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Within a few short years, Obote's errors and misdeeds led to his downfall a second time, and in 1985 the Okellos organized a coup within the army (the Acholis overthrowing the Langis) and against the Obote regime. Okellos' forces, however, were also undisciplined and within six months they fell to the invading National Resistance Army (NRA) led by Yoweri Museveni (Mutimbwa, 1992). During all of this political and military chaos at the center, the army barracks armory in Moroto was once again looted and the Karimojong obtained another large infusion of guns.

By this time, an internal and international trade in arms was well underway in Karamoja. Continuing militarization and armed conflict in southern Sudan, western Kenya, and southern Ethiopia had created a steady and lucrative trade in guns and ammunition across these borders into Karamoja. Indeed, this trade still continues, especially from southern Sudan into Dodoth in northern Karamoja. The price of a round of ammunition is determined by the distance from its source, and increases as it moves south in Karamoja.

Museveni's NRA was attempting to pacify the whole of Uganda, and within a few months it reached the borders of Karamoja. As it moved in, the army began to arrest gun-holders and confiscate their arms. Some observers report that when the NRA tried to disarm the Karimojong, things went awry. In some areas, the army did manage to take away many of the guns, but then the soldiers misbehaved, bullying people and looting stores, and generally convincing the Karimojong that their only protection from men with guns lay in keeping guns themselves. The resistance might have become quite violent, but before that could happen, the NRA was withdrawn, and sent westward to fight the more serious rebellion that had broken out in northern Uganda, leaving behind only a token force, and a still heavily armed Karamoja.

In 1989, a group of policy-makers and individuals deeply concerned about conditions in Karamoja held a conference to try to find solutions to the increasing violence and lack of security in the area. After lengthy discussions, a preliminary report from the conference participants detailed two options: (1) the army could re-enter Karamoja and forcibly disarm the local people, or (2) the people could keep their guns and the armed Karimojong warriors could be transformed into a local level force to police the use of guns. In the opinion of the conference participants, the first option would be met with violent resistance and thus would be extremely costly in terms of money, military effort, and human lives. The second option was resisted by politically powerful opponents in Kampala who would not accept a policy that provided government support to these armed and rebellious warriors, many of whom had committed criminal acts. Rather, the opponents insisted, these thieves and murderers should be arrested. The result of this effort at peacemaking was stalemate. No final report of the conference was ever completed, and the government did nothing.

### **The Formation of the Vigilantes**

In 1992, as security conditions in Karamoja continued to deteriorate, the Moroto District Council decided to take matters into their own hands. They appointed Sam Abura Pirir as Secretary of Security for Moroto District (southern Karamoja) and charged him with organizing

a local police force recruited from among the armed warriors. Members of this local force, known as "vigilantes", were recruited according to two main criteria. First, you must own a gun (the local government was not going to provide weapons), and secondly, you must be recognized as a leader in your community. The criteria for recognized leadership were quite traditional, i.e., your opinions are listened to and carry great weight, you are a man, or the son of a man, wealthy in cattle, your bravery and marksmanship are well-known and admired (or feared), or your skills at divination are recognized and respected. A small force was initially formed and, as events would have it, almost immediately tested.

In Matheniko County, a well-known and respected local school headmaster was ambushed on the road and killed. A group of vigilantes from the area was quickly formed and began tracking the killers. It followed these fugitives to Namaalu in the far south of the district, then north to Nabilatuk, and finally back to Matheniko. In the course of their pursuit, the vigilantes arrested a sub-county chief who had helped the killers elude their pursuers, thus demonstrating their political muscle in law enforcement. Two of the killers managed to escape into Kenya, but the pursuers got word that a third one was hiding in a village just south of Moroto. Before dawn, the vigilantes surrounded the village, then kept everyone inside and began a systematic search. The fugitive's kinsman in the village had hidden him under the top of a granary that was removed and placed on the ground. It was a clever ruse and probably would have worked, but the man panicked, leapt out of his hiding place and began firing only to be shot and killed.

The vigilantes' determined and effective performance in this event was very impressive. As a result, several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) agreed to support the vigilantes through contributions of blankets and food, and their commander was able to get shirts for his men as a kind of rudimentary uniform.

Sam Abura Pirir (1996) developed the initial vigilante force by recruiting ten men from each parish (a unit of a subcounty) for a total of 900 in Moroto District. He also chose a few women as intelligence gatherers: when they moved about they saw and heard things that might indicate illegal or non-peaceful activities, and men did not pay any attention to them. Abura Pirir decided that the top priority was to secure the roads. The army had not been able to accomplish this and its own vehicles, even when traveling in convoys, had come under fire. Private vehicles and convoys were at great risk of attack, and over the past decade many NGOs had withdrawn from Karamoja because of these attacks. So initially, the ten vigilantes in each parish were posted to guard the roads and, according to Abura Pirir, they were immediately effective. The roads became much safer.

Meanwhile, President Museveni was under continuing political pressure from districts bordering Karamoja to deal with the problem of armed Karimojong cattle raiders. When he finally visited the area, he was persuaded, albeit with misgivings, that the national government had to support the successful vigilante program that already had the backing of NGOs and the local government. To allay his skepticism, the President took three significant actions. First, he appointed Peter Lokeris, a trusted associate from Karamoja, as a special President's Representative on Security in Karamoja to oversee this volatile situation. Secondly, he appointed a new army commander for the Moroto division, a man from Karamoja who spoke the language and could relate to the local people. As a final and crucial step, Museveni insisted that the vigilante organization must come under the command and control of the army. Local

officials were in no position to argue with this demand. Although local government funds were used to pay the vigilantes' monthly stipend, now set at 10,000 Ugandan shillings per month (approximately US\$10), the army became the paymaster. The overall force was greatly expanded to 1,000 per county--5,000 in Moroto District (southern Karamoja) and 3,000 in Kotido District (northern Karamoja). The vigilantes were issued their own special uniforms and a hierarchically elaborated military command structure was established, with commanders at each geopolitical unit level, i.e., village, parish, sub-county, county, and district. Even the temporary cattle camps had vigilantes moving with the herds. According to Abura Pirir, the army did not retain the women vigilantes that he had recruited, because they did not fit the military conception of what a soldier is or does; the army only wanted people with guns, and "how can a woman have a gun?"

By early 1996, this new form of security did appear to be having a positive effect. In the village of Nabilatuk, for example, people were sitting outside their houses and shops long after dark, talking and drinking tea and beer, in a relaxed atmosphere of sociability they had not experienced for many years. They could walk from one homestead to another without fear of attack, they said, something that had not been possible until the vigilantes became active. Although still somewhat wary, many people attested to the increased safety they felt in traveling throughout the region. Reports of raiding and other forms of theft by violence dramatically decreased.

Under this new organization, one question immediately arises: are the vigilantes soldiers? They do receive some military training and some political education on peace and development from the army. When government officials need to go into an area where there is a high potential for violence in order to initiate security discussions with the local people, they will enter in an army vehicle, typically an armored personnel carrier (APC). Unlike a few years ago, the local people do not attack the APCs because they now are filled with vigilantes and elders, recognized traditional local leaders, not government soldiers from ethnic groups outside of Karamoja. In one particular situation, the vigilantes do work under the close supervision of the national army. Museveni's government promulgated a law forbidding the Karimojong to carry their weapons outside of Karamoja. When Karimojong herdsman bring their cattle to temporary cattle camps across the district borders into neighboring Teso and Acholi areas, vigilantes in these groups accompany them. Some of these vigilantes do bring their guns, but they report to the nearest police or army barracks where they sleep and train with those units and are available to participate in policing the prohibition on Karimojong having guns.

The district police force, also controlled by the district administration but an entity separate from the vigilantes, is being rebuilt with Karamoja secondary school graduate recruits who are receiving formal training at the national police academy. Some local officials say that the vigilantes are a kind of local arm of the district police, but how these two forces will be organizationally related, much less integrated, has yet to be addressed.

### **Keeping the Peace through Talking**

Within traditional Karimojong society, important decisions for the group (one might call them policy decisions) are made through a process of discussion and debate by the adult

(initiated) men of the community or area. As noted earlier, in these discussions certain men are quite influential, especially those who are elders, who have a reputation for good judgment, who are wealthy in cattle (usually seen as an indication of good judgment), who have special powers of prediction or prophecy, or, in circumstances of conflict with an enemy, are known to be especially brave and militarily astute. Although changes that have occurred during the past two decades of turmoil have threatened to undermine this system of traditional authority and decision-making, these leadership traits are still recognized and the form of group decision-making is still potentially powerful. As local government leaders have tried to create peace in Karamoja, they have used this traditional political process to prevent outbreaks of large-scale conflict and escalating violence. I was fortunate enough to witness an example of this approach to peace-keeping.

In January 1996, serious trouble was brewing. For more than twenty years some Turkana herdsmen had lived in an area north of Mt. Moroto. Recently they had moved east and south of the mountain. They had made marriage and livestock alliances with their Karimojong "cousins" (primarily, the Matheniko) and lived in relative peace; indeed, some villages and even some cattle camps were a mixture of Turkana and Matheniko. Farther to the south, the Pian division of the Karimojong had developed similar, although much more recent, alliances with the Pakot people, some of whom lived in Kenya and some in Karamoja territory adjacent to the Pian. In Kenya, the Pakot and Turkana have an ambivalent relationship; sometimes they are allies, sometimes enemies. During the past decade in Karamoja, the Pakot have been known to join the Pian in large raids against other groups. Now, the Pakot and Pian were complaining bitterly about what they claimed was a new and hostile military alliance of the Turkana and Matheniko, and threatening to take what they portrayed as preemptive action against these enemies.

Word of these complaints and the impending conflict reached Kampala and the central government made a decision that the Turkana must be forced back to the north side of Mt. Moroto. On orders from Kampala, the army commander in Moroto went out to the Matheniko/Turkana villages and told the Turkana that they had to pack up and leave in three days. The commander, who harbored his own grudges against the Turkana, then informed the Pakot and Pian of his actions, and thus these two groups expected the Turkana to be forced out of their current location.

In an effort to defuse this situation, a group of government officials, lead by Hon. David Pulkol, Member of Parliament for Moroto District and then Minister of State for Karamoja Affairs, and including Michael Lokawua, then Chairman of the Moroto District Council, Peter Lokeris, Sam Abura Pirir, and the Moroto army commander, traveled to distant villages and cattle camps to talk, often late into the night, with local leaders, trying to ascertain the factual basis for this conflict and the potential for violence. Among the Turkana, they talked with a particularly powerful and influential man named Lowakaabong, who told them that the Matheniko/Turkana elders had come to an agreement with Pakot elders just six or seven days earlier on how to share grazing and water resources in a particularly desirable and contested area known as Ochorichoi. (Because of the continuous conflict over this choice area, all settlements in the area had been abandoned for more than three decades.) When these officials talked with Pakot leaders the following night, they discovered that there had been no actual

incidents of raiding or trouble with the Turkana. In other words, the whole "problem" appeared to be a fabrication.

But the Moroto army commander refused to rescind his order to the Turkana to move their settlements unless ordered to do so by his superior commanding officer. So Peter Lokeris went to Kampala to consult with the President's office and to Mbale to convince the Divisional Army Commander to attend a peace meeting the following Saturday. Word was then sent out to the contending parties to bring their supporters to a large meeting on Saturday at Ochorichoi to air their grievances.

On the way to the meeting that Saturday morning, we encountered a group of Matheniko herdsmen, all heavily armed and tense with anger and apprehension, who said they were not going to the meeting. They had been warned by an arms trader who had just been in Pakot villages that the Pian and Pakot were planning to steal their cattle while they were off attending the meeting. The trader also said that the Pakot were going to attack and disrupt the meeting with gunfire. As we left the main road and headed for Ochorichoi, the government officials all rode in one vehicle discussing what their strategy should be. When we arrived at the site, hundreds of men were already there, sitting in their various ethnic groups, all armed. Many vigilantes were present, also sitting with their respective tribal groups. The army had unobtrusively deployed men all around the far perimeter of the area. The men in these ethnic groupings were very quiet, tense and wary.

The meeting finally got underway with an opening speech by Lokeris who warned that the patience of the national government was not inexhaustible and the army could be used to enforce peacekeeping. Then the first round of speakers, two from each group, began to present their arguments and rebuttals. The Pakot led off with a vitriolic attack by a young man who accused the Turkana of every kind of treachery and atrocity, including burying people alive. In one dramatic gesture, he pointed to Lowakaabong and in a voice strained with anger called him a thief. A second Pakot speaker, although older and less histrionic, also claimed that the Turkana were the core of the problem, that the Matheniko had been harboring these criminals, and that they must be sent packing back to Kenya. Two subsequent Pian speakers made essentially the same argument. Then the Matheniko were given a chance to respond to these accusations. They pointed out that the Pakot are also from Kenya and so did not have any grounds for criticizing the Turkana as outsiders. Indeed, on the Kenya side of the border they were living with the Turkana and making alliances with them, just as the Matheniko had done. When Lowakaabong was allowed to defend himself and to speak for the Turkana, he challenged his accusers, especially the Pakot, to name one incident where his group of Turkana had stolen from them. In further rebuttal, he cited several incidents in which Turkana stock were stolen and he had counselled his people against retaliation. He told how he had led his people into Kenya to recover from Turkana raiders cattle they had stolen from the Karimojong, and had even made up the difference out of his own stock. The Pakot fears were unfounded, he said, and he noted their recent grazing rights agreement.

As the afternoon wore on, the speakers were all more senior men, elders and vigilante commanders, and the speeches took on a more conciliatory tone, with many statements extolling the benefits of peace. As the meeting broke up, men from the different ethnic groups

were talking with one another and shaking hands. The Divisional Army Commander was convinced that violence had been averted and rescinded the order against the Turkana.

In discussions after the meeting several of the Karamoja government officials said they believed that the Pian and Pakot had deliberately fomented this conflict hoping to generate hostility toward the Turkana and force them to move their herds and settlements. Because the Matheniko and Turkana livestock and homesteads had become so intermingled over the years, the Matheniko would have to accompany the Turkana. Then, while they were on the move and in their weakest position, the Pian and Pakot would attack. They came to the meeting with tempers flaring, expecting the government to evict the Turkana. Thus, at the beginning of the meeting there was enormous tension and a real possibility of violence, but the conduct and outcome of the meeting had undermined their position and destroyed their strategy.

### **Restoring Traditional Authority**

At the close of the meeting the local governmental leaders had exhorted the men to establish in their villages local councils of leaders who would meet frequently to keep track of any trouble that might be brewing and take measures to keep things from escalating to violence. For example, if any theft of livestock had occurred they could go to the ones who had stolen and force them to return the animals or make restitution. These local leaders would be the equivalent of, and in many cases would be, the traditional elders.

As the armed violence of the past two decades escalated, the control that the elders had traditionally exercised over the young men was challenged. Rich men with guns formed small armies of young headstrong warriors who were dispossessed and willing to break the cultural rules and restraints against indiscriminate raiding and killing. Those elders who also were dispossessed in the chaos of raiding, drought, and famine could no longer command respect or exercise any control over these young men. The threat of a total breakdown of traditional law and order was one of the most serious consequences of the transformation of weaponry in these warrior societies.

Fortunately, this system of social control by the elders was not completely destroyed. The practice of initiation into the age grade system has continued. Indeed, many of the modern educated men who are government officials told me they had been initiated. The cultural principle and practice of respecting those who are older has deep roots and a strong rationale in this pastoral political economy. Some of the elders have managed to maintain their status, although they have adapted to the new reality of modern firearms being widely distributed. They also are armed, have maintained their herds, often through some raiding, and have networks of younger men they can call upon for support. Nonetheless, they still are committed to the traditional forms of decision-making and they have grown weary of the violence and destruction. It is from the ranks of these elders and their networks that many of the vigilantes have come, and it is to these elders that the modern governmental leaders are now turning to create peace through the restoration of traditional forms of culturally legitimate social and political authority.

It may seem ironic that at the end of a century of attempts to isolate, then to control and change Karamoja the value of the elders is finally being recognized. The British colonial

administration was convinced that the elders were an impediment to progress and civilization, and so it appointed chiefs (Barber, 1968). When the chiefs proved ineffectual, the colonial administration blamed the elders and attempted to destroy their political power by outlawing initiation ceremonies, hoping to undermine the continuity of the age grade system. The plan might have worked, but fortunately, when Ugandan independence occurred, this edict was rescinded and the age grade system was immediately revived (Dyson-Hudson, 1966). Still, in the years since independence a series of Ugandan governments has viewed Karamoja as dangerously backward and irrationally resistant to change, and the elders have been mocked and disregarded, as outsiders appointed by Kampala have come into Karamoja to administer a series of unsuccessful development plans (Quam, 1978) or to impose a militarized order. More recently, Karamoja has produced a few leaders who have risen to some political prominence at the national level. In June 1996, David Pulkol was re-elected to Parliament (and has since been appointed to the powerful post of Director of the External Security Organization), Michael Lokawua was newly elected to Parliament, Peter Lokeris was appointed Minister of State for Karamoja Affairs, and Omwony-Ojok continued to serve as the Director of the National AIDS Commission. These modern men, along with their allies in the District Administration, have become convinced that the traditional forms of social control are the best hope for creating peace and community development in the places they call home.

Will this approach work? Will it be given a chance to work? The peace in Karamoja is not perfect and it is fragile. In November, 1996, *The Monitor* newspaper in Kampala carried four stories about relatively small-scale incidents of cattle raiding and armed attacks in Karamoja (Sylvester, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 1996d). Significantly, the stories also included accounts of vigorous response by vigilantes and other security officers. Another serious drought could set off a series of conflicts over grazing and water which might quickly escalate into large-scale armed violence. In the past, when a family lost much of its livestock it could rebuild its wealth through traditional practices of borrowing and skillful herd management. The recent levels of impoverishment may require new strategies of subsistence and recovery, but the opportunities for agriculture and wage labor are severely limited in Karamoja, especially after the recent economic and infrastructural decline (Okudi, 1992). Unless those who are impoverished, especially the young men, can find a lawful means of subsistence, they will continue to be a reserve army of potential recruits for renewed raiding and banditry.

The militarization of the vigilantes could create some dissonance with traditional authority. The effectiveness of the vigilantes is based on their legitimacy as indigenous, grass-roots leaders whose authority is grounded in their conformity to traditional values. They are local leaders who guard their community areas, although some ambiguity exists regarding their status because they fall under the command of the army and are organized in a military-style chain of command structure. What would happen, for example, if a senior commander gave a local vigilante an order that contradicted the authoritative voice of the local elders? Where would the vigilante's allegiance lie? The vigilantes have received pay increases, full uniforms, and even some additional payments in kind. They also are receiving additional military training. Where do their long-range interests lie? If they begin to be seen as another arm of the national army, will the people continue to trust and obey them?

On the other hand, the national government has little choice but to pursue the current policy of indigenous peace-keeping in Karamoja. With rebellion on the Sudan border and warfare to the west and south in Zaire and Rwanda (French, 1996; UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, 1996), it cannot take on significant military operations in the northeast. As has been the case so often in the past, Karamoja is viewed as an exceptional problem case in national development. This time the people of Karamoja may have a chance to demonstrate the effectiveness of their traditional system of political authority in keeping the peace in an armed society.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism. Mahmood Mamdani. (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996) xi+353pp.**

Whatever else may be said of *Citizen and Subject*, it is a landmark publishing event in contemporary African political studies. Coming out hot on the wake of South Africa's transition to a non-racial democracy, and the continuing political paralysis in most of the rest of the continent, the book has set a new agenda that seeks to answer to the historical origins of the ongoing social and governance problems in South Africa as well as north of the Limpopo. Quite unconventional in its perspective and conclusions, the book argues that the difficulties in South Africa's racially segregated past are writ large in the rest of the continent. It therefore denies South Africa and apartheid any "exceptionalism", embracing the implausible argument that "apartheid was the generic form of colonialism". *Citizen and Subject* may also represent the first opportunity in a long time that an African scholar has made significant theoretical waves in African studies on both sides of the Atlantic, considering the attention the book has received in South African universities as a whole, and in the US African studies community generally. The book also presents its author in his new theoretical perspective, having all but bade farewell to materialistic interpretations of post-colonial Africa, grounded in class struggles in the neo-colonial context, and embraced the Weberian perspective of authority--what Weber called "possession of the means of administration"--as the ordering factor of social conflict. All this is most refreshing, persuasively argued, and extremely well written. But it remains to be seen, when all the reviewers have had their say, and when all the factual evidence is carefully sifted, whether the book adds value to existing knowledge of the colonial origins of Africa's political predicament and South Africa's new role in it. Despite his having enjoyed reading the book, this reviewer has some strong doubts about that.

The overarching thesis of the book which this writer read, disbelievingly over and again since acquiring his copy in the middle of last year, leaves little ambiguity in the reader's mind. The institutional framework of rule enshrined in apartheid and in all late colonialism, hinged especially on its use of "indirect" rule over the natives by local chiefs using "customary law". This in turn dichotomized African societies into "citizens" (those above the writ of customary laws, enjoying some civil liberties, and mostly white), and "subjects" (primarily peasant households in the countryside) who faced the wrath and arbitrariness of native authorities, chiefs and their retainers. The book proceeds with the assumption--often enshrined in customary law statutes--that native authority was coextensive with geographic "tribal" domains. Given the multiplicity of rural native authorities, the system of indirect rule so established is referred to by Mamdani as "decentralized despotism". In Southern Africa at least, white authorities sought to

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v1/1/reviews.pdf>

transplant indirect rule into the "native" townships, and to sustain the figment of "tribal" solidarity under chiefly control in the urban setting where black migratory labor was seen as transient, and still grafted to its rural umbilical cord. Somehow, and again difficult to sustain in the light of hard historical evidence, British and South African indirect rule is equated to what Mamdani calls the French colonial policy of "association". At the nadir of the books narrative, the tragedy of African independence is represented as the continent's inability to dispense with decentralized despotism even when rural socialist revolutionary programs were attempted, as they were in Tanzania and Mozambique. With the attainment of independence, and of majority rule in South Africa, the institutional framework was "deracialized but not democratized". This left the African peasantry almost everywhere "trapped in a nonracial version of apartheid". But with one major exception: in South Africa, industrialization had brought Africans in vast numbers to the cities, and in that context, indirect rule and decentralized despotism were an urban affair. So was the opposition to the system. In short, rural protest movements north of the Limpopo are generically identical to the township rebellions in South Africa.

In these circumstances, *Citizen and Subject* informs us, rural and urban popular resistance to decentralized despotism inevitably took an ethnic form--"tribal" political organization, as Mamdani calls it after dispensing with the quotation marks early in the book, hoping that his readers will understand that he is no apologist for the colonial coinage or the archaic sense of the term. Modern "tribalism" writes Mamdani, signifies the contradiction of (indirect) authority and the resistance it generates. To wit then, far from being reactionary, provincial and backward looking, ethnic-based peoples' resistance (be they rural or urban) "may be emancipatory" in the move toward democratic rule in Africa. As examples of emancipatory backlash against the tyranny of the decentralized despots by the rural peasants, the author describes the long-simmering Rwenzururu uprising in Toro, Western Uganda, the 1950s Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya, postcolonial "simba" revolt in the Congo (now Zaire). All attacked despotic native authority. In South Africa's townships, the revolts of the 1970s onwards aimed at the sham black administration erected by apartheid. The book's empirical data is culled especially from Uganda, but also from Kenya, Tanzania and Zaire, in addition to the large chunks from South Africa. With the partial exception of Nigeria, West Africa and Francophone Africa have only bit roles, if they feature at all. And while the township rebellions in South Africa are themselves symptomatic of emancipatory counter-action, the counter-revolutionary behavior of some hostel dwellers is itself seen as "tribal" action motivated by autocratic native rulers filling a vacuum created by lack of modern secular trade unionism. The books calls for a critical review of the democratic potential of these popular, ethnic-based rural and urban resistance movements, without being romantic about them, as Africanists recast their analytical apparatus to understand the best way out of the current political impasse.

But is the essence of the history of African colonial rule--the seeming genesis of the problem--captured by the metaphor of decentralized despotism and its malcontents? To begin with, it may be prudent not to overemphasize the African novelty of using local rulers to buttress colonial rule for the use of native auxiliaries has been inherent in the definition of colonialism through the ages. The archetypical model of Lugard's policy of using native rulers in the British empire was India, and its political sequel after India's independence in 1947 was very different from the institutional depravity that informs much of Africa today. Indeed,

notwithstanding Mamdani's impressively low figures of European officers in African colonial service (even in closely-administered colonies like Kenya), the truth is that most empires have survived on a combination of might and local administrative accomplices. Reviewing the practice in the ancient world, Machiavelli says in *The Prince* that there are three ways to hold newly conquered lands: "first by devastating them; next by going to live there...; thirdly by letting them keep their own laws, by exacting tribute, and setting up an oligarchy which will keep the state friendly to you". Anticipating the decision of the Victorian colonial office, Machiavelli judged the third alternative--i.e. indirect rule--as the most economical and effective. Depending on the country, African colonial rule in practice combined indirect rule, European settlement and brute force, and its variation across countries and imperial powers--British, French, Belgian, Portuguese and Italian--was more varied than is suggested by a uniform apartheid, "association", or indirect rule. Thomas Hodgkin brings this out most clearly in his classic *Nationalism in Tropical Africa*, and we know from detailed historical work on comparative colonialism (like that of Michael Crowder) of the substantive differences between British indirect (and sometimes direct) rule, and French-style direct rule with its complements like assimilation, French education in French, African deputies in the Parisian national assembly, replication of territorial administrative circles and prefectures, etc. In fact, association did not become policy until well after the 1944 Brazzaville conference, as a sop for the would be African nationalists during the war. It pays to remark that like under the British, there were exceptions in the French system as well: the Mossi kingdom in the then Upper Volta, and Felix Eboué's installation of the grand chefs in Central Africa come to mind. But all this reinforces the terrific diversity of colonial structures at the grassroots. Indeed, long after independence, there were regions in Africa--like Northern Chad and interior Mozambique--where it was news that the colonialists had departed. The people had never heard of their arrival.

Thus while the nexus of the colonialist and his local agent may have some overall but highly general resonance, it was hardly similar in substance in British territories themselves, let alone French, Portuguese, Italian and Belgian colonies. And it was hardly apartheid in miniature except in the most perfunctory sense: effective foreign conquest requires active local auxiliaries--the interface between foreign and local laws, between citizen and subject is implicit in the definition of colonialism. Strictly speaking, if apartheid and the politics of indirect rule are equated, then apartheid was the norm not just in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and Nigeria, but also in colonial India, Northern Ireland after the seventeenth century, and Native American reservations after the heyday of the US Cavalry. And as an analytical model it has minimal predictive capability since the political consequences in these situations are so divergent.

Neither is the relationship of chief and their subjects as portrayed in *Citizen and Subject* wholly consistent with the practice of "decentralized despotism" under indirect rule and apartheid. In his memorable 1949 essay, "The Village Headman in British Central Africa", Max Gluckman described the Janus-faced obligations of native rulers at the lower end of the colonial hierarchy. To the extent that he was successful in his duties, the headman (and the chief) was at once a representative of popular local causes and an enforcer of unpopular colonial directives. The history of local African rulers under British colonial rule is shot through with examples of difficulties in balancing the two, with some chiefs siding with the ruled or turning tables against the colonial order. Against the wishes of the white establishment in South Africa, Khama I of

the Bamangwato was an early modernizer, introducing much-needed schools and health programs to his people. Chiefs and local spiritual leaders founded the first nationalist party in Gabon. Chief Koinange wa Mbiyu in Central Kenya was a powerful influence in the Kikuyu independent schools movement; detained without trial in the Mau Mau years, he died in prison in 1961. The list is long that would prove Gluckman's point.

However, this is less problematic than the recurring portrait in this book of "tribe", "tribespeople", "tribalism", and "customary law" as concrete categories of political behavior, with or without quotation marks. Coming in the 1990s and in Southern Africa, of all places, this is surely unforgivable. For nowhere else in Africa have these terms been as severely discredited--in the sense that Mamdani uses them--as in the urban and migrant labor culture in Southern Africa. With the publication of J.Clyde Mitchell's *The Kalela Dance* in 1959, and the subsequent work of urban African ethnicity at the then Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Lusaka, it was established that township-based identities bore little resemblance to "traditional" rural "tribes", which were themselves often creatures of the vortex of social and administrative changes introduced by colonialism; a process in which African peoples were creators of their new identities, not the hapless tools of colonial exploitation some left-wing authors claim "tribal" groupings to have been. Thus although as a communal appellation, the ethnic designation of "Nyanja" may have had resonance in the Northern Rhodesia copperbelt (with urban "Nyanja chiefs" to boot), it was irrelevant in eastern rural parts of the territory, where the "tribe" supposedly originated, and where the operational categories of identity (complete with "tribal" chiefs and "native" laws) were Ngoni, Tumbuka, Chewa and many others. In one of the most articulate renditions of this phenomenon, Crawford Young (in *Politics in the Congo*), described the emergence of "Bangala" identity in colonial Leopoldville--complete with its ethnic political association--and narrated the surprise of the native chief in northeastern Belgian Congo, the supposed home of the "Bangala", who himself denied any knowledge of a Bangala ethnicity. Over time, we have seen an accumulation of similar ethnographic data with reference to the Tonga, Shangaan, and Tswana (in Southern Africa) as well as the urban identities of Dyula, Yoruba, Hausa, Luhya, Fang, Ugandan Nubians, and so on.

As an old witticism from this literature, African ethnic identity ( indeed all ethnic identity worldwide) is a shifting, multilayered phenomenon that is contextually defined. To contend as Mamdani does on a "conveyer belt" of migrant tribals from rural to urban, all governed by common ethnicity and indirect rule, is simply and factually untenable, however persuasive may be the archival legal statutes underpinning this concept that he quotes. And this is when one wishes Mamdani had not shed his materialistic heritage so readily. In one of the most influential books on this resurgent phenomenon of ethnicity in the 1990s, Benedict Anderson describes new and old nationalities as "imaged communities", a term that applies no less to what Mamdani and others describe, with the best of intentions as African "tribes" and "tribespeople"; terms of course that do not apply to non-African Croats, Serbs, Basques, Chechens, Pathans, Parsees, or just plain Baluchis. Over twenty five years ago, Pierre van den Berge, author of *South Africa: A Study in Conflict*, appealed for the abandonment of this invidious and meaningless term (tribe) in place of more objective and universal categories. Far from being mere semantics, this is sound advice. The discourse of ethnic identity and national politics can now be heard in Britain, the Russian Republic, Sri Lanka and Australia. That

"tribalism" continues to be used so casually for Africans, all objective evidence to the contrary, may say something about the minimal extent by which the perception and study of ethnic movements in Africa has changed. And it testifies to the need for international comparativism of the kind Mamdani rules out in the opening remarks of this book.

One of the most surprising things about African studies at the end of the century is the extent to which some major strands of them have revived (almost unconsciously) the analytical categories that were current in the heyday of "modernization" and "development" theories of the 1950s and 1960s. According to the conventional wisdom of that era, African societies were characterized by conflict between "tradition" and "modernity", with "modernizing elites" created under colonialism, championing the later. And of course there were dissenters who saw strong benefits in using popular traditions and beliefs as a springboard for modernization. With the disappointing results of development in the 1970s, it was argued by dependency writers that the problem lay in attempting to modernize the colonial, European-run economy with then neo-colonial African "petty" or "bureaucratic" bourgeoisie in place instead of overhauling the production system and putting "the people" in control. Now it is starkly stated that with the end of apartheid and one-party rule in the north, the system is still hostage to an indigenous ruling oligarchy installed in the past (like the old "petty" bourgeoisie) that does not incorporate the people in decision-making. Once again, the system has been "deracialized but not democratized". Hence the current efforts to build a countervailing African civil society. For all its attacks on Goran Hyden's dichotomy between the modern capitalists and the traditionalistic "economy of affection", *Citizen and Subject* bears all the trademarks and the dilemmas of the modernization school and its sequel, of the struggle between the old and new institutions of governance and economic life. There may be nothing wrong with that. In moments of crisis like those in Africa today, it does pay to retrace one's steps in order to chart a better way forward. If the debates sparked by this book enable us to design a clearer path for national governance in Africa, it will have served a greater purpose than its author intended.

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**The Road to Hell: The Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid and International Charity. Michael Maren. New York: The Free Press. 1997. 302 pp.**

The Road to Hell is a scathing critique of the development and relief aid industry in East Africa. In his expose, journalist and former aid worker, Michael Maren portrays several US Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and the US military, among others, as corrupt, self-serving agencies whose ulterior interests contributed to rather than helped resolve conditions of famine and war in Somalia. According to Maren, relief aid to Somalia in the 1980s and 1990s was manipulated by local authorities, hoodlums, and even refugees who grew rich diverting food and other donations or

by using these resources for political ends. Despite this, Western aid agencies continued to solicit funds and carry out relief and development activities because they benefited financially. Maren exposes the expatriate aid community in Africa as comprised of careerists who live luxurious lifestyles in the midst of poverty and make little attempt to learn about or to integrate themselves into their host society.

Maren uses his own experiences as an example of how easily expatriates obtain comfortable jobs in Africa and how little the impact of their action or inaction matters to them and their funders. As a Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya in the late 1970s, he discovered that he had little to offer in the village where he lived and that his presence there was the result of a bribe made by the school headmaster who wanted a white teacher to attract more students and donations. As an employee of Catholic Relief Services in Kenya, Maren learned, "[w]ith my English degree and suburban upbringing and white skin, I could walk into an African village and throw money and bags of food around. I could do anything I pleased. I had, admittedly, enjoyed the feeling of power. Suddenly it scared me." Maren later worked for USAID in Somalia as a food monitor in the early 1980s, where he discovered that the Somali government was deliberately diverting development aid and inflating refugee numbers to keep refugees dependent and to keep the aid flowing.

Maren takes aim at Care, Save the Children, AmeriCares, and other American NGOs. He accuses CARE of continuing to solicit UN funds for food relief in Somalia while knowing that its donated food was turning up in markets in other countries. He criticizes Save the Children's exploitation of starving children to raise funds which are spent mostly on administering grants from the US government. Save the Children in Somalia did not pay field personnel or disperse project funds, preferring to make a profit by changing money on the black market and renting a weekend beach house for the director. Maren suggests that AmeriCares' purpose is to provide tax write-offs for corporations, and details how the agency delivered inappropriate donated goods (Gatorade, Mars Bars, Pop Tarts, Maidenform bras) to disaster-stricken areas in Russian, Bosnia, and Japan.

If all that he says is true, *The Road to Hell* provides a depressing comment on the state of foreign and charitable aid. The book's most important contribution is as an eye-opener for the general public whose only information about international development and relief aid comes from commercials for charities and the popular press. Maren does provide insightful details about interclan conflict and politics in Somalia. As an objective study of aid in Africa, however, *The Road to Hell* is inadequate.

Maren is right: the development industry is inherently paternalistic, but he does not mention and may be unaware of the lively debate and increasing attempts in development literature, in NGO and major bilateral and multilateral agency policies and programs to reverse the top-down, dependency-creating, bureaucratic nature of development. Maren also does not distinguish clearly between relief aid and development aid. Food aid is notorious for creating dependency and disrupting local markets in emergency situations, while development, although by no means free of problems, does not suffer from the massive influx of funds and the sensationalistic press coverage that distort relief aid. His analysis ignores local movements and small NGOs based in African countries who receive aid funds and manage them more responsibly and responsively than the large agencies.

By sensationalizing the corruption and greed, Maren's analysis overlooks the complex but less flashy problems of the aid industry. In this sense he is no different than those he criticizes. Like the journalists who flocked to Somalia, Maren was right there with them, looking for a good story.

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**The Ghost of Equality: The Public Lives of D.D.T. Jabavu of South Africa, 1885-1959.**  
**Catherine Higgs. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1997. Pp. xiii + 276.**

The Ghost of Equality chronicles the long and varied life of Davidson Don Tengo Jabavu, one of South Africa's most distinguished public figures. The book is aptly subtitled "the public lives of D.D.T. Jabavu" since his life encompassed several distinct careers as an educator, African nationalist politician, organizer, writer, and Methodist lay preacher. In Catherine Higgs's fine biography his profound influence is duly recognized. Her book joins the growing number of biographies and autobiographies that have appeared in recent years illuminating the lives of leading African political figures in South Africa. With notable works now available on Nelson Mandela, Sol Plaatje, Alfred B. Xuma, H.I.E. Dholomo, Z.K. Matthews, and Albert Luthuli, a comparable study of D.D.T. Jabavu is especially timely.

Higgs provides an engaging and well-informed account of Jabavu's very full public career. Jabavu made his mark as the first African lecturer at the South African Native College (Fort Hare), where from 1916 to 1944 he helped transform what "was little more than a glorified high school" into the preeminent institution for higher learning for black South Africans. During this same time, Jabavu was instrumental in organizing several associations of teachers, farmers, and voters. Perhaps his crowning achievement centered around his cofounding of the All African Convention in 1935, for which he served as president until 1948. In 1943, he also helped establish (and subsequently led) the Non-European Unity Movement. Despite his repeated attempts, Jabavu's efforts to merge the AAC and NEUM with the African National Congress in a broad opposition alliance never came to fruition. In 1949, recognizing that his moderate approach to political protest was at odds with the more radical and assertive strategy assumed by the younger generation of African leaders, he retired from active political life. His last years were spent in relative seclusion devoted to writing and making only the occasional public appearance.

According to Higgs, the defining characteristic of Jabavu's political philosophy was his lifelong commitment to the "Cape liberal tradition." He believed that equal rights ought to be extended to all civilized men irrespective of race. In spite of the many developments that progressively stripped all blacks of basic rights in South Africa during his lifetime, and which effectively rendered this goal unrealizable, Jabavu continued to cling to the Cape ideal. This quixotic strain in his ideological bearings is captured by the book's title, "The Ghost of

Equality." Even late in life, by which time he had grown disillusioned with white liberals and British justice, Jabavu never wholly renounced this improbable dream.

Higgs effectively points to the limits of Jabavu's political activism. Like many elite, mission-educated South African blacks of his age, Jabavu was unable to jettison his ideological commitment to polite deputations in favor of grass-roots radicalism. Despite the pressure applied by the younger political leaders who entered the ranks of the AAC and other black opposition movements during the 1940s, Jabavu resisted attempts to make the AAC more responsive to a mass membership. As Higgs points out, it is ironic that the guiding principle of Jabavu's life was fashioned after the famous dictum of Cecil Rhodes--"equal rights to all civilized men south of the Zambesi."

Higgs seems to suggest that many of Jabavu's shortcomings emanated from his enduring belief that he and other elite Africans were uniquely qualified to lead their African constituencies. For Jabavu, haunted by the ghost of equality, an education grounded in Western cultural values still served as the portal to social and moral "uplift" for a few select Africans.

Higgs deliberately excludes all but the most skeletal details of his personal life, choosing to avoid the "gossip mongering and voyeurism" that might otherwise insinuate itself into an account of his private life. While this decision may be methodologically valid and even laudable in its own right, it leaves the reader yearning to learn something--anything--of what Jabavu was like as a private person. Virtually no mention is made of what activities he pursued in his leisure hours, whom he counted as friends, or of any other such intimate matter. While these issues may be rather pedestrian in nature, their inclusion would have provided a more rounded and vivid portrait of a very complicated man.

Throughout, Higgs balances her account of Jabavu's contribution to African political and associational life with a solid historical contextualization of his times. She demonstrates a strong grasp of the tensions surrounding his public lives and manages to present an impartial assessment of his foibles and failures as well as his strengths and accomplishments. Higgs's well-written and engaging account is appropriate for both undergraduates and graduates and represents a valuable contribution to understanding an important South African.

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