, Kirundi, and Amharic backgrounds neutral interpreters should be used to facilitate the interview. A UNHCR Eligibility Officer explained the importance of using neutral interpreters:

The problem with interpreters sometimes arises at resettlement where some tend to be biased. How do you employ a fellow refugee to interpret for a fellow who is due to be resettled? It is better to get a refugee who is similarly on the resettlement pipeline.

¹⁷ UNHCR Handbook paras 190 and 192.

Other observers support this idea. Michael Shulman, for example, contends that, if interpreters who are likely to have an interest in the proceedings are used, there is a risk of ‘inaccuracy in interpretation, whether subconscious or conscious’.¹⁸ Accordingly, he recommends ‘excluding the [claimant’s] friends, enemies [and] relatives ... from acting as an interpreter’.¹⁹

The third proposal targets a procedural step within RSD interviews. Paragraph 199 of the UNHCR Handbook reminds decision-makers to ‘clarify any apparent inconsistencies and to resolve any contradictions, ... and to find an explanation for any misrepresentation or concealment of material facts’. In this regard, Eligibility Officers are required to re-read the Interview Report to claimants to seek clarification.²⁰ For one-on-one interviews, it is easy for an Eligibility Officer to seek clarification in the course of the interview or at the end. However, owing to the indirect dialogue between an Eligibility Officer and claimant in interpreter-assisted interviews, this step is extremely crucial. Otherwise, cases of an interpreter putting words in the mouth of a claimant might escape undetected. Even so, some Eligibility Officers fail to adhere to the terms of the UNHCR advice. Not only did I personally witness the omission of this procedural step, but I also met refugees and rejected claimants who expressed similar sentiments. This is extremely troubling considering two questions UNHCR require its Eligibility Officers to ask claimants. The first asks claimants whether they wish to provide any ‘additional information’ or ‘anything further’ in respect to the interview.²¹ The second asks if the interview questions were ‘clear’ and the claimant was ‘satisfied’ with the answers they gave.²²

Aasha’s case highlights the value of this step:

The interview was okay, they did not harass me and I answered every question truthfully.... But, I was not asked if I wanted to add anything. Nor was my testimony read back to me. It would have been better if they did, so that I could add something which is missing and something which is needed to be corrected.... At

¹⁸ Michael B. Shulman, ‘No Hablo Inglés: Court Interpretation as a Major Obstacle to Fairness for Non-English Speaking Defendants’, *Vanderbilt Law Review*, 46 175, 1993, p. 190.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ See UNHCR, *supra*, note 11 advising interviewers at the end of the interview to ‘ask the applicant if [they] have anything to add, including any questions or concerns concerning the interview itself or any aspect of the determination process’ (p. 55).

²¹ UNHCR, *Eligibility Interview Form*, question 43.

²² *Ibid.*, question 44.

least the [Eligibility Officer] should have taken even 15 minutes to correct any errors.

Conclusion

In order to ensure refugee claimants a fair hearing it is important that they understand, particularly in interpreter-assisted interviews, the kind of evidence that will be used to determine their claim. Otherwise, as Shulman cautions, if an interpreter ‘makes an error and if that error affects the outcome of the process, the [claimant] cannot correct the error by showing what [they] actually said since [their] original testimony is not in the record’.²³

A good interpreter is one who is able first, from the words spoken by a claimant to provide the plainest, clearest, and simplest English or Swahili equivalent; and second, to convey this without missing the precise meaning and original intention. Undeniably when interpreters act professionally their contribution is critical in the asylum process. The reverse is true: unprofessional or incompetent interpreters could (and do) stifle the entire system. Kenyan legislation²⁴ that seeks to transfer the entire refugee protective obligation, including RSD procedures from UNHCR to the Government of Kenya, must take this into serious account. Accordingly the drafters and discussants of the Refugee Bill should not only appreciate the important role interpreters’ play in refugee claims. The proposed legislation should aim at the highest levels possible in interpreter-aided interviews and clearly outline provisions that ameliorate the communicational deficiencies identified here which otherwise stand to gravely weaken the entire asylum protection regime.

²³ *Supra*, note 18, p.186.

²⁴ Kenya’s then Minister for Home Affairs after assuming office in January 2003 promised to take the Refugee Bill which had been pending since 1993 to Parliament in October 2003. At the time of writing (June 2004) the Bill was awaiting debate.

Targeting the World: Africa Shoots Back with New Perspectives on Film

Joseph Gugler, *African Film: Re-Imagining a Continent*, Oxford, James Currey; Cape Town, David Phillip; Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2003. pp. 202. Illustrations. ISBN 0-85255-561-X (Currey p/b).
Melissa Thackway, *Africa Shoots Back: Alternative Perspectives in Sub-Saharan Francophone African Film*, Oxford, James Currey; Cape Town, David Phillip; Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2003. pp. 239.

These two new books on African cinema from the three publishers James Currey, David Phillip and Indiana University Press need to be read in tandem to be better appreciated. The two titles compliment each other in many ways and are both most welcome additions to the slowly increasing resources that support the study and understanding of films from Africa as well as African cinema in general. I make this distinction because Joseph Gugler does not shy away from confronting the breadth and width of the description and expression of the African environment through film by limiting himself only to texts that have been authored by Africans. Instead he conjoins texts that ‘image’ and re-imagine the African personality and environment despite their authorial origin¹. At the same time Thackway posits the Francophone region of Africa as a cinema by itself *vis à vis* the conventional homogeneous African cinema approach. These are two compelling aspects because the African personality needs to be contextualized in order for one to understand how to read the African film. Gugler and Thackway support the work of earlier critics including Diawara, Ukadike, Barlet, Givanni, the Pfaffs and many others who have paved the way to understanding the oftentimes difficult film texts.²

The sleeve on Gugler’s book reads ‘Joseph Gugler analyses the films in relation to their historical, socio-cultural and political contexts and offers us a new, more realistic and humanistic “window on Africa”’. Indeed Gugler does that and more and this can be witnessed by the number of new perspectives,

¹ Gugler as a result contextualizes the place of *Out Of Africa* as well *A Dry White Season* within this discussion.

² Including Olivier Barlet’s *African Cinemas: Decolonising the Gaze* (1996), June Givani’s *Symbolic Narratives / African Cinema Audiences, Theory and the Moving Image* (2001) and Kenneth Harrow’s *African Cinema: Post-Colonial and Feminist Readings* (1999).

films, film directors and inter-textual parameters that are deployed to assist the reading of the films and cinemas. He divides his book into six chapters which group films and cinemas in themes that the author labels 'Recovering the Past' (films that deal with the history that has stereotyped the African), 'Fighting Colonialism' (films that deal with the African armed struggle), 'The Struggle for Majority Rule' (films dealing with the contexts of the oppression and liberation of South Africa), 'Betrayals of Independence' (films dealing with Africa's post-independence regimes), 'The Exploited and Neglected Peasantry' (films dealing with Gender and other diverse communities in Africa), and 'Between the African Mass Market and International Recognition' (films that foreground issues of marketing African films). I shall adhere to these interesting delineations in the discussion that follows to further reveal their richness and importance.

While these six perspectives may appear as old ones it is Gugler's supporting texts before each chapter and within the footnotes that offer an extra dimension to studying the films. Indeed the comprehensive and authoritative background texts that Gugler offers are in themselves worthy of our attention as they work towards contextualizing not only the environment of the films that will follow but all films that could fall within that category.

Many of the earlier books and analyses of African cinema fail to give viable contexts for their production, further reflection and cross-referencing. Sometimes even in analyses where contexts were given they often worked towards limiting rather than unfolding the film texts. The historical, cultural, industrial and authorial contexts afforded here make valuable additions to understanding African cinema in general. In addition each chapter includes references and filmography that are in themselves varied enough and cover many fields thus affording wider research potential. However it is Gugler's critical theorization that gives the book its edge. Gugler deconstructs the films and the African cinema scene to reveal inner and outer workings of the African text reflecting on diverse contexts. Beyond that even his knowledge of the literary scene in Africa is exploited to advantage. The inter-textual analysis offered becomes a tool for a definitive and authoritative understanding and reading of each film. The African film indeed requires this type of cross-textual application to bring the film's world into focus. Gugler even works to discuss the context of some of the posters that were used to market the films to reveal the inner workings of the industry that is still struggling to find a market for the African film product.

The eclectic choice of films (for which any number of reasons could be given to explain prioritization and without success) is representative enough to reflect their importance within each category. A number of texts are old enough for one to question what else could be said on them. *Xala*, probably the most widely discussed African film, still finds space in this book and with good reason and results.³ Gugler adds to our appreciation of the film through such information as the relationship between the book of the same title and the film (the book was based on the original script and not vice versa) and how Sembene uses the two texts to complement one another as well as push his political agenda forward.

Gods Must Be Crazy is also another widely examined film but in Gugler's hands the earlier arguments that have been pitted against the populist judgement are made clearer with the deeper insight we have of Jamie Uys' *oeuvre* and ideological viewpoint as well as the shameless race-based circus that the film provided the international distributors of the film.⁴ He suggests complicity in the role that the international cinema communities played towards the negative portrayal of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. Even while he condemns the distribution circuits he does not however take time to indicate the role that the Western media played in undermining the struggle for human rights across the continent.

Films like *Fools*, which is included in the discussion, are often never included in the discussions of African cinema principally because they have never won awards at international film festivals; or because they were not appealing to critics as principal sources of African cinema elucidation. Certainly it may be because they are also produced in the Southern African region, a backwater location in terms of the African film product. Gugler nevertheless resuscitates these films because they are part of a growing theme that projects the Africa of the present that is indeed also a reflection of the past.

Gugler also utilizes the book to discuss a seemingly uncommon feature of African cinema-adaptations. Only a few African film productions have been based on published short stories, novels or plays. *Kongi's Harvest*, *Xala*, *Bullfrog in the Sun*, *Sambizanga*, *Cry the Beloved Country*, *Boesman and Lena*, *A Dry White Country* and *Fools* being some of those film adaptations of literary products.⁵ If one were to make a generalized view of African cinema

³ See discussions of *Xala* in *Teaching African Cinema* by Roy Ashbury, Wendy Helsby and Maureen O'Brien, London, BFI, 1998.

⁴ See also Peter Davis' *In Darkest Hollywood* (1997).

⁵ The books include: *Kongi's Harvest* (Wole Soyinka), *Xala* (Sembene Ousmane), *Things Fall Apart*

development it would be the fact that many would-be excellent film directors might not have been good film script writers in their own selves. My line of reasoning with such film makers is to ask them to visit their local libraries or their local story tellers; and to take cues from storytellers often much better than themselves for sources of their stories. Indeed were African film makers able to utilize the novels, short films, plays and oral stories abounding in Africa we might not have been confronted with the many underdeveloped dramas that come out of the African film scene. While Gugler does not suggest this in his analysis one feels that his skewed use of literary based film texts in this book would suggest his predilection to such a potential. Indeed Gugler does discuss problems with adaptations with his examination of *Kongi's Harvest*, *Xala*, *Sambizanga*, *Fools* and *A Dry White Season*. Problems with time compression in developing characters that films demand, familiarity with the story's world that is more patent in the novel, visual interpretations and possible 're-contextualization' that topicality demands are identified as possible areas of interest in the use and analysis of the adapted film-story.

I have written elsewhere about the film and its use of the documentary position as being central in understanding the authorial position of the director.⁶ Undeniably the documentary style is so pervading in our conceptualizing of the world of film that its use is invariably to place 'truth' in the absolute and not the contestable. While Gugler agrees that the documentary style is persuasive to most Western audiences he does not take that extra step to recognize the consequent meanings created through the position that the style warrants. He notes of *Gods Must be Crazy* that, 'Slapstick and broad humour are so persuasive that many Western viewers fail to perceive the underlying ideology' (p. 71). His discussion of *Flame* however leaves much to be desired. While it is true that the Zimbabwean War veterans in *Flame* were against the film's portrayal of men their principle argument was the fact that the women's issue seems to have been highlighted at the expense of other issues that have come out of the liberation struggle *because it suits the West to do so* (my emphasis). The land issue, which is the cause of the struggle then and now, has not been tackled to any extent (by Western funding sources). This hijacking of the representation of African problems by Westerners is a subject often tackled with kid gloves because of the fear as to what Western media outlets might do if one was to speak the African mind. Actually even Gugler projects this fear as he discusses the current Zimbabwe impasse where he fails to bring the

(Chinua Achebe), *True Life of Domingos Xavier* (Mario de Andrade), *Cry the Beloved Country* (Alan Paton), *Boesman and Lena* (Athol Fugard), *A Dry White Country* and *Fools* (Njabulo Ndebele).

⁶ See my article 'African Documentary History: A Discourse of Authority' at <http://web.uct.ac.za/conferences/filmhistorynow/>

Lancaster House Agreement (1980) into the discussion of the land redistribution problem that has increasingly engulfed not only Zimbabwe but Africa in general. One would have expected at least the inclusion of a reference to the Agreement in footnote 6 (p. 60) to suggest the complexity that is 'missed' by the media. Unlike Gugler, when Melissa Thackway reflects on this in her book reviewed here she notes that 'Western women ... may be oppressed by the patriarchal structures of the West, but colonial discourse reveals that they may simultaneously find themselves in a dominant position vis-à-vis non-western women and men.'

Gugler presents, with each film, a discussion of the individual director's *oeuvre* where possible and this helps the reader in better understanding the texts. Information about Sarah Maldoror's background or Jamie Uys pre-*Gods Must be Crazy* films, Sissoko's longer version of *Finzan* for African audiences or the photograph of Mweze Ngangura and Benoit Lamy after their first shot of *La Vie Belle* all add to our appreciation of the films and the conditions of their production and distribution.

I have earlier made specific comments on the inter-textual reading environment that Gugler creates with the inter- and cross- referencing of media products in his analyses especially with regard to film adaptations. However the analyses themselves are written with at least two perspectives in mind given the theoretical grounding that the introductory sections of each chapter afford. In this way Gugler accentuates the reader's feeling of inadequacy in making definitive arguments about the stories suggesting at the same time a need for further study. While not necessarily making that overt observation he suggests that our viewing of African films has to date been facile and needs a wider understanding of many factors surrounding African cinema culture. That is perhaps one slight blemish of the book - that African cinemas are not contextualized within world cinema except with regard to 'mainstream' cinema and instead of an understanding of cinema as a system of making sense developed within speaking communities. Gugler tries somewhat to remedy this through his last chapter where he suggests a new African perspective in the production and distribution of 'video films' in Ghana and Nigeria that reflect a veritable transfer of technology. He shows that it is only the realistic and not the normative conditions of Africa that could spawn such an industry.⁷

The extent to which our ignorance is acceptable can only be equal to our recognizing the innumerable perspectives that the reading of African film texts

⁷ See <http://humanities.uwichill.edu.bb/filmfestival/2003/films/kelani&okomi.htm> (accessed 29/2/2004)

demands. The meaning of any communication is derived not from language but from the rationalizations that the speaking community abstracts. While it is easy to idealise the conditions of our intellectual horizons it is often the horizons of culture and their limitations that constrain our understanding and demand negotiation.

Melissa Thackway's book is an incredibly well-researched and authoritatively validated text on some of the most memorable films that have come out of Africa. While forcing the viewer to agree to the very colonially oriented categorization 'francophone', the author does not however in any way limit the reader's enjoyment and appreciation of the hard work that has gone into the analysis of and research on the referred films. For myself this categorizing, which seems necessary, goes on to support the argument that foregrounds the diversity and prevalence of many cinemas in Africa as deliberately maintained by Olivier Barlet.⁸ Thackway analyses a wide range of films from those dealing with the history of African nation-making and its colonial antecedents to films in which women are both in front of and behind the camera. She further 'ups the ante' through the very revealing and largely academically oriented interviews she undertakes with some filmmakers most of whom are 'Francophone's best'. The films discussed include the classic *Afrique je te plumerai* and *Afrique sur Seine* as well as *Asiento*, *Allah Tantou*, *Fdajal*. The filmmakers include Adama Drabo, Anne Laure Folly, Dani Kuoyate, Fanta Regina Nacro, Idrissa Ouedraogo, Abderrahmane Sissako, Cheick Oumar Sissoko and Jean-Marie Teno. A veritable crop of filmmakers.

The book is also an important addition to African cinema literature on account of its very theory-based approach. One must add that the book utilizes a deconstructionist methodology in approaching the films, clearly aware of the importance this adds to speculative analysis of texts coming from the African continent. I say this because some earlier approaches to films from Africa have attempted to pit the texts against or sometimes even side by side other world cinema texts and attempt to compare and contrast their styles and leanings. This approach I am happy to note has been eclipsed by the deconstructionist which gives the text its local context and importance as well as its inevitable differential alterity without highlighting the alternative aspect. This has been the bane of critical theorizing over the years where films from Africa were immediately linked to other Third World texts, to Third World Cinema or even

⁸ Olivier Barlet, *African Cinemas: Decolonising the Gaze*, London, Zed Books, 1999. I make the same argument in my thesis *The Cinema of Southern Africa: Towards a Regional Narration of the Nation*, Flinders University of South Australia, 2001.

ascribed the Alternative cinema labels which were essentially there to afford pigeon-holing and easy canonization within Western paradigms.

Thackway organizes her book into chapters to cover a brief history of the cinema of the region and examines and proposes a possible critical paradigm. In the definitive chapter three she discusses at some length the concept of orature in African cinema, an increasingly important identity factor of African cinematic expression. I was disheartened by Thackway's apologist approach to ascribing orature as a typical African 'convention' when she says, 'without wanting to be too essentialist, this analysis will show that this has conferred a certain cultural identity on Francophone African cinema' (p. 49). There is no reason to apologize for this diverse mode and perspective. Indeed most conventions adapted to Western cinema genres are typically essentialist: they are based on concrete cultural backgrounds and perspectives. For example the break-neck pace and witty speech patterns of the screwball comedy genre is based on the American view of banter within married life and the place of the woman in that world.⁹ Being essentially an oral culture many African communities have highly developed conventions of speech and memory that reflect the status, importance and articulation of orality. Indeed Tommaselli argues for this 'essential' difference whereas Silvia Winters warns us of this tendency when she suggests that the validity of Eurocentric extrapolation of difference is often based more on relativity rather than on diversity. Thackway's attentive examination of this cultural edifice in the subsection 'the stylistic and cultural influences of orature on film' (pp. 59-92) is to be lauded.

Chapter five is also a serious attempt at positioning African cinema around the 'modernist' mode. As Thackway analyses African films that tackle African experiences of Europe we are made aware of the risk to which this exposes African narratives due to the almost doctrinal or canonical perspectives that Western critics hold. In my view it is the Western audiences that are like the proverbial goat tied to a tree by a short rope who will never be able to nibble on the succulent new leaves somewhat out of its reach. Colonialism, as Fanon had argued, does not only afflict the oppressed but the oppressor as well.

Chapter six highlights another aspect of representation of African films made by and about women that continue to 'deconstruct the paradigms that confine women in society's oppressive structures' (p. 148). The chapter centres on films by directors like Safi Faye, Anne Laure Folly and Fanta Nacro who have a body of work that affords us a peek at the continuing and valiant struggles for

⁹ Thomas Schaltz, *Hollywood Genres*, New York, Random House, 1981, pp.150-185

women's voices through cinema. Indeed Thackway shows that African women film makers have held to that intention for a long time and often work towards subverting the old-order messages.

The final section of the book includes interviews with well known and the not so well known film makers from Francophone Africa. While interviews have formed part of many earlier books and authoritative journals, Thackway's are especially crucial. Unlike those we found in M'bye and Bakari's *African Experiences of Cinema* the interviews contained here are deeply self-reflexive and give the reader an interior view of the creative sources of the films as the directors conceptualise their works and reasons for production.¹⁰

Along with the appropriate illustrations and very well researched material this book will take long to be eclipsed as it further proves that there are many cinemas to be found in the continent and the Francophone is only one. Gugler's and Thackway's books not only posit formal strategies for the production of knowledge through film but also stress its consequences. Even if for that reason alone, and there are others indeed, I highly recommend these books towards any study of African cinema, but also as an appendage to cultural studies and indeed communication studies.

Martin Mhando
Murdoch University
Western Australia

¹⁰ Imruh Bakari and Cham Mbye (eds), *African Experiences of Cinema*, London, BFI Books, 1996; Roy Ashbury, Wendy Helsby and Maureen O'Brien (eds), *Teaching African Cinema*, *op. cit.*

Sexuality, Power and Social Change in the Struggle against the HIV Epidemic

Catherine Campbell, *Letting Them Die: Why HIV/AIDS Prevention Programmes Fail*, Oxford, The International African Institute in association with James Currey; Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press; Cape Town, Double Storey, 2003. pp. ix + 214. ISBN 0 85255 868 6 (p/b).

This book is a timely and important reflection on the dominant practices of HIV prevention programmes. Two decades have passed of national plans, donor funding, passionate commitment, community programmes and stakeholder partnerships past and through which the virus has spread relentlessly. The book poses some basic questions:

- Why is it that people knowingly engage in sexual behaviour that could lead to a slow and painful premature death?
- Why do the best intentioned attempts to stem the tide of the HIV epidemic often have so little impact?
- Why is it that programme people continue to prioritize individualistic biomedical and behavioural perspectives?
- To what extent can local community mobilization contribute to the fight against HIV, especially in seriously deprived communities?

These questions are explored through the study of the social construction of sexuality in Summertown (a pseudonym), in the Republic of South Africa, and factors shaping the Summertown Project's attempts to reduce HIV transmission. The Summertown Project sought to limit HIV transmission through three activities: the control of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) which increase a person's likelihood of contracting HIV; community led peer education and condom distribution (with a focus on women who work in commercial sex, youth and mineworkers); and local multi-stakeholder collaborative project management. The two latter encapsulate the Project's commitment to the participation of a broad range of stakeholders in the creation of what Campbell calls health-enabling community contexts.

The Project was initiated in the mid-90s by a grassroots group of black African residents of a township in the gold mining region of Summertown who came together because of a growing concern about the HIV epidemic. This group included local teachers, social workers, youth leaders, traditional healers and

mine officials. A local government official introduced them to a group of academics, including the author, interested in establishing an HIV project. A lengthy period of negotiations brought together interest groups that became the Project's stakeholders: the grassroots group, trade unions, mine management, provincial and national government, and several academics and international funding agencies. The stakeholders established a local NGO to run the Project. The Project has been running since mid-1997 and the research in the book covers the period between mid-1997 and mid-2000.

The Summertown geographic community is characterized by dramatic social inequalities. Levels of unemployment are in the order of forty percent. Those in employment often have unskilled and poorly paid jobs. Crime and violence is endemic. It is estimated that in the Province in which Summertown is located a woman is raped every twenty seconds. Schools are under-funded, teachers under-qualified, drop out rates high. The local mines have suffered serious cutbacks over the past decade and insecurity is rife in a global climate of increasing casualization of labour and the contracting out of various tasks to outside companies.

Campbell's thesis is that a complexity of multi-level processes influence HIV transmission and that, unless addressed, they hamper the most well-meaning efforts to dislodge the epidemic's grip. Campbell argues that many existing HIV prevention efforts in sub-Saharan Africa have been dominated by biomedical and behavioural understandings of sexuality and health. These assume that sexual behaviour is shaped by the conscious decisions of rational individuals. Locating the cause of sexual behaviour at the individual level has led to individual behavioural interventions, both for STI treatment interventions and for sexual behaviour change. The admonition 'ABC' (Abstain, Be faithful or use Condoms) typifies this approach.

The Summertown Project was itself captured by these understandings in its approach to STI services and to HIV prevention. If the Project interventions had been successful the outcomes should have been a decrease in STI levels and HIV transmission rates. However, the outcome measures of the Project showed no measurable impact on the proportion of people with STIs or who had experienced a genital sore in the past twelve months. HIV prevalence data was not available. These outcomes are in line with an expanding body of research, as well as the soaring HIV statistics, which shows that people often knowingly engage in sexual behaviour that places their health at risk. They also put in question STI research conducted in well-resourced and carefully managed settings which fails to take into account that, in the unruliness of

living, people often fail to present themselves at STI clinics at the first signs of infection. As Campbell summarises: ‘The forces shaping sexual behaviour and sexual health are far more complex than individual rational decisions based on simple factual knowledge about health risks, and the availability of medical services’ (p. 7).

Campbell is a social psychologist with a particular interest in the local community level of analysis, a level relatively neglected in HIV theory and practice. At the micro social level studies have linked sexual behaviour to properties of the individual: self esteem, knowledge, etc. At the macro social level studies have drawn attention to the ways in which poverty, gender relations and globalization facilitate HIV transmission and undermine the effectiveness of HIV prevention efforts. Each of these perspectives form a part of the story, Campbell argues, but she seeks to understand the transmission and prevention of HIV as a ‘social issue located at the interface of a range of constituencies with competing actions and interests’ (p. 8). The trend towards community programmes and broad based partnerships indicates that the practice of HIV prevention is undergoing a steady paradigm drift, effectively acknowledging the complex range of determinants of sexual behaviour. The community-led peer education programmes and the collaborative stakeholder partnerships undertaken by the Project sought to promote *community contexts* that enable and support behaviour change.

However, Campbell argues that these evolving HIV prevention practices are not mirrored by the development of understandings of the community and social changes that are often necessary preconditions for health enhancing behaviour change. Campbell seeks to develop a critical social psychology that takes into account the social determinants of behaviour, and which seeks to explain sexual behaviour in ways that have direct implications for the design of HIV interventions and policies. This latter is to be achieved through attention to the complexity of multi-level processes that shape sexuality and strengthen people’s collective ability to respond to health risks.

The importance of Campbell’s book lies in this endeavour. The Summertown Project departed radically from traditional HIV programmes by its emphasis on its two forms of community participation. However, little is known about the ways in which participation and representation have a positive impact on health and community development. Campbell outlines a framework for conceptualizing the processes by which these impact positively on the health of community members and by which lessons can be drawn from the successes and failures of such programmes.

The conceptual tools for a social psychology of participation used by Campbell include the four interlinked concepts of social identity, empowerment and critical consciousness, social capital and power. These concepts structure the analysis. Thus, for example, in analyzing the context of the peer education programme for sex workers, Campbell uses the concept of social capital to analyze the extent to which pre-existing community networks and relationships supported the Project interventions. Three key dimensions of social capital are drawn upon: grassroots participation in local decision making within a context of egalitarianism and solidarity; the existence of trust among community members; and the existence of relationships of reciprocal help and support. The conclusions she draws from the interview materials is that 'the [sex worker] peer education programme was established within a community characterised by conflictual and exploitative relationships, low morale and low levels of pre-existing social capital' (p. 90). This analysis highlights some of the difficulties implicit in project design which directs that health care workers use existing local sources of social capital as a starting point for their work. Where community networks and relationships are structured around unequal and exploitative social relationships other approaches may be necessary.

Biomedical surveys at the beginning of the Project showed that sixty-eight percent of women were already HIV-positive in 1998. One of the goals of the Project was to create a climate of tolerance and support within which people might disclose their HIV status. Campbell asks if the Project created new social capital; in particular, respect for those touched by the epidemic. Her findings on community acceptance of coercion and punishment as a means of regulating their lives highlights the importance of Freire's concept of critical consciousness as a pre-condition for changes in behaviour and attitudes. Critical consciousness is an understanding of the ways in which one's behaviour is structured by broader social and structural forces. The harsh struggle for survival in the Project area is enacted in force fields of non-local structural and gender inequalities. The extent to which people are able to adopt new sexual strategies, change their attitudes and safeguard their health is constrained by the degree to which social circumstances support or enable them in these endeavours.

In exploring whether the peer education programme created new social capital, Campbell distinguishes between bonding or group social capital and bridging social capital. She argues that despite the internal and external factors militating against it group capital was created by the women-focused peer education programmes led by local sex workers. This enabled local women to

exercise leadership and control of the programme in a way that would not have been possible had men been involved. However, the Project failed to build three forms of bridging or linking social capital that would have greatly facilitated the larger success of the Project: the empowerment of the sex workers through linking them into networks of similar groups; building bridges to the mining industry and trade unions in such a way that parallel programmes amongst the mine workers might have been established; and creating state-society synergies through ensuring supportive public policies and programmes to back up the work of the Project.

Campbell uses the Summertown Project to illustrate:

the immense complexities of implementing community based HIV-prevention projects in the absence of an appropriate conceptualization of the interlocking biological, psychological and social dimensions of the epidemic; the development of local skills, capacity and infrastructure to translate such a vision into action; and the development of clear and robust incentives for effective stakeholder participation (p. 186).

Hope is justified, Campbell argues, since all five of these ‘lacks’ (lack of commitment, conceptualization, capacity, infrastructure and accountability) could have been avoided. What the Summertown experience shows is that ‘community interventions are *extremely difficult to implement* and that much careful work needs to go into setting up and implementing community programmes’ (p. 187).

Campbell’s analysis shows how trenchant is the unwillingness to embrace innovative conceptualizations of the nature of the epidemic and its response. The majority of the Summertown stakeholders, as do the majority of global players, clung to biomedical understandings of disease and disease prevention. They also persisted in locating the epidemic outside of themselves, in less powerful groups, showing little willingness to consider the ways in which they themselves might have to change if the epidemic was to be rebuffed. This distancing in the realm of the local echoes a more general global tendency: to deny collective involvement in, or responsibility for, the epidemic. With hindsight, Campbell concludes, the likelihood of success would have been enhanced by a collective effort to resist the dichotomy of Them and Us and to generate a collective sense of ownership and responsibility for the epidemic at every level.

Campbell's reflections on the lessons of the Summertown Project are relevant far beyond Summertown and its province: past the national border, across Africa and into the far reaches of the epidemic. The old ways of understanding and responding to this epidemic have not gained us sufficient ground against it sufficiently quickly. There is much that can be learnt and applied in this thoughtful and challenging analysis. If we are to make headway against its ravages we must take this book seriously.

Elizabeth Reid
Visiting Fellow
Australian National University

From War Camp to Modern African City: Ibadan 1829 to 1939

Ruth Watson, *Civil Disorder is the Disease of Ibadan ('Ijo Iboro Larun Ibadan'): Chieftaincy and Civil Culture in a Yoruba City, Oxford, James Currey, 2003. pp xi + 163. Appendices, Bibliography, Index (p/b).*

The book is a lucidly written, brilliantly constructed account of chieftaincy and the political culture of Ibadan from its beginnings as a war camp in 1829 to 1939 when it was one of the largest cities in Black Africa. The book is based on oral evidence, traditions, private papers and archival evidence, but interpreted through acute understanding of the complexities of the culture. It moves well beyond the commonplace study of colonial impact on indigenous polity in teasing out the drama of African agency and manipulation.

Ibadan was more than a Yoruba city-state, it was a model of modernity, just as Chicago defined the American metropolis. Just like that great city, the civic society of Ibadan constantly re-invented and transformed itself - with a political dynamism that negates any stereotype of the 'traditional'. The study takes us beyond the narrow confines of chiefs and colonial officials to the struggle for power at a multiplicity of levels. What sets this study apart and fascinated me was the way in which the author documented the interplay between the material and symbolic in the struggle for control and definition of institutions. My favourite chapter is the penultimate, 'The Cloth of Field of Gold: Material Culture and Civic Powers', (an earlier version of which appeared in the *Journal of Historical Sociology* in 1998) in which colonial

suppression on the sale of a design of trade cloth is shown to be the foci from a power struggle within Ibadan civic society and a threat to colonial governance.

Turning to the mundane of content, the book opens with the founding of Ibadan, the nineteenth century politics of hegemony over Yorubaland, the civil strife that facilitated British colonial rule, the impact of the loss of sovereignty, the marginalization of war chiefs under colonial administrative 'reforms' and the ensuing power struggles. Throughout, the author demonstrates how the past was reconstructed within an ever-changing context by myriad social actors.

The book is a significant contribution to the social and cultural history of British colonial administration in Africa and of civic society in one of Africa's greatest cities. It will be of interest to historians, anthropologists and political scientists for its innovative approach to political culture. I highly recommend it.

David Dorward
African Research Institute
La Trobe University
Bundoora, Victoria

Post-Apartheid South Africa's Foreign Policy During the Mandela Years

James Barber, *Mandela's World. The International Dimension of South Africa's Political Revolution 1990-99*, Athens: Ohio University Press; Oxford, James Currey; Cape Town, David Philip, 2004. pp. 214. ISBN 0-85255-976-7 (James Currey p/b).

James Barber has written two earlier books on South Africa's foreign policy both of which examined a very different phenomenon from this third study, namely the foreign relations of a pariah state ruled by a white minority that was engaged in the simultaneous struggle against domestic anti-apartheid forces plus hostile world opinion. While he did a credible job examining the difficulties that that apartheid state faced in the pre-1990 world environment he has done a less convincing job grappling with the post-1990 complexities.

Post-1990 South Africa has faced a double-transition – first, dealing with the dynamics of building a post-apartheid polity; second, confronting the difficulties posed by the pressures of globalization. The dynamics of this double-transition intersect in the realm of foreign policy, something to which Barber does not pay sufficient attention. These double-transition dynamics have made South Africa's post-1990 foreign policy formulation a complex affair with very different policy goals and policy-problems from the pre-1990 era. Barber's real weakness lies in his discussion of South Africa's internal politics. His discussions of these internal dynamics are rather superficial and read a lot like the sort of coverage seen in popular journalism. Only when Barber turns to the foreign relations dimension does the quality of the discussion improve dramatically. The problem is that because South Africa's fraught internal policy dimension has necessarily impacted upon the process of foreign policy-making, Barber's superficial examination of South Africa's internal politics weakens the book.

Mandela's World however has strong as well as weak points. The book adds value in three areas: first, it describes the 1990s' transformation of South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs in a discussion that offers a glimpse into the fraught dynamics of transforming one government department, which involved changing the staffing profile dramatically; shifting policy-frameworks (from 'defending apartheid' to 'African renaissance'); and shifting geographical emphasis (from the west to Africa). This makes fascinating reading. Second, Barber describes the competition between Mandela and De Klerk for foreign attention between 1990 and 1994; and third he examines the emergence of South Africa as a middle power that punches above its weight in international relations.

Barber periodizes South Africa's post 1990 foreign relations into two phases: 1990 to 1993 and 1994 to 1999. The first of these involved a competition between Mandela and De Klerk for foreign attention. This competition mirrored the internal struggle that took place between the African National Congress (ANC) and the National Party (NP) in the period between the ANC's unbanning and the 1994 elections. The book chronicles the foreign relations victories and defeats of both Mandela and De Klerk; and the difficulties experienced by the ANC as it adjusted to the collapse of its main benefactor, the Soviet-bloc.

An interesting dimension of the book is its examination of the ANC's difficult learning process of adjusting to the USA's global dominance, as Barber chronicles how the ANC had effectively to adjust its rhetoric and learn

(through a series of painful experiences) to be 'pragmatic' rather than adhere to its old 'principles'. He also provides a reasonable introduction to the way in which South Africa had, by 1999, already begun to emerge as both an African power and a middle ranking power in global terms. Unfortunately, the book's discussion ends in 1999 – the year Mbeki came to power. Since then Mbeki has dramatically expanded South Africa's diplomatic role in Africa around the 'African Renaissance' theme. He has redefined South Africa's relationship with the USA; expanded South Africa's peacekeeping roles; and expanded South Africa's economic push into Africa. Post-1999 South Africa's foreign policy initiatives have become much more interesting, and South Africa's status as a middle power has grown under Mbeki, which unfortunately, Barber's book does not cover.

The failure to address the post-1999 Mbeki era points to an important weakness in the book, namely the tendency to 'personalize' ANC-politics into 'Mandela', and to over-emphasize Mandela's role in the transition. Barber constantly over-rates Mandela's role in the 1990-1999 period, as encapsulated in the book's very title *Mandela's World* (albeit that this is a good marketing device). He also ignores the way in which Mandela's icon status became a huge asset to the ANC, allowing him effectively to 'float above' politics, unencumbered by realpolitik; in other words the ANC deliberately deployed Mandela as a valuable 'public relations' tool to calm white fears internally and to promote the 'South African miracle' externally (with a view to attracting foreign capital). The brilliant way in which Mandela played this role was an important dimension of South Africa's foreign relations. Barber is too inclined to take Mandela's performances at face value and to ignore the background ANC team-work (and struggles) underpinning these performances.

As for the book's weaknesses – the book would have benefited from Barber spending more time discussing a range of other issues including: the Mandela-Mbeki relationship in which Mandela played a ceremonial role while the job of real politics and running the country was left to Mbeki; the internal politics of both the ANC and NP (and how these impacted on foreign policy); taken a more detailed look at ANC and NP positions during the 1990s negotiations and the reasons why the ANC's (and Mandela's) economic policies changed and why the ANC outmaneuvered the NP; and finally some more detail on USA-South African relations and the major shifts in South African foreign policy in the 1999-2002 period.

As it stands the book tells a small part of the wider story of South Africa's transition away from apartheid. Anyone interested in the radical transformation

of South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs will find it worthwhile reading.

Eric Louw
School of Communication and Journalism
University of Queensland

A Masterly History of the Afrikaners

Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners. Biography of a People*, London, Hurst & Company, 2003. pp. 698. Illustrations. ISBN 1-85065-714-9 (p/b).

This is a splendidly comprehensive book of the complex story of Afrikanerdom's 350-year history. The book will be illuminating and fascinating even for those who think they know South African history well. Importantly, this book provides an explanation of apartheid that deserves to be taken seriously. What makes Giliomee's explanation so useful is that he avoids the oft seen simplistic portrayals of Afrikaners as unreconstructed white supremacists and/or backward racist rednecks, which portray apartheid as a cousin of Nazism. Instead, Giliomee traces apartheid's roots to a complex mix of factors which include Calvinism; the economic dislocation suffered by Afrikaners after the Boer War; their grievances about Anglo economic and cultural domination; their fear of being culturally swamped by an ever-growing black population; and the work of a group of zealous nationalist intellectuals between the two world wars. The result is a book that is simultaneously critical of apartheid yet sympathetic towards Afrikaners.

An important feature of the book is that Giliomee has taken the trouble actually to read the writings of Afrikaner nationalists. By engaging with apartheid ideologues and trying to understand them he has managed to produce a view of apartheid that is not often presented. Giliomee's basic thesis is that apartheid was a well thought out strategy deliberately calculated to try and secure the cultural survival of an ethnic minority. In order to try and explain the birth, growth and death of apartheid, he tries to reconstruct the way the world looked to Afrikaner nationalists. He hermeneutically deconstructs a wide array of political and literary texts in an attempt to get 'into the heads' of both those who created and those who followed the apartheid ideology. The result is revealing.

The argument that Giliomee constructs is that apartheid was a rational modernizing plan formulated as an alternative to both liberalism and socialism. Rather contentiously he suggests apartheid mixed a (successful) development modernization program with repression and socio-political injustice. Consequently, although he does not shy away from examining and criticizing the negative and disastrous consequences of apartheid, he also looks at its not inconsiderable economic achievements – which included building a highly developed economy, plus sophisticated infrastructures and educational system. One of the book's interesting features is Giliomee's interest in trying to understand how and why Afrikaners allowed themselves to become agents of a brutal system long after it became clear the system was unjust and unworkable. In this regard he spends some time examining the way in which from the 1970s onwards Afrikaner intellectuals began criticizing apartheid and undermining it from within. Giliomee does not present a sympathetic picture of the National Party, being critical of the way in which that Party created the apartheid impasse and the way in which it failed to reform its way out of this impasse. Yet his criticism of National Party leaders does not fall into the trap of simplistic caricatures or demonization. Instead he unpacks the drama of their beliefs, judgments, miscalculations, triumphs and tragedies. And he does this in the form of a compelling and well-written narrative.

Because Giliomee's attempt to explain apartheid in *The Afrikaners* serves to challenge many of the interpretations offered by both liberal and Marxist historians, it will raise a few eyebrows. Similarly, although Giliomee does not condone apartheid (in fact he was one of the earliest Afrikaner academics to attack the National Party); he also does not unambiguously condemn it. This too will confront many. But that is what makes the book worth reading. Its almost-700 pages of meticulous research and rigorous intellectual engagement with the material presented makes this a book that deserves serious attention.

For Australians one of the more intriguing details in *The Afrikaners* is the story of Hendrik Biebow. Biebow was reputedly the first person to call himself an Afrikaner in 1707. For this affront to the Dutch colonial authority he was apparently banished to the Dutch East Indies, but was shipwrecked en route. In this way the first Afrikaner may also have become the first white settler in Australia, because genetic research suggests Biebow's descendants are now part of Western Australia's indigenous-aboriginal population.

Eric Louw
School of Communication and Journalism,
University of Queensland

Looking Back to Zimbabwe's Women Fighters in the Third *Chimurenga*

Tanya Lyons, *Guns and Guerilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle*, Trenton, New Jersey, Africa World Press, 2004. pp. 338. Map, 11 illustrations. ISBN I-59221-167-4.

At a time in Zimbabwe when the party-government is a devouring machine, every other person is unemployed, and the next source of mealie meal can be uncertain, it is in some ways uplifting to enter the realm of memory. Once upon a time not so long ago an armed struggle precipitated events that got rid of a colonial government. Once – not long ago – soothing words of racial reconciliation graced the lips of a new prime minister in the not-so-long-ago parliamentary system of Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe was widely hailed as the Pride of Africa. In a scant twenty-five years however we have seen the rise and the fall of Zimbabwe. Now the whole thing is pear-shaped. Gone are the *bons mots*, the political sense of proportion, all remnants of ZANU-PF graciousness and words of growth with equity (although the practices were always a bit *comme ci, comme ca*). It's nasty there now.

The armed struggle was nasty too. Painful. Tough. Punishing. During Zimbabwe's first decade of independence it was common to encounter writings on that struggle – dissections of the nationalist era, analyses of the leading parties and their military wings, exposés of demobilization politics, stories of tea-time at the assembly points or of weapons hidden in Matabeleland. There were of course struggles within the struggles, as the late (and at that time very lively) Masipula Sithole reported and kept telling us during each new era of post-independence Zimbabwe. There were threats from apartheid South Africa. There were supposed regional splits. Zimbabweanists were intrigued by the intrigues and emboldened in our work by the successes of the country against the odds. Zimbabweans, ecstatic after the nasty war ended, put their shoulders to the wheel, as another late Zimbabwean, Joshua Nkomo, used to say. By the mid-1990s, it was not fashionable to research aspects of the armed struggle. The country was getting on with it now. Political economy and the fortunes of one after another pig-in-a-poke opposition party were where it was at.

And now Tanya Lyons takes us down memory lane to the days of Ian Smith's Rhodesian Forces facing ZANLA and ZIPRA cadres, the days of *Chimurenga*, the bush training camps in Mozambique and Zambia ... and, let's face it, to the whole rip-roaring excitement, promise, and effort of 1970s Zimbabwe. As

someone who knows the stories of those times well enough, it is something of a surprise to find myself glued to yet another recounting of the Days of Struggle. I expect to be ho-hummed; I mean, how many of these repeating tales does one tuck into with full absorption? Yet with things so not-OK in Zimbabwe today anyone with a heart would have to have a halo too to hold off nostalgia for a time in a near past that held the embryo of a different near future than the one that eventuated. Lyons's study of the past has the added advantage of talking about women in the struggle, the interviews with eighteen women ex-combatants still something of a novelty. It is not an overly glorified version of those days and those lives, although Lyons does have something of the wouser in her. It is not the final word, the authoritative study, on women in the bush alongside the always already heroic men. It is solid, definitely a contribution to Zimbabwean war studies, but imperfect. The timing of the study is part of its appeal. It feeds the imagination and infuriates all over again.

Women have been mostly rear seated or given chorus roles in research on the nationalist era and the war, with notable exceptions that Lyons amply notes (e.g., Staunton, Schmidt, Barnes, Raftopoulos). She warms up the audience for women's agency during the war and the controversies around it by reminding us of nationalist gender moments preceding the war era, such as the activism of women in the 1956 bus boycotts and 1961 protests; and there is the reburying of spirit medium Nehanda's remains in Zimbabwe (instead of Mozambique) during the war years. This material is not new and original, but it is spliced well into and around stories of women ex-combatants in the 1970s. Their words give deadpan frightening glimpses of flea-ridden beds in the camps, severe food shortages, crawls through bush that cut up ill-protected feet and legs, bodies pulverized by high-powered RF weapons, massacres at Chimoio and other camps – including the devastation at Mkushi camp for women. Lyons also tells how white women were subjected to/shaped appalling appeals to a silly girliness while other women in Zimbabwe were being treated like guerilla girls. A typical war poster in Rhodesia: *Be a Dumb Blonde – Think About National Security – Don't Talk About It*. Lyons revisits the problems, the controversies, and the underappreciation of women in combat circumstances through stories telling of rape by soldiering mates (and rapes denied) and of frustrations with mixed messages about women in combat roles; and she takes us to Heroes Acre to show us how scant is the showing of women war dead.

The presentation of the interview material is uneven throughout the book, though, and can be downright cursory - paragraph of narrative here and paragraph there and then on to another theme. Instead of getting the picture of a multi-vectored, complex, and differentiated set of realities in the bush, a

reader can get jumbled or selective impressions. Lyons over-relies on the words of a few celebrity women of Zimbabwe, principally, Teurai Ropa (Joyce Mujuru, war commander and later MP/minister in various roles), but also Margaret Dongo (MP) and Freedom Nyambubaya (radical poet). The first two have had as much air time as men from the war era; and Ropa/Mujuru is just as tarnished as other politicians in today's Zimbabwe. Lyons describes Nyambubaya as an outspoken ex-combatant, which means that she has had outlets for voice. The other, more average (one supposes) women appear with first name only to protect their apparently endangered identities/lives. We don't know who they are really, how they were selected for interview over other average women ex-combatants, and what the rapport was (or was not) between Lyons and (all) the women. Also the silencing of some women ex-combatants takes place in a context where others, like Ropa, Dongo, and Nyambuaya, have voice; but Lyons does not explore this. It is as though we are meant to admire a celebrity class of women fighters, whose names we can know fully. Others, to paraphrase a novel by Yvonne Vera, are still without names and details.

Lyons also wrestles with the perennial issues of 'representing the other' and 'can the subaltern speak' - without full success. She interprets the subaltern problem laid out by Gayatri Spivak as a question of 'letting' certain people talk so they won't be subalterns anymore - which is very far off the point about who one hears when one seems to be hearing the subaltern. The issue of representing the other has been hotter in Australia than many other places, and Lyons frets about it before remarking that she established a dialogue with the women she interviewed; but there are no signs of dialogue in the text. I'm sympathetic to Lyons's dilemma: research politics can tie a researcher in so many knots that the final product comes out tortured. That almost happens here, for at the end of the day we remember Tanya Lyons's worried voice at least as much as we remember the other voices. As for whether any of these 'subalterns' become nonsubaltern by speaking to Lyons it is apparent that a woman like Ropa/Mujuru has not been subaltern for decades.

One final comment. The interviews at the centre of this study were conducted in 1996-97, and the resulting book was published seven years later in 2004. It surprises me that with the hard times that came upon Zimbabwe after 1997, Lyons did not update her analysis to consider stories of women ex-combatants against the context of present-day Zimbabwe. History seems to end in 1997; but of course the veterans of the armed struggle have been key players in the politics and land reform practices of contemporary Zimbabwe. To go the extra mile in the analysis would require timely references and these are not here either, even though many of the scholars Lyons cites have published new work

since the mid-1990s. That she relies only on older studies means that an opportunity is lost to consider a certain past interacting with, swamped by, ignored in, or perhaps shaping an authoritarian/populist present. And thus my nostalgia for a time of purpose in Zimbabwe's past, hard as that past was. And nostalgia is not the best place to be.

*Christine Sylvester
Institute of Social Studies, The Hague
& Leverhulme Professor 2003-4
University of London, SOAS*

The Role of the Queen Mother in the 1900-1 Asante-British War: Myth and/or Reality?

A. Adu Boahen, *Yaa Asantewaa and the Asante-British War of 1900-1*, Edited with editor's note by Emmanuel Akyeampong, Accra, Sub-Saharan Publishers; Oxford, James Currey, 2003. pp. 182. Maps, photographs, ISBN 9988-550-99-5 (Sub-Saharan Publishers p/b), 0-85255-443-5 (James Currey p/b), 9988-550-64-2 (h/b).

Adu Boahen, who for many years was Professor of History at the University of Ghana, seeks in this book to establish the part that Yaa Asantewaa, the Queen Mother of Ejisu (Ejisuhemaa), played in the revolt against British rule in 1900 in what is today Ghana. He presents her as a feisty, small-built woman, aged about sixty in 1900, who was one of the main instigators of the war – perhaps *the* main instigator – and the principal war leader. Yaa Asantewaa's fiery and provocative speeches probably did cause the men to take up arms; no doubt, she taunted them with doing nothing to redress the wrongs inflicted on Asante four years earlier when Prempeh, the King of Asante (Asantehene), and many of his leading chiefs were arrested and deported, and Asante was placed under British protection. The war which she thus instigated in turn marked a turning point in British-Asante relations: after it, Britain's right to rule Asante was based on conquest and was cemented by an Order in Council of 26 September 1901 annexing Asante to the Crown, though it remained subject to the Governor of the Gold Coast.

The editor's summary of 'Asante in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century' provides historical perspective, but the book would have benefited if, in his otherwise helpful introduction, the author had discussed more fully the

weakness of the Asante kingdom after its defeat at the hands of the British in 1874 and the effects of the ensuing 1884-88 civil war, when the country split into rival camps ranged behind the two candidates vying for the position of Asantehene. Above all, particular attention might have been given to the relationship between the Kumasi chiefs, whose tentacles reached far beyond Kumasi (the Asante capital) and the outlying heads (Amanhene) of the states which made up the Asante Confederacy. Traditional patterns of allegiance were distorted by the British (as the Committee of Privileges set up by the Asanteman Council in 1935 revealed) but are, I believe, very important in determining the parts played by various chiefs, both Asante and Brong, in the 1900-1 War.

The book draws on both documentary sources and oral traditions, especially those collected in Asante by Thomas Lewin in 1971 and 1972. Lewin interviewed a large number of Asante chiefs and people; many of them were aged between seventy and one hundred and their accounts are sometimes contradictory – for example, whether or not Yaa Asantewaa ever left Ejisu and visited the battlefield. Nevertheless, these accounts - checked against the records of British colonial officials and military personnel and Basel missionaries - provide a valuable source of information about the Asante War and Yaa Asantewaa's role in it. The documentation is ably assembled and relevant questions are asked, but the evidence presented does not unequivocally support all the conclusions reached. Unfortunately, because of illness, Boahen was not able to revise his manuscript and the substance of his arguments and the evidence which he presented remain unchanged. The result for me is a book which is informative and, in some of its oral accounts, stimulating, but also one which, while adding to our knowledge of an important period of Asante history, is somewhat lacking in analytical depth.

Governor Hodgson's demand for the Golden Stool – occupied by the Asantehene and, according to legend, containing the soul of the Asante nation - his insistence that Asante should pay the war indemnity imposed after the 1974 war, subsequent punitive expeditions around Kumasi, the unpopularity of British rule, and concern that Asante economic interests were being endangered by the grant of gold mining concessions, were rightly identified by the author as important causes of the 1900-1 War. The evidence presented also substantiates his claim that Yaa Asantewaa played more than just a symbolic role in the war, though whether her role extended as far as the following statement suggests is not proven:

As leader and Commander-in-Chief, Yaa Assantewaa appointed and dismissed field commanders; sent orders and advice to the various field commanders and the troops mainly through her personal war captain, Akwasi Boadu; supplied the soldiers with gunpowder; worked out strategies ... visited some of the stockades; and was present at some of the battles to cheer them up (p. 126).

In her capacity both as Ejisuhemaa and head of state following the deportation of the Ejisuhene in 1896, Yaa Asantewaa might well have had a major say in determining the organization and strategy of the sizeable Ejisu (as distinct from the Asante) army. From her base in the state capital, she consulted the gods and sought spiritual protection for the soldiers, encouraging them and supplying them with gunpowder; she visited her stockade at Amakom, often appearing in battledress and carrying a gun, though she never fired it - custom debarred Asante women from fighting. The new stockade strategy meant that each state, division and town raised its own army, appointed its own commander and built its own stockade or barricade, with its camp to the rear. There were reports of her visit to the stockade at Kokofu, but whether she co-ordinated the activities of the various forces outside Ejisu is unclear.

Yaa Asantewaa's army seems to have borne the brunt of the fighting between early April 1900 and its defeat at the battle of Ejisu on 30 August, after which Asante reverted to fighting as a single national army. With Asante morale at a low ebb, Yaa Asantewaa moved from Ejisu to Ofinso, whose royal families were closely linked, and then to Atwima and the forests of Ahafo, playing a more obviously national role than she had done previously both as war leader and, with final defeat imminent, negotiator with the British. After surrendering to the latter in March 1901 she was shipped with the other forty-five political prisoners to the Seychelles where she died in October 1921.

Yaa Asantewaa's precise role in the war may be in doubt, but the reasons for Asante's defeat are clear. An obvious reason was the poor quantity and quality of the guns – mainly antiquated flintlock muskets - used by the Asantes; these were no match for the British cannons, repeater rifles and bombs. This problem was compounded by the Asantes' shortage of shot and powder. Another reason was the use of stockades, mentioned above. Oral accounts said that stockades, behind which Asante soldiers took up position, were 'built of immense tree-trunks with earth rammed between them'; those at Dompase and Kokofu were each six feet high, six feet thick and 300 yards long (p. 68). They became ineffective as soon as the British learned how to outflank them and followed up

with bayonet charges. Another important reason for defeat was that this was not, as the author claims, 'a veritable national War of Independence' (p.173), but a sectional war, albeit with national elements, in which the brunt of the fighting was borne by the Kumasis, Ejisus, Offinsos and Atwimas, with some assistance from the Ahafos, Bechems, Duayaw-Nkwantas, Wenchis, some Kokofus and Adansis. The states of Nsuta, Agona, Kumawu and Bekwai sided with the British. There is insufficient evidence to warrant the categorical statement that the key Amanhene of Juaben and Mampong, together with the Amanhene of Kokofu and Kumawu, would have joined the conflict if they had not been held in the Kumasi fort following their arrest on 16 April 1900.

The half-hearted response of many states to the call to war is understandable given the weakened state of Asante after 1874, the civil war which preceded Prempeh's enstoolment as Asantehene in 1888, and continuing chiefly discord augmented by the changes which the British made to traditional patterns of allegiance - for example, the status of the chief of Berekum, who traditionally came under a Kumasi division, was enhanced; he was given further preferment as part of the post-war settlement, when he was made an Omanhene with the divisions of Bechem-Ahafo and Boronfo placed under him. Leading Brong states, such as Takyiman and Dormaa, which had originally been conquered and forced into the Confederacy against their will, owed no allegiance to the Golden Stool and did not join the fight to safeguard it. Finally, the May 1901 petition by which Yaa Asantewaa and her fellow deportees attempted to incriminate the Kings of Mampong and Juaben by asserting that they were 'two of the principal chiefs who rebelled against the Queen and were very active in furnishing men, arms and ammunition' (p. 170) was not proof of their loyalty to the Golden Stool so much as an expression of the anger which the deportees felt that these very senior chiefs had given only lukewarm support to the Asante cause (the Mamponghene occupied the Silver Stool and was outranked only by the Asantehene).

William Tordoff
Emeritus Professor of Government
University of Manchester, UK

The Autobiography of a Zambian Nationalist

Simon Zukas, *Into Exile and Back*, Lusaka, Bookworld Publishers, 2002. pp. 220. Maps, photographs. ISBN 9982-24-020-X (p/b).

Spanning as it does some seventy years' history first of colonial Northern Rhodesia and then of independent Zambia, the appeal of Simon Zukas' autobiography for this reviewer is twofold: it is the personal odyssey of a man of intelligence, enterprise and integrity which also provides insights into the internal politics of successive Zambian governments over the past forty years. His narrative starting with his early childhood in Lithuania, shifting to his 'Rhodesian adolescence' and then to successive phases in some fifty-five years of his public life as Zambian nationalist, businessman and farmer and politician adds to our understanding of Zambian politics over those same years as well as of the man himself.

Simon Zukas, born in Lithuania in 1925 of Jewish shopkeeper parents, arrived in Northern Rhodesia on the eve of his thirteenth birthday. He attended an all-white school and at a time when fraternizing with Africans was taboo all his friends were white - a strange beginning for a man known through his life for his colour blindness. He became Northern Rhodesia's first king scout and deferred taking up a scholarship to study civil engineering at the University of Cape Town in favour of joining the army. His war service in military intelligence gave him an insight into the British colonial system in different parts of East and Central Africa. As a student in South Africa he became a leading member of the Student Socialist Society; he was a committed Marxist, but rejected the constraints of Marxist orthodoxy. Back in Northern Rhodesia he was strongly opposed - mainly on political grounds - to the creation of a Central African Federation and criticized Lawrence Katilungu, the mineworkers' leader, for not using the political strike as an anti-federation weapon. He became a leading nationalist, convinced that military and mass action were essential to achieve Zambian independence. His political activity cost him his temporary post as engineer with the Ndola Municipal Council, (after which he started practising as a structural engineer on his own account) and led in December 1951 to his deportation to Britain. The second of the charges levelled against him - that he had incited Africans against Europeans - was particularly painful since (as he points out, p. 83) non-racism was 'a cardinal point' in his philosophy.

During his long exile in Britain Zukas carved out a successful career as a structural engineer. In January 1954 he married Cynthia Robinson, a South

African art-teacher student who shared his own radical beliefs; they had two sons, David and Alan, and were a close-knit family. From their London base through the 1950s they kept in close touch with the changing situation in both South and Central Africa. Disillusioned with Harry Nkumbula's weak leadership of the African National Congress, Zukas became a member of the breakaway Zambia African National Congress and, when that was banned, of the United National Independence Party (UNIP), led by Kenneth Kaunda. He formed a branch of UNIP in London and published a monthly newsletter - *The Voice of UNIP*. Finally, following Zambia's independence in October 1964, in April 1965 the Zukas family left their Hampstead (London) home and settled in Lusaka where Simon set up the consulting engineering practice of Simon Zukas and Partners, an off-shoot of the Zukas and Magasiner practice in London.

Though Zukas initially supported the creation of a one-party state in 1973 as offering a solution to the sectionalism that was tearing UNIP apart, he came to regret this decision as Kaunda became increasingly authoritarian and intolerant. Yet of the attempted and unsuccessful coup of 1980 he writes 'Cynthia and I had no sympathy with the coup because we saw no mass movement behind it'. He suspected that it aimed to end support, in the interests of business, for the ongoing struggle in Rhodesia and South Africa (p. 152) and was surprised that his friend Edward Shamwana, prominent lawyer and businessman, was involved. When Kaunda was finally forced at the end of the 1980s to accept the end of the one-party state, Zukas in 1990 joined with other politicians and businessmen such as Arthur Wina in the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) headed by Frederick Chiluba, to whom he was never close. In the MMD government he served in turn as a Deputy Minister at State House, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (a post which enabled him to draw on his own experience as a farm owner), and then as Minister of Works and Supply. When the MMD sought a constitutional amendment to exclude Kaunda, on the specious grounds of parentage, from standing as a presidential candidate in the 1996 elections, Simon backed Kaunda's right to stand and resigned from the government. Following the dissolution of Parliament he vacated active politics until early 2001 when he intervened to oppose Chiluba's attempt to secure an (constitutionally illegal) third term in office. For a brief period, he became chairman of a new party - the Forum for Democracy and Development.

Much of Zukas' contribution to Zambian national affairs in both the UNIP years and later has been made in what he calls 'Working Part Time with State Institutions' (title of Ch. 11, which deals with his time in a number of

parastatals, the University of Zambia Council and other public bodies). Here he ascribes the poor state of the Zambian economy less to the struggle against Smith's Rhodesia than to nationalization and the adoption of state ownership as the basis for Zambia's economic development. Zukas had wide knowledge and experience of the country's state enterprises and despaired at the economic mismanagement and corruption which bedevilled so many parastatals. He looked to the MMD to carry forward the establishment of a free market economy; the latter being part of the IMF's structural adjustment programme which had been accepted by Kaunda towards the end of his period in office. Zukas worked hard while in office to revive the stagnant, cash-strapped economy. As Minister of Agriculture he came in for criticism from Cabinet colleagues, MMD MPs and commercial farmers for trying to move the agricultural industry, and particularly maize production, fully and quickly into the market. He was adamant that the demand for maize subsidies to be restored was unrealistic until copper production and world copper prices increased. His conviction that the solution lay in the introduction of a free market economy was understandable in the light of Zambia's experience with state ownership, though whether such an approach could succeed in the political and economic conditions prevailing in Zambia is open to question.

That Simon was more successful as a businessman than as a politician may have been because he was too principled for the political game. Generous to a fault and always loyal to his friends, he has been occasionally politically naïve in supporting individuals and liberation causes of which he had insufficient knowledge. But it was above all a matter of timing - he came to office when the Zambian economy was in so parlous a state that recovery was bound to be a slow and painful process, calling for more radical action than his colleagues would accept.

*William Tordoff
Emeritus Professor of Government
University of Manchester, U.K.*

Forthcoming: Graham Connah's New Book on African Archeology

Aras readers will be pleased to know that Emeritus Professor Graham Connah has a new book coming out later this year, *Forgotten Africa: An Introduction to its Archeology*, which introduces the general reader and student to Africa's past. Those who remember his article in this journal ('Writing Africa's Archeological Past: Who Writes for Whom?' in *ARAS* Vol XXIII Number I, June 2001) in which he challenged his fellow archeologists not for any lack of scholarly worth but because most of their papers and books 'have hardly made good bedtime reading' will not be surprised that this new book is described as 'a fascinating and important story told in a straightforward and readable manner'. Or that Connah's concern is to raise public awareness, both inside and outside Africa, about what is often an overlooked and forgotten subject. The book is due around August 2004, published by Routledge, and all going well will in due course be reviewed in this journal.

CJG

Migration and the Nation-State: The Case of Displaced Rwandans in Tanzania

Saskia Van Hoyweghen

(Ed. note. Saskia Van Hoyweghen, whose work on Rwanda will be familiar to ARAS readers, was awarded her doctorate by Leeds University in March 2004 for her thesis on displaced Rwandans in Tanzania. She has sent me this short note about her thesis which will be of interest to all those readers concerned with both the Central Lakes Region and East Africa.)

This thesis documents Rwanda's migration history from the colonial period to the present day. The main focus is on migration from Rwanda to Tanzania. As an ethnography of Rwandan migrants, it presents empirical data on the social, economic and political context of Rwandan migration. During the colonial period, the Belgian colonizer used Ruanda-Urundi as a labour pool for its colony, the Congo. The period of violence leading up to Rwanda's independence caused the former Tutsi elite to flee the country in the early 1960s. The so-called Rwandan diaspora stayed mainly in neighbouring countries and over the years lost both hope and interest to return to Rwanda. In Uganda an organization rose in the late 1980s that fostered the plan to return to Rwanda by force. When the Rwandan Patriotic Front attacked Rwanda in 1990, it marked the start of a civil war that would last four years. Within Rwanda, the government became more radical and extremist factions eventually started the genocide in April 1994, not only killing more than half a million people but ultimately forcing two million to flee. In the meantime, the Tutsi diaspora returned. The Hutu refugees remained in camps along the border for over two years before being returned by (military) force.

The factual account of Rwandan migration is accompanied by a more theoretical reflection on issues of power and mobility. Two particular aspects of this relationship are explored in further detail. First of all, the thesis seeks to explain how the territorialization of power, brought about by the colonial project and the introduction of the nation-state, has shaped the position of migrants in Africa. It is argued that the shift from labour migrant to refugee is not just contextual but part of a changing policy environment in which rights are increasingly attached to the concept of place. The migrant has, since

Africa's independence, become someone who lives outside the valid political order. Secondly, and linked to this, the labelling of the migrant has served particular interests of governance. The refugee has become not just an outcast but equally a danger to the valid political order, resulting, since the 1990s in more aggressive policies towards refugees.

Notes

South Africans Take Stock After Ten Years

(Ed. I asked the South African High Commissioner to Australia, H.E. Mr. Anthony Mongalo, if he would write a short note for ARAS to mark South Africa's tenth anniversary of freedom and must thank him for his response.)

As South Africa this year celebrates ten years of democracy South Africans are taking stock of the progress that freedom has brought towards a better life for all. The South African Rainbow nation today represents a people whose dignity has been restored, a people working for a better South Africa, a better Africa and a better world without conflict and war.

One of the most notable achievements since 1994 is the new Constitution, which was signed into law by President Nelson Mandela at Sharpeville in 1996. It has been acclaimed internationally as one of the most progressive and democratic in the world. With over 780 pieces of legislation it has created a framework for reshaping South Africa. This Constitution has laid a solid foundation for a truly non-racial and non-sexist South Africa, and it strengthens reconciliation and national unity.

The past ten years have seen South Africa being transformed into a people-centred, progressive State, which is hailed worldwide. The seventy-seven percent registered voter turnout on 14 April 2004 is proof of confidence expressed by the people in the Government's broader policies. Access to basic services has expanded, and the last census, done in 2001, found: 85% of households with access to clean water; 69.7% households using electricity for lighting; 20.4% people completing Grade 12 schooling; 89% adult literacy; 96% literacy for fifteen to twenty-four year olds; 63.8% households in formal housing. Since 1994, around ten million people have gained access to clean running water; there have been 3.8m grid connections for electricity; and 1.46m subsidised houses have been built or are under construction. Primary health care expanded with free healthcare for expectant women and children under the age of six. An integrated nutrition programme now reaches 94% or 4.58m targeted school pupils.

South Africa still faces many challenges, among them, poverty, HIV/AIDS and unemployment:

- Programmes to alleviate poverty have improved the lives of millions of South Africans, and where social grants were previously allocated on a racial basis, they are extended to all who are in need and eligible. More than seven million South Africans now receive social grants, and the poorest twenty percent of households receive the largest amount from the allocated grants.
- Resources allocated to the Government's comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS have expanded hundred-fold from R30 million in 1994 to over R3.6 billion in the current financial year. The comprehensive care and treatment campaign being rolled out is the biggest in the world, and has been lauded by the United Nations as sustainable.
- One of the principal barriers to employment for most of the unemployed is the economy's need for skills that the majority was denied under apartheid. This issue is an integral part of the Expanded Package Programme, part of a package of measures which will address the marginalization of millions of South Africans as a consequence of the policies of apartheid.

The South African economy is stable and has been transformed from one which was in crisis pre-1994, to one which now shows continuous growth. The economy is growing at a healthy 2.8% per annum on average as compared to the negative growth in the three years preceding 1994. Progress has been made to consolidate the 'two economies' in one country. The one is advanced and skilled, becoming globally more competitive, and the second is mainly informal, marginalized and unskilled. Despite impressive gains in the first economy, the benefits have yet to reach the second economy.

South Africa is playing an important role on the African continent, and contributed to the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union. It will continue to play its role in strengthening the African Union and to promote its development programme NEPAD (The New Partnership for Africa's Development). NEPAD is an African programme tailored by Africans for the development of the African continent, which is meant to create conducive conditions for meaningful and sustainable development in Africa. It is a commitment by African leaders to democracy as well as good political and economic governance, while they also continue to work to prevent and resolve situations of conflict and instability on the continent. These are the inherent

requirements if Africans are to succeed in placing the African continent on a path of lasting growth and development.

The achievements South Africa made in the past decade are notable if one considers that a period of ten years is far too short to overcome the terrible legacy of more than 350 years of colonial and apartheid rule. As South Africans began the Second Decade of Democracy on 27 April 2004, we are convinced that what has been achieved during the First demonstrates that as Africans we can and will resolve our problems. We are equally certain that Africa will record new advances as she pursues the goal of a better life for all. She will do what she can to encourage a more equitable and humane new world order. President Mbeki said on the occasion of his Inauguration and the 10th Anniversary of Freedom in Pretoria on 27 April 2004, 'The new South Africa is a democratic, peaceful, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous country, committed to the noble vision of human solidarity'.

Some Observations on the 2004 South African Elections in KwaZulu-Natal

In 1994, during South Africa's first democratic election campaign, political parties promised massive social and economic changes, while repeating the caveat that the recovery from the inequities and psychological repression of apartheid would take a generation or more. The lineaments of change over time in such a complex polity are not always easy to discern: popular and even scholarly memories of a time when things were different are distorted and corrupted by everyday events, by the invisibility of gradual, imperceptible changes, by a deliberate silencing of the past, by selection based on present needs rather than past realities. Without conscious acts of memory and of understanding, the links between the past and the present become blurred in the popular imaginary. Now, in 2004, the economy and property prices boom in eThekweni/Durban as the fears of the past become irrelevant and, despite the devastation that HIV/AIDS is wreaking, many Durbanites seem to share a sense of having walked a long way from that violent and inequitable reality which was late apartheid, without necessarily actively noting or remembering in any detail all the small steps along the path. Cultural memory is like that.

In the weeks before any South African election, a new flower blooms in the streets: in place of the usual posters advertising travel specials and newspaper headlines, election posters appear overnight. Of a standard size (about A1) and

mounted on cardboard, they are tied to almost every lamp post on well-travelled routes, even in quiet suburbs. The semiotics of positioning has its own politics: most are at a height that a tallish person could manage to have put them up (and so they are easily accessible to political opponents who might rewrite them with a spray can of paint, or tear them down - although there seem to be unspoken agreements about such total destruction). For others though, a ladder or a *bakkie* (ute) strategically parked to give enough lift, clearly had been necessary. This year in eThekweni/Durban the battle for position was won (in most areas) by the African National Congress (ANC), which had announced a focus on the province of KwaZulu-Natal even before the official campaign began, in an effort to take government from the ruling Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). The ANC's poster campaign was spearheaded by prominent photographs of the granddaughter of Gandhi asking which party her grandfather would have voted for, answered by a complementary poster with a resounding affirmation of Gandhi's support for the ANC (historically accurate or no). In areas with any Indian connection though, even these attempts at authentication and validation by the ANC were trumped by the plethora of posters sporting the photograph and slogans of the Minority Front's Amichand Rajbansi - popularly known as 'the Raj' and, more evocatively, as 'the tiger of Bengal', a self-bestowed title.

In previous elections, local, provincial and national, IFP posters were ubiquitous, prominently featuring the leader, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, often in Zulu, although English was just as widely used for posters in the CBD and the areas formerly designated as 'white' residential suburbs. The ANC too uses Zulu, although more sparingly in the suburbs. In 2004 the IFP's poster campaign seemed lackadaisical, even compared with its local alliance partner, the Democratic Alliance (DA), successor to the long series of white-based liberal parties of the apartheid years. While the ANC was mobilizing its leaders and members in public rally after public rally, and ensuring that the leadership, even the normally-remote figure of the President, Thabo Mbeki, were accessible and uncharacteristically exposed to the public gaze, the IFP was playing its politics in less visible arenas, politicking over issues that ultimately lost the only Zulu-based party crucial sectors of its support. One such issue, the location of the province's capital, has been bubbling since 1994: the IFP has been determined to preserve Ulundi, in the heartland territory, as the capital, despite the historical and economic claims of Pietermaritzburg. In the run up towards the latest election, the alliance with the DA was clearly all that could possibly help the IFP across the line, yet the issue of Ulundi as capital was perceived by significant sections of the DP's own membership and voter base as so antithetical to good government that they mounted a major media

campaign against it. That this was successful was manifest in the substantially-different provincial and national voting figures for the DA, as its own membership continued to support it nationally but walked away in the province, thus negating the attempt by the IFP to retain Ulundi as the provincial capital.

What the DA had recognized, and what both the ANC and IFP were slower to focus on, were the strengthening indications that significant numbers of Zulu people were not registering to vote, or having registered were not going to cast a vote. In listening to people talk in the days leading up to the election what became clear was that concerns about the national government's lack of action on HIV/Aids, and about the continued lack of employment opportunities for young people in KZN were impacting on voter intentions. That the participation rate was still very high should not hide the disillusionment that is felt in those sectors of the population who continue to be marginalized and disadvantaged. That this was the case seemed to strike the President for the first time as he was brought to rallies and public meetings in rural KZN in a distinct shift from his previous public persona.

Through the posters, their relative positionings and the language of their slogans, much of the election's results can be read. The ubiquitous black, green and gold of the ANC, confidently trumpeting the successes of the past ten years, houses built, electricity connections, social justice issues; the IFP less focused on issues than in the past; and the DA mounting its second negative campaign in a row, focussing on crime, security and corruption issues.

Two days after the election, as we parked the car in a side street off Florida Road, one of Durban's thriving restaurant streets, I noticed a rarity among posters: one for Patricia de Lille, leader of the new Independent Democrats, and formerly 'firebrand' of the Africanist Pan African Congress (PAC). Her proportion of the national vote had not been huge but had been encouraging for those who are looking for a genuine opposition party to emerge now, after ten years of ANC domination of the polity, but her party organization had seemed minimal, at least in KZN, far from her power base in the Cape. My husband straightened the poster for me to photograph and as I focused I realized someone was standing alongside me. For a split second my heart sank: in taking such photographs over the years I have attracted interesting and sometimes abusive comment from passers-by. This woman was as ordinary-looking as any who have discussed politics in the street with me in the past, elderly, with a shopping bag over one arm and an embarrassed teenage grandson in tow. Her accent was of the white working class, the foundations of

the increasing electoral support that the old National Party of the apartheid years had garnered up until the early 1990s, for whom the PAC were anathema, the worst of the 'terrorists'. Yet she had stopped to talk to us because I was photographing Patricia de Lille's poster, not to berate us, as she surely would have done ten years ago, but to tell us that she was going to 'vote for Patricia' in the next election, clearly regretting that she had not done so this time. Her political feelings went beyond gender solidarity, to a concisely-expressed class-based understanding of what de Lille has to offer the country. The fact that in expressing that understanding race was not mentioned, but both gender and class were explicitly articulated, resonated with much else that had been occurring in KZN during this campaign: that politics, despite the ANC's continuing huge majorities, are shifting gradually towards issues rather than old loyalties.

In KZN, those loyalties have played themselves out in horrendous levels of violence in the past. Between 1984 and 1994 at least 10,000 people died in violence between the ANC and the IFP. The violence has been more contained since 1994 but still flares up intermittently, as local issues interface with larger political loyalties. A few days before the 2004 elections, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) chair, Dr Brigalia Bam, indicated to the media that while she thought that nationally there was little threat of violence on election day or during the counting, KZN was a different matter, remaining volatile to the point that of the total of 50,000 police deployed nationally during the election, 20,000 were located in KZN.

That KZN was almost totally free of political violence on election day and in the tense days afterwards, as the count dragged on, as the backroom politicking and deal making intensified, as the ANC's S'bu Ndebele took over as Premier of a provincial coalition government, in which even the Raj received a portfolio (as minister of sport), as the posters gradually were taken down, speaks to a gradual lessening of street-level political tensions during the ten years of democracy.

Joan Wardrop

Australian Anti-Apartheid Activists’ Sydney Celebrations of South Africa’s Ten Years of Freedom

Members of Australia’s historic anti-apartheid movement in Sydney celebrated Africa’s tenth anniversary of freedom with a large gathering in NSW Parliament House, an art exhibition, and the launch of a new book by author Margaret Brink. One hundred and fifty anti-apartheid activists and long time supporters of a free South Africa gathered at NSW Parliament House on April 28th to celebrate South Africa’s ten years of democracy. The event was hosted by the President of the NSW Legislative Council, Dr Meredith Burgmann, who had been arrested on numerous occasions during anti-apartheid demonstrations in the 1970s. His Excellency, the South African High Commissioner to Australia, Mr Anthony Mongalo, who was accompanied by his wife, Mrs Lillian Mongalo, took the opportunity to thank the Australian people for their support.

Margaret Brink, anti-apartheid legend, described the celebration, ‘as an occasion for singing the praises of the countless courageous people who won freedom against terrible odds’. Many guests were brought to tears by her speech and the voices of the Solidarity Choir singing *Nkosi sikelel iAfrica*. And artist Bruce Petty brought smiles to many lips with memories of his cartoons of yesteryear that railed so effectively against the injustices of South Africa’s apartheid past. Maritime Union Secretary, Robert Coombs spoke of the crucial support of the trade union movement during the struggle against apartheid, and how none of the many South African shipping vessels visiting Australia from the late 1960s onwards avoided intense industrial action. As he expressed himself in industrial lingo, they would ‘find themselves stuck up’. As many of the other speakers pointed out, action of this kind was just one of the many ways ordinary Australians contributed to the victory of the South African people over apartheid.

Ten years of freedom was also celebrated with a month-long exhibition in the Fountain Court at Parliament House. The works in the exhibition reflected four notable NSW artists’ experiences of the 1994 South African elections and the significant political and social changes that have taken place since. Of those artists featured in the exhibition, George Gittoes and Bruce Petty were both in South Africa to cover the 1994 elections. Gittoes’ dramatic work ‘The Pitch’, which captures the elation of that time, as a banner in the crowd reads, ‘Enter

the Promised Land – Vote ANC’ with images of Nelson Mandela among the hopeful faces at the Soweto election rally two days before voting, dominated the Parliament House Fountain Court. Yvette Pritchard was forced to leave South Africa in 1967 and returned after the ‘94 elections. Rediscovering her country of birth has become the main inspiration for her joyful, energetic paintings. Muriel Coorey was privileged to live in the North Eastern Transvaal from 1992–1998 and witness the dramatic effect of democracy on the people.

The exhibition also included some fabulous pieces of ephemera including ‘Vote One’ Nelson Mandela badges, ANC beanies and caps and rare photos and posters from the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Sydney. It brought back memories for all those attending and in the spirit of generosity and hope the raffle raised \$800 to go towards APHEDA-Union Aid Abroad, women and AIDs education projects in South Africa. In the words of the High Commissioner, Anthony Mongalo, ‘Let us continue on the path together to nurture this young democracy.’

These celebrations continued with the launch of Margaret Brink’s book, *Nkosi sikelel iAfrika - memories of Apartheid* on May 14th. Three hundred pairs of feet rumbled up the stairs of Gleebooks, the wine flowed freely and the Solidarity Choir launched into song as historians, politicians, friend, relatives and anti-apartheid activists of yesteryear struggled to find seats in time to hear the impressive array of speakers - author Margaret Brink, the President of the NSW Legislative Council, Dr Meredith Burgmann, Dorothy McRae McMahan and the founder of the Boomerang Project Di Singer.

The keynote speaker, Margaret Brink, enchanted the gathering with her personal view of a life devoted to social justice, interlacing her account with the kind of whimsical humour contained in the first sentence of her book: ‘These reminiscences may sound rather like Spike Milligan’s account of his part in the downfall of Hitler.’ Dr Meredith Burgmann read out several passages from the book, describing it as a ‘rollicking yarn’. She recalled that Margaret and her late husband John had expressed some guilt about leaving South Africa when they did and expressed her belief that they were ‘meant to come to Australia to be the centre of the anti-apartheid movement in this country’.

The Reverend Dorothy McRae-McMahan, who has been part of many movements for change towards a more inclusive church and society, said Margaret’s memories should be compulsory reading for all people – ‘not just because of its stories about the harsh realities of the South African apartheid

regime but because it shows us in amazing clarity the capacity of the human spirit in its struggle towards good, truth and justice’.

Boomerang Project Co-Founder Di Singer spoke of the fundraising undertaken to help build a foster care village for HIV-infected babies and toddlers in Port Shepstone, Natal. To date Boomerang, affiliated to APHEDA, has sent over \$165000 (R800000) to Rehoboth, a grass roots project, which will be used as a prototype for other similar villages in the area. At the time of writing, \$1850 raised from the sale of Margaret Brink’s memoirs had been donated to the Boomerang Project.

*Yvette Pritchard and Lynette Simons
Sydney*

Winterton Collection of East African Photographs

The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East African Photographs, acquired by the Herskovits Library of African Studies last year, was formally introduced to the University community on November 18 with a special lecture by history faculty member Jonathon Glassman. Sponsored by the University Library’s Board of Governors, the lecture illustrated the collection’s relevance to research – Glassman’s own and that of Northwestern students – and to East African history in general. Approximately 125 people attended.

The Winterton Collection is the single largest purchase ever made of totally unique research materials in the history of the Herskovits Library. The collection adds new depth and dimension to the library’s printed materials relating to East Africa and the history of photography in the region. A valuable resource for Northwestern faculty students as well as visiting scholars, it will also be used to enhance the African studies curriculum for Northwestern undergraduates. Purchase of the collection was made possible primarily through the Charles Deering McCormick Endowment for Special Collections administered by the University Library. Another portion of the funding came from the George and Mary LeCron Foster Endowed Fund. The purchase was handled by the London dealer Jenny Allsworth.

Assembled over nearly forty years by British collector, lawyer, and international businessman Humphrey Winterton, the collection consists of about 6,500 photographs in seventy-five separate albums, scrapbooks, or loose

collections, each with a distinct East African focus. The earliest photographs were taken by James Augustus Grant in Zanzibar in 1860; the most recent photographs are of pre-independence election campaigning in Kenya in the 1960s. As a collector, Winterton assembled photographs that documented as broadly as possible the breadth of African experience, including African life, European life in Africa in all its manifestations, and the African landscape, in particular as it changed over time. Included are photographs that depict the building of East Africa's railways, the growth of East Africa's urban centers, and the development of colonial administration. The photographs extensively document rural life as well as the life of colonial officials and private businessmen. There are outstanding examples of portraiture, some of which were taken by commercial studios.

A guide to the Winterton collection's 6,500 photographs is available. Further information can be obtained by contacting the Herskovit's Library (847-467-3084; africana@northwestern.edu).

(I am grateful to the editor, *Program of African Studies* (PAS), North-Western University, for permission to reproduce this note from the Winter 2004 issue, Vol. 14, No 2. Ed.)

Photographs as Historical Sources

Since the early 1990s there has been a transformation in the sophistication and understanding in the uses and limitations of photographs as historical text. There is a growing awareness of photography as a conscious act of construction, selection, subjectivity and manipulation, the image as captured and controlled. Over the years I have published a number of articles, often AFSAAP conference papers, using images as sources. However the recent announcement by Northwestern University that it had purchased the Humphrey Winterton collection, over 6,500 photographs of East Africa dating from 1860 to 1960 has drawn me back to the importance of the medium. While I don't envisage any Australasian university putting up large sums for acquisitions, we ought to be more pro-active in developing photographs as a source for African studies in Australasia.

Some years ago Melbourne University purchased micro-fisch of the photograph collection of the Royal Commonwealth Society, London. Many of the museums in Australia and New Zealand contain photograph collections accompanying their African artefacts. I have a number of private collections of

nineteenth century family photographs from Africa. Families want to retain the originals but are generally pleased to allow free access to copy and use them. Then there are all those African images we've taken - often of street-scapes long obliterated by urban sprawl, village ceremonies now just memories, the end of empire, etc. etc. John Barnes gave the African Institute at LaTrobe a large collection of Ngoni images from his days at the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute; Bev Snell her images following the liberation of Mozambique. I have reels of old 8mm film taken by missionaries in the southern Sudan in the 1940s and I would like to burn them onto DVDs, if I can find a low-cost means.

I intend to document and scan my photograph collections onto CD-ROM for deposit at LaTrobe University library before I retire. Computer technology means such images can be labelled, documented, reproduced and deposited in university audio-visual collections at very little cost.

David Dorward

Internet Missionary Photograph Archive

The Internet Missionary Photograph Archive is a new web resource hosted by the University of California. The content of the searchable database is historical photographs from mission repositories in North America, Britain and continental Europe. Contributing archives to date include the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, Inc. (Maryknoll), Yale University Divinity School Day Missions Library, the Leipzig Mission, the Norwegian Missionary Society, and the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. Pictures from the Moravian Church in Herrnhut will be added soon.

The IMPA data base is intended to be an open scholarly resource. It is a work in progress and feedback is welcome. New photographs are being added on an ongoing basis, but there are already more than 2,000 fascinating photographs dating from the 19th century to World War II. The search page can be reached via a tab at the top of the web page. You can also select 'mission photography' from the drop down menu on the left hand side of the main page.

[http://www.usc.edu/isd/archives/arc/digarchives/mission/\(IMPA\)](http://www.usc.edu/isd/archives/arc/digarchives/mission/(IMPA))

*Jon Miller
Center for Religion and Civic Culture
University of Southern California*

(Ed., with acknowledgement to H-Africa@H-NET.MSU.EDU)

From Around Australia

His Excellency John Lepi Lanyasanya has taken up his position as **Kenyan High Commissioner to Australia**.

His Excellency Mr. Molosiwa is the **Botswana High Commissioner to Australia**. I apologize for the misspelling of his name in the last issue (ed.).

The Australian Government has opened its **High Commission in Ghana** on 21 June of this year. It will cover Ghana, most of Francophone Africa, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and the Gambia.

The African Research Institute at La Trobe University hosted three seminar afternoons in May and June focusing on issues facing African communities in Melbourne. The programme included:

Lindee Conway, AMES, 'Issues around Language and Language Course'.

Dr Irene Donohoue Cline, Melbourne University, 'The Dinka Women's Literacy Project'.

Dr Apollo Nsubuga, La Trobe University, 'Reflections on Tensions in African-Australian Families (Melbourne Experiences) and What Appears to Challenge the Family Court'.

Dr Kirsty Sangster, Refugee Health Research Institute Centre, La Trobe University, 'A Longitudinal ethnographic study of refugee youth'.

Omar Farah, 'Australian Somalis: families, authority and "who pays the bills".'

Dr Marion Bailes, Centre for International Mental Health, 'The Somali Health Project'.

Issa Farah, 'Issues concerning Somali Youth in Australia and the Somali Diaspora'.

There was a good attendance by service providers, academic staff and students.

The African Studies Centre WA held three meetings through the first semester:

Catherine Macdonald gave a talk entitled 'Community Development Consulting in the Mining Industry in Africa' on Tuesday, 6 April 2004.

Raymond Suttner gave a talk entitled 'The Character and Formation of Intellectuals within the ANC-led South African Liberation Movement' on 22 April 2004.

Francis Olaka, gave a talk entitled 'Update on Sudan Problems' on 2 June 2004.

Conferences

The African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific (AFSAAP) will hold its **27th Annual and International Conference** at the University of Western Australia, Perth, WA, on the theme 'African renewal, African Renaissance' from **26th to 28th November 2004**. (See p. 6 of this issue of ARAS)

The **47th Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association USA** will take place from **November 11-14, 2004 at the Marriott Hotel in New Orleans, LA**. The meeting will be held jointly with the Canadian Association of African Studies. The National Program Co-Chairs are Dennis Cordell (Southern Methodist University) and Philip Zachernuk (Dalhousie University). For more information or to download proposal forms, please visit www.africanstudies.org. Questions regarding proposal submission or the Annual Meeting, please forward to asaamc@rci.rutgers.edu. The ASA looks forward to seeing you in New Orleans, LA this year!

Kimme Carlos, Annual Meeting Coordinator, African Studies Association, Rutgers University, Douglass Campus, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 Phone: 732-932-8173 Fax: 732-932-339

An **interdisciplinary symposium** on diverse aspects of the science, social science and politics of environmental change in Africa. '**Trees, Rain and Politics in Africa. The dynamics and politics of climatic and environmental change**' will be held at **St Anthony's College, University of Oxford, UK, 29th September - 1st October 2004**. Preliminary session headings are: 1. Climate Change. 2. Palaeoecology and Archaeology. 3. Recent Environmental Histories. 4. Histories and Social Studies of Science. 5. Vegetation change, remote sensing and resource use. 6. The winners and losers of degradation and regeneration. 7. Environmental change and political discourse in states and villages. Hosts will be: William Beinart, St Anthony's College, Oxford. Dan Brockington, SoGE, University of Oxford. Wendy James, University of Oxford. Paul Lane, British Institute in Eastern Africa, Nairobi. Michael Sheridan, University of Vermont. Enquiries to: Dan Brockington, School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford, Mansfield Rd, Oxford, OX1 3TB, UK. dan.brockington@geog.ox.ac.uk Further details on the conference and a call for papers are provided online <http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/news/conference08.pdf>

The North-West University: Vaal Triangle Campus (Vanderbijlpark, South Africa) in cooperation with the **International Water History Association**

(IWHA) presents **‘Flows from the Past: A Trans-disciplinary Conference on the History of Water in Africa’**. This conference follows in the wake of discussions on the IWHA network and plans mooted by a group of interested researchers at the third conference of the IWHA in Alexandria, Egypt, in December 2003. The conference will be held **from 8-11 December 2004 at Riviera on Vaal, Vereeniging, South Africa**. The major objective is to start exploring, under the auspices of the IWHA, the potential for a comprehensive project on the history of water on the African continent. It is hoped that the conference would prepare participants who specialize in Africa for the next IWHA Conference in Paris that is scheduled for 2005. General and Registration Enquiries: Ms Petra Lawson at tel. +27-16-910-3709 or fax+27-16-910-3711 or e-mail dypal@puk.ac.za

Call for papers: ‘Middle Passages: The Oceanic Voyage as Social Process’. An interdisciplinary conference to be held in **Perth, Western Australia July 13-16, 2005**. Convenors: Professor Marcus Rediker, University of Pittsburgh and Professor Cassandra Pybus, University of Tasmania, Australia. Sponsored by the International Centre for Convict Studies and the Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of Western Australia, the conference will be hosted by the Western Australia Maritime Museum in Fremantle (near Perth), Australia. Located in a working port on the Indian Ocean, this dynamic institution offers a vibrant maritime atmosphere. The conference will build on a highly successful predecessor, ‘Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean, c. 1500 - c. 1900’, which was held at the University of Greifswald, Germany, in July, 2000. The aim of this international conference is to explore the social and cultural transformations caused by the transport of labor, unfree and free, around and across the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans. Our definition of the ocean includes riverine and other hydrographic systems that connect to it. We seek to investigate, compare, and connect the experiences of slaves, indentured servants, transported convicts, political prisoners, sailors, and migrants of all kinds, and to consider ships as places where their struggles have made history. We invite papers that emphasize the transformative historical function of vessels of all kinds, from the smallest indigenous canoe to the deep-sea vessel of the age of sail, to the largest modern cargo ship, especially related to these specific themes. For further information: Contact Emma Christopher at emma.christopher@bigpond.com.

African Health and Illness, University of Texas at Austin

We are pleased to announce a three-day conference centered on the theme of African Health and Illness. We welcome papers that pose medical, cultural, sociological, methodological, and theoretical questions whether addressing

relevant, recurring and urgent issues or raising neglected topics. Papers are welcomed on virtually all topics and themes, irrespective of time, period and space, as well as interdisciplinary perspectives. The conference will encompass a wide range of disciplines and perspectives. Participants will be drawn from the United States, Canada, and elsewhere, including European and African countries. Graduate students are encouraged to attend and present papers. Please address all inquiries and submissions to Mr. Matthew Heaton at mattheaton@mail.utexas.edu

www.utexas.edu/conferences/africa

The Uganda Society, Kampala, Uganda, will hold its 80th Anniversary Conference at Kyambogo University, Kampala, on August 24th-26th August, 2004, on the theme 'The Uganda Society in the 21st century'. For further information contact the conference committee, E-mail ugsociety@mulib.mak.ac.ug

STOP PRESS: 2004 United Nations Population Award

Australian and internationally acclaimed demographer John Caldwell and the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, a pioneer in the treatment of childbirth injuries were in April awarded the 2004 United Nations Population Award. The Award is given annually to individuals and institutions for their outstanding work in the field of population and in the improvement of the health and welfare of individuals. John Caldwell (see *ARAS* Vol XXV No 2 December 2003, p. 96) is now Emeritus Professor of Demography in the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University. The Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital was founded in 1974 by Australian doctors Reg and Catherine Hamlin.

Note for Contributors

The Australasian Review of African Studies, as the only Australian journal devoted entirely to African affairs, aims to publish both scholarly and generalist articles and other materials that contribute to a better understanding of contemporary African societies and states: authoritative, informed, critical material on Africa and African affairs that is both interesting and readable.

What makes the *Review* distinctive as a professional journal is its 'mix' of authoritative scholarly and generalist material on critical African issues. Each issue includes a number of scholarly and generalist articles on African affairs; short notes on current African issues and events; reports on research and professional involvement in Africa, and notes on African university activities. The journal is inter-disciplinary in scope and welcomes articles across the broad range of African affairs written from different disciplinary and professional perspectives across the humanities and social sciences. Articles that explore the historical context within which contemporary African issues have to be situated are particularly welcome as is comparative material on Africa, Asia and the Pacific and shorter notes that provide critical background understanding of current issues.

Articles should usually be no more than 4,500-5000 words. Articles are peer reviewed and two referees' reports submitted to the writer. The final decision as to acceptance and publication is made by the editor in consultation with the two referees. Shorter notes and reports should not exceed 2,000 words. We ask that contributors write in a form that makes their work available to as broad an audience as possible, both academic and non-academic.

All contributions should be formatted to be compatible with Microsoft Word and sent electronically as an attachment. If this is not possible they should be sent via the post on a floppy disk.

The journal's style sheet, as well as a copy of a recent issue of the journal is available on request from the Editor.

All manuscripts and correspondence should be sent to:

The Editor

The Australasian Review of African Studies

Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Media, Society and Culture
Curtin University of Technology, GPO Box U1987 PERTH, WA 6845.

Email: C.Gertzelt@exchange.curtin.edu.au