

Rezensionen / Reviews

DE SAINT MARTIN, Monique/ SCARFO GHELLAB, Grazia/ MELLAKH, Kamal (éds.). 2015. *Étudier à l'Est. Expériences de diplômés africains*. Paris: Karthala. 300 pp. ISBN: 978-2811114633

reviewed by

Eric Burton, University of Vienna

Étudier à l'Est. Expériences de diplômés africains is about experiences, biographies and professional trajectories of Africans who studied in the Soviet Union and other East European countries. The book presents results and preliminary findings from the interdisciplinary and comparative research programme ELITAF (*Etudiants et élites africaines formés dans les pays de l'ex-bloc soviétique*), a collaboration of over 80 junior as well as established researchers from universities in France, Russia, Senegal, Congo and Morocco. In line with the basic tenets of ELITAF, the editors Monique de Saint Martin (Paris), Grazia Scarfò Ghellab and Kamal Mellakh (both Casablanca) managed to draw together contributors from several disciplines including history, political science, sociology, anthropology and literary science.

The editors' introduction delivers one of the best entry points to the subject available to date. Tens of thousands of Africans studied in Eastern Europe between the late 1950s and the demise of state socialism in 1989/91, more than 43.500 graduated in the Soviet Union alone. Although there were precursors, like the strongly politicized Soviet educational programmes for foreigners in the 1920s to early 1940s, this form of mobility between Africa and state socialist countries established a fundamentally new form of migration flows and educational globalization. Preceding decolonization, the metropolises had enjoyed a near-monopoly on higher education in their dependencies. Once politically independent, many African states seized the opportunity to recalibrate and diversify their foreign relations. Possibilities to study multiplied as the competing Cold War superpowers and their allies, motivated by their own political and economic objectives, readily offered scholarships to secondary school leavers and young academics. This

dovetailed with the interests of African governments (of a wide spectrum of political colours) which aimed to “produce” the maximum number of qualified persons in the shortest amount of time possible to man the growing state machinery. As long as national universities had limited capacities or did not exist, sending students to wherever possibilities came up was the most pragmatic thing to do. Additionally, African liberation movements, political parties and unions, too, were engaged in the circulation of young men and (significantly less in number) women and welcomed Eastern charm offensives entailing opportunities in higher education. Apart from painting a canvas of the historical context of these exchanges, they sketch what criteria were attached to scholarships and carve out some general lines of the trajectories and living conditions of students.

The seventeen contributions that follow are subdivided into three parts of roughly equal length. The first part (*Étudier en URSS et dans les pays de l'ancien bloc socialiste*) focuses on the institutional framework and conditions in the Soviet Union, Romania and East Germany. The second part (*Des diplômés africains face aux soubresauts de l'histoire*) deals with the intersection of life-courses and historical events and shows how students grappled with political ruptures like coups and revolutions in their home countries, on the one hand, and the implosion of East European state socialism on the other hand. The third part (*Entre deux ou plusieurs mondes. Des expériences contrastées*) illustrates the wide spectrum of personal experiences, reaching from statements of Moroccan students that the time spent studying in the Soviet Union where the best years of their lives to narratives of utter disillusionment. There are, however, more similarities than differences between the individual texts of the separate parts, with many themes appearing in all three sections.

Although some of the articles draw on earlier research (Grazia Scarfò Ghellab, for instance, mentions that first interviews were conducted as early as 1974), the common methodological framework gives the volume a coherent appearance. The contributions are of good to excellent quality. Most of the texts in the second and third parts are based mainly on interviews and lay out case studies based on one to ten persons. These are mostly of common national origin, for instance Morocco, Mali, Congo, Benin and Senegal. Few authors also make use of novels in which former students fictionalized their experiences. In the case of archival sources, as

Anna Sim-Moskovitina and Nikolay Dobronravin point out in the case of Russia, access to documents remains restricted and thus difficult. Still, some contributions, especially in the first part, also rely on archival sources.

The main theme of the book are circulations and mobility in their multifaceted meanings of geographical, ideological, social and various other kinds of movement, transgression, and border crossings. Overseas education has been a vehicle to attain more knowledge and a degree to facilitate personal advancement, to enter the circle of the educational elite and hence to also gain political and economic influence. As becomes clear, there were many other pathways that differed from the linear and officially preferred version of departure, degree, and return. Some students stayed in the Soviet Union (and later, Russia), or even returned with their spouses; others went to third countries and did or did not return to their country of origin. The expectations before arrival ranged, like retrospective judgements, from enthusiasm to horror. As Constantin Katsakioris points out in his contribution, some African students defected from France because they were eager to study in a socialist country (pp. 81-82), while in Congo, as Régine Tchicaya-Oboa and Patrice Yengo show, Christian parents stood aghast at news that their children were to study in the “godless Soviet Union” (p. 220, all quotes translated by E.B.).

Even if indoctrination and “winning the hearts and minds” of foreign students clearly was an objective of East European countries, political transformations could in no way be predicted. Although the symbolically charged cover image of the volume – showing a heroic procession of African and Soviet students with Soviet and other flags – seems to imply otherwise, the contributions convey a sense of rather “unideological” studies: courses were marked not by political indoctrination, but by the transmission of technical expertise and an emphasis on the practical relevance of training. To be sure, there were difficulties, setbacks and disillusionments – especially among those who had come with high hopes of socialism – but for many, the negative sides did not outweigh the positive sides of the stay.

One of the most outstanding achievements of this collection is that it conveys a sense of the students’ complex individuality, showing that those young men and women were not just students, but also sons and daughters, lovers and parents, party members and petty traders, dissidents and careerists, workers and adventurers, conformists and revolutionaries,

wrestling with foreign languages, East European authorities and African embassies, strange food habits, and own expectations. Daily life and mobility during the stay are examined in several contributions, just like the experience of racism – and strategies of dealing with it. As becomes clear, students' activities and opinions were at times at odds with the interests of sending and receiving states who hoped for the return of qualified, docile cadres.

The biographical trajectory of an Ethiopian militant, named Abdul, serves as the striking example of a scholarship's outcome which pleased neither Soviet nor Ethiopian officials. Carefully contextualized and skilfully sketched by Tassé Abye, Abdul's politicization begins with his involvement in Ethiopia's radical left in late 1960s Addis Ababa. In 1969, Abdul secured a scholarship for the Soviet Union where he got involved in Maoist and Marxist-Leninist study circles of militant foreign students. Some of those students turned full-time revolutionaries and completely abandoned university studies. Abdul, however, was not a full-scale *homo politicus*. He continued with his studies, went to Western Europe during the vacations to make money and enjoyed the "decadent" lifestyle of dancing, drinking and being with his Russian girlfriend: "We wanted to combine amusements, politics and our studies." (p. 135). Eventually, however, Abdul's revolutionary fervour had the decisive impact on his life course: In 1973, he heeded the call to join the underground guerrilla struggle in Ethiopia, first against the imperial regime and then the (self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist) Mengistu regime. In 1984, Abdul abandoned the struggle, left Ethiopia and eventually settled in North America where today, he works in a human rights centre. Trajectories like Abdul's challenge assumptions of top-down indoctrination in the Soviet Union and foreground instead the circulation of radical ideas among (foreign) students.

Political and ideological transformations as intended and unintended outcomes are a re-occurring theme in other texts as well, just like economic aspects. Many of the Africans who studied in the Eastern Bloc, as several contributions strongly suggest, came from fairly modest backgrounds. Many of them did not have the opportunity to study in their countries of origin, or in Western countries. In East European countries, however, they were privileged upon arrival in two important respects. Firstly, foreign students received higher scholarships than their local counterparts. Secondly, they were – in most cases – allowed to travel westwards which

enabled them to profit from the slope between Western and East European economies. The cross-border trade and exchange of hard currency as well as petty commerce, i.e., importing or smuggling goods “under the coat” (p. 242), became increasingly widespread. In the 1990s and 2000s, new professionalized commercial networks were knit based upon knowledge and social capital accumulated in Cold War times. Moroccan pharmacists who had studied in the Soviet Union, Kamal Mellakh shows, have established agencies relaying Moroccan students with private universities in Russia (which are comparatively cheap in international comparison). This development led to competition between pharmacists holding Russian degrees, on the one hand, and those holding Moroccan degrees, on the other hand.

As Michèle Leclerc-Olive points out in her contribution, the diversity and, in many cases, contrasting nature of experiences presents a methodological challenge; and the micro-focus in most texts opens rather than closes further enquiries and debates (p. 124). If there is any criticism to be made of this excellent collection, it concerns two minor issues, namely, an almost complete lack of articulation with the Anglophone literature on the topic, and some regional imbalances. First, African countries formerly colonised by France receive most of the attention. Southern and East Africa (with the exception of Ethiopia) are mostly neglected. Secondly, the term “East” mostly refers to the Soviet Union. Given its quantitative importance in extending scholarships, this is understandable, still, East Germany, Romania and Bulgaria receive fairly little attention, while other East European countries are completely neglected. In this area, there still is a whole range of opportunities for future research. Comparative perspectives with overseas students in “the West,” but also in China and Cuba, would serve to unpack the notion of the “East” even further to arrive at a more global perspective.

As an excellent piece of research contributing to the establishment of such a global perspective, *Étudier à l'Est* deserves to be read widely by anybody interested in contemporary history, migration, higher education, and relations between Africa and the world. The volume's strongest part is that it successfully highlights Africans' agency during the Cold War in the interstices of superpower competition, economic inequalities, and changing historical constellations, including the world after 1990. The book as a whole enriches and complicates our understanding of migration and social

mobility, evoking a strong sense of the complex entanglements of high politics and professional education. Finally, the enquiries into the institutional arrangements for foreign students and the everyday life in socialism(s) serve to de-mystify relations between Africa and Eastern Europe and replace obsolete Cold War narratives with a more balanced, nuanced, but also contradictory picture of overseas education.

BECK, Rose Marie/ KRESSE, Kai. 2016. *Abdilatif Abdalla - Poet in Politics*. Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota. 147 Seiten. ISBN 978-9987-753-38-3

rezensiert von

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„*Hakuna sehemu yoyote ya mwanaadamu ambayo haikuingiliana na siasa kwa njia mojawapo au nyengine [there is no human space which is not permeated by politics in one way or the other]*“ (S. v). Mit diesen Worten Abdilatif Abdallas (S. 85), dessen Leben und Werk im Fokus des vorliegenden Bandes stehen, verweisen die HerausgeberInnen im Vorwort auf das, was sein Leben wesentlich beeinflusste und prägte – die Politik.

Die Aufsätze dieses Bandes basieren zum großen Teil auf Vorträgen, die bei einem Symposium zu Ehren von Abdilatif Abdalla anlässlich seines Ruhestandes an der Universität Leipzig, an der er zuletzt tätig war, gehalten wurden. Die Beiträge dieses Symposiums am 4. und 5. Mai 2011 bieten der Leserschaft eine breite Perspektive auf Abdilatifs Schaffen und würdigen den 1946 in Mombasa Geborenen als „*writer and political activist, as verbal artist and a master of riddles*“ (S. v). Dieses Projekt gelingt auf ungemein mitreißende Weise.

Rose Marie Beck und Kai Kresse gliedern die Beiträge in vier Bereiche. Der erste Teil gilt Abdilatif Abdalla als Person und Lyriker und der Bedeutung seines Schaffens für die *Swahili and African Studies*. Thematisiert wird hier aber auch die Herausforderung, die Werke aus dem Swahili in andere Sprachen zu übersetzen. Kai Kresse porträtiert Abdilatif Abdalla sowohl als Schriftsteller als auch politischen Aktivist. Kresse verweist in diesem Zusammenhang auf Abdilatif Abdallas eigene idiomatische

Charakterisierung als Vertreter von und Kämpfer für die Unzufriedenen (*Wasiotosheka*) und spannt einen konzeptuellen Bogen zur Stimme der Menschlichkeit (*Sauti ya Utu*), zu der Abdalla aufruft. Anhand von Auszügen aus Abdallas Werken zeigt Kresse auf, dass in ihnen Unzufriedenheit als wertvolle und kreative Ressource literarisch wirkungsvoll wird. Der Gedichtband *Sauti ya Dhiki* (1973; Stimme der Agonie), welchen Abdilatif Abdalla im Geheimen während seiner dreijährigen Inhaftierung verfasste und für den er später „*ironically won a literature prize named after Kenyatta, the same autocratic president whose suppression of dissenting voices had not only sparked off Abdalla’s pamphlet [Kenya: Twendapi?] and activism in the first place, but also brought him into jail.*“ (S. 23) ist Zeugnis dafür, wie eng politische und schriftstellerische Welten verbunden sind.

Ganz anders, nämlich sehr persönlich, hält Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o seinen Aufsatz, in dem er sich seinem Freund Abdilatif in vergleichend-kontrastierender Weise annähert. Er thematisiert dabei die damaligen politischen Ereignisse und die Erfahrungen, denen sie beide in dieser Zeit als Schriftsteller ausgesetzt waren. So skizziert er etwa die Folgen, die seine Publikation *Petals of Blood* für ihn und *Sauti ya Dhiki* für Abdalla zeitigten: „*Sauti ya Dhiki won the Kenyatta literary prize; my novel and the play won me Kenyatta’s wrath and a place at the Kamiti Maximum Prison. I was thus the second writer to be so imprisoned in post-colonial Kenya.*“ (S. 12)

Über die Bedeutung und die Relevanz von Abdallas Gedichten für die gegenwärtige ostafrikanische Gesellschaft schreiben aus unterschiedlichen Perspektiven Ken Walibora Waliaula, Ahmed Rajab und Mohamed Bakari. Bakari beschreibt unter anderem die Rolle Abdallas als Lexikograph bei der Modernisierung des Swahili während seines Exils in Dar es Salaam. In seinem Aufsatz legt Walibora Waliaula den Fokus auf zwei Aspekte: einerseits untersucht er die unterschiedliche Verwendung des „Ich“ in Abdallas Werken, andererseits verdeutlicht er die Funktion der Metapher als Instrument der Kritik eines Regimes anhand eines Gedichts. „*Doing Things with Words in Prison Poetry*“ (S. 55) ist also das Aufbegehren Abdallas gegen die Missstände der damaligen Zeit. In seinem Beitrag führt Rajab den LeserInnen - auf eine ebenfalls sehr persönliche Weise - das Zusammenspiel von Poesie und Politik vor Augen. Rajab erachtet Abdalla als einen engagierten „*poet of the people*“ (S. 72), der um die Bedeutung der Bewahrung von Erinnerung weiß. Dass Abdallas *Sauti ya Dhiki* ein

wichtiges Werk der Erinnerungskultur ist, zeigt sich nicht zuletzt darin, dass sein Gedichtband auch 35 Jahre nach dem ersten Erscheinen immer wieder neu gedruckt wird (S.68).

Rose Marie Beck und Said Ahmed Khamis befassen sich in ihren Aufsätzen vor allem mit der Problematik des transkulturellen Transfers der Werke von Abdalla. Interessant ist in diesem Zusammenhang der Umgang mit Übersetzungen im vorliegenden Band selbst. Die Übersetzung des Titels des Pamphlets *Kenya: Twendapi?* kommt in fünf Beiträgen (Kresse, Khamis, Walibora Waliaula, Bakari und Rajab) in fünf unterschiedlichen Varianten vor. Dieses Pamphlet wurde zwar nicht offiziell ins Englische übersetzt, aber Abdilatif Abdalla selbst verwendet die Übersetzung *Kenya: Where Are We Heading To?* (S. 97).

Der zweite Teil ist Abdilatif Abdallas eigener Stimme gewidmet, die sich in wichtigen und ansonsten schwer zugänglichen Texten findet. Allen voran steht die Reproduktion der Flugschrift *Kenya: Twendapi?*, in der Abdilatif Abdalla Jomo Kenyattas Regierung kritisierte, und die ihn wegen angeblichen Aufruhrs und Verhetzung von 1969 bis 1972 in Einzelhaft brachte. Kritisiert werden darin etwa die Ausbeutung der KenianerInnen, herrschende Gesetzlosigkeit und eine Elite, die allein die eigene Bereicherung im Sinne hat. Dass diese Schrift in diesem Sammelband abgedruckt ist, stellt einen außerordentlichen Gewinn dar; denn obwohl von vielen AutorInnen darauf Bezug genommen wird, war sie bislang nur wenigen zugänglich gewesen. Ebenso sind in der Festschrift zwei Aufsätze von Abdilatif Abdalla enthalten, die er in den 1970er Jahren im Exil in Dar es Salaam verfasste, und die die gesellschaftliche Position und Verantwortung eines Autors in der postkolonialen Gesellschaft zum Inhalt haben. Dazu kommt ein Nachdruck von Gefängnis-Tagebuchaufzeichnungen, die Abdilatif Abdalla kommentierte, um sie für die Leserschaft nachvollziehbar zu machen.

Die Beiträge des dritten Teils beschreiben den politik-, literatur- und sprachwissenschaftlichen Rahmen, in dem die Texte von Abdilatif Abdalla zu verorten sind. Abdilahi Nassir zeichnet das Stimmungsbild Kenias während und nach der Unabhängigkeit nach, so dass Abdallas Frage *Kenya: Twendapi?* auch jenen LeserInnen verständlich wird, die sich bisher kaum oder wenig mit Kenias Geschichte auseinandergesetzt haben. Alena Rettovás Essay zu Existentialismus in der Swahili-sprachigen Literatur hebt sich insofern von den anderen Beiträgen des Bandes ab, als sie sich dieses

Themas nicht ausschließlich in Hinblick auf Abdilatif Abdallas Person annimmt. Ekkehard Wolff schlussendlich diskutiert aus soziolinguistischer Sicht u.a. die Symbolkraft der Sprachwahl. Dass Abdilatif Abdalla seine lyrischen Werke ausnahmslos in Kimvita, der Swahili-Varietät aus Mombasa, verfasste, versteht er als einen politischen Akt: *„it comes as no surprise that Abdilatif Abdalla attributes such high value to his Kimvita variety of Kiswahili. By this he is able to feed his thoughts and grievances (at the same time also as voicing the concerns of the ‘common people’) into what finally will become [...] part of global discourse.“* (S. 129)

Abgeschlossen wird der Band mit einem vierten Teil, der persönlichen Erinnerungen und Würdigungen von und durch KollegInnen, GefährtInnen und Studierende(n) Raum bietet. Bemerkenswert ist, dass alle LaudatorInnen ihre Beiträge in Swahili verfassten. Die ehemaligen Studierenden Abdallas zeigen mit einem Gedicht in ausgefeilter Metrik, gewidmet ihrem ehemaligen *Mwalimu* (Lehrer), dass Abdilatif Abdalla nicht „nur“ politischer Poet, Aktivist, Lexikograph, BBC-Mitarbeiter, etc. war, sondern auch eine engagierte und erfolgreiche Lehrerpersönlichkeit.

Abdilatif Abdalla - Poet in Politics bietet einen vielschichtigen Einblick sowohl in die-beeindruckende Lebensgeschichte Abdilatif Abdallas als auch in die sein Leben prägenden gesellschaftlichen Entwicklungen und wissenschaftlichen Bereiche. So vielfältig wie die Beiträge sind, können sich LeserInnen mit unterschiedlich gelagerten Interessen angesprochen fühlen und sich auf eine lohnende Lektüre freuen.

ELLIS, Stephen. 2016. This Present Darkness: A History of Nigerian Organised Crime. London: Hurst & Company. xv + 313 pp. ISBN 978-1-84904-630-5

rezensiert von

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Das posthum erschienene Buch des britischen Afrikanisten Stephen Ellis (1953-2015) greift im Titel auf eine Bibelstelle zurück, die dem Buch als Motto vorangestellt ist: *„For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over*

this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.“ (v, Hervorhebung AS) Es handelt sich um das Ende des Paulusbriefs an die Epheser, in dem der Prediger Paulus dazu aufruft, gegen das Böse aufzutreten und sich zu wappnen: „Zieht die Rüstung Gottes an, damit ihr den listigen Anschlägen des Teufels widerstehen könnt“, heißt es unmittelbar vor dem Satz, den Ellis zitiert: „Denn wir haben nicht gegen Menschen aus Fleisch und Blut zu kämpfen, sondern gegen die Fürsten und Gewalten, gegen die Beherrscher dieser finsternen Welt, gegen die bösen Geister des himmlischen Bereichs.“ (Epheser 6,11-12) Auf den ersten Blick mag es sonderbar erscheinen, ein Buch über das nigerianische organisierte Verbrechen auf eine solche Weise einzuleiten, doch nach Lektüre des Buches sollte sich dieser Eindruck in nichts aufgelöst haben. Tatsächlich bringen Titel und Motto in kongenialer Weise Lebensthemen von Ellis – sein Interesse an Fragen der Religion und Politik, am Verhältnis universeller Humanitas und an partikularen Geschichtserfahrungen, an den Handlungen und Gedanken von Menschen aus Fleisch und Blut – auf einen gemeinsamen Nenner. Der könnte lauten: Die gegenwärtig konzedierte Finsternis ist kein Schicksal, sie ist Resultat einer spezifischen Geschichte und daher veränderbar. Und Geschichte bewusst zu gestalten, setzt ebenso wie das Bemühen, Geschichte zu verstehen, die Bereitschaft voraus, sich aktiv einzubringen. Der Afrikawissenschaftler Ellis tat das zeit seines Lebens in unterschiedlichen Sachzusammenhängen immer wieder mit Verve, ganz im Sinn einer engagierten Wissenschaft.

Das Buch liest sich überaus flott. Einer knappen Einleitung folgen elf Kapitel, von denen das letzte (überschrieben mit „11. *Nigerian Organised Crime*“) dezidiert die einleitend nur kurz angerissenen, im Buchverlauf jedoch dicht beschriebenen, Themenstränge und Positionen des Autors resümiert. Ellis stellt darin explizit die Frage nach der Besonderheit Nigerias („*Why Nigeria?*“, 223ff.), die er aus dem historisch gewordenen Wesen Nigerias erklärt – aus seiner kolonialen und postkolonialen Geschichte und der unter diesen Umständen geformten politischen Kultur: „*State Crime*“ (217ff.), so charakterisiert er diesen Zusammenhang kurz und bündig gegen Ende des Buchs, wo er erstmals ausdrücklich Bezug auf Definitionen von organisiertem Verbrechen nimmt. Diese späte Behandlung theoretisch-modellhafter Zugänge begründet Ellis eingangs: „This is not the place to examine different definitions of organised crime other than to say that most

of them imply that to qualify for this label criminal activity has to be associated with an identifiable group of people existing for a substantial period of time. This description actually fits the Nigerian state better than any other group." (4) Ellis' Versuch, das nigerianische organisierte Verbrechen zu verstehen und zu erklären, setzt darum am konkreten Untersuchungsfall an; er folgt keiner vorabgesetzten Modellvorstellung, sondern operiert klassisch historisch, auf den singulären Fall Nigerias konzentriert; dabei verwahrt er sich gegen eine essentialistische bzw. kulturalistische Lesart: „Nigerian organised crime is not created by culture,“, so sein vorletzter Satz, „but it does arise from a particular history. Where else could it possibly come from?“ (230)

Eine große Rolle in dieser besonderen Geschichte spielen die Verflechtungen, die über die nigerianischen Grenzen hinausreichen. Der Blick auf die Geschichte Nigerias muss darum beides berücksichtigen: (1) die internationale Ebene, ohne die es ein Gebilde namens Nigeria gar nicht geben würde und die eine der Existenzbedingungen des postkolonialen Staates ist; (2) die nationale Ebene, die im Fall Nigerias immens divers, komplex und vielschichtig ist. Ellis bedient über die gesamte Strecke des Buchs beide Elemente, die er als engstens ineinander verstrickt und sich wechselseitig beeinflussend kenntlich macht. Seine Darstellung folgt im Wesentlichen der Chronologie, wobei er klare thematische Zuspitzungen setzt. Die ersten drei Kapitel („1. *Rules of Law*“, „2. *Wonder-Workers*“ und „3. *Enter the Politicians*“) diskutieren Nigeria im kolonialen Rahmen der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts. In den folgenden Kapiteln stehen verschiedene Aspekte der nigerianischen Entwicklung seit der Unabhängigkeit 1960 im Fokus, wobei Ellis auch hier wiederholt auf Kontinuitäten aufmerksam macht, die auf die koloniale Ära zurückweisen. So schildert er beispielsweise im vierten Kapitel („4. *The National Cake*“) die aufbrechenden Verteilungskämpfe um Macht und Ressourcen in den frühen Unabhängigkeitsjahren, ohne die ausländischen Beiträge dazu unter den Tisch zu kehren, und die daran anschließende Veralltäglichung korrupter Verhaltensweisen. Weitere Abschnitte widmen sich der Rolle des Militärs, des Erdöls und der Diversifizierung der kriminellen Szenen in Nigeria („5. *The Men in Uniform*“, „6. *Boom Time*“), ihrer Globalisierung („7. *Crime Goes Global*“), sowie mehreren Aspekten der „staatskriminellen“ Organisation: etwa die oligarchische Zusammensetzung der nigerianischen Führungsriege seit Babangidas Machtübernahme 1985 („8. *Godfathers*“),

sowie die besonders durch nigerianische Netzwerke bespielten kriminellen Sparten Betrug (alias *Four One Nine*), Drogenhandel und Sexarbeit („9. *The Business of Crime*“). Darüber hinaus thematisiert Ellis im zehnten Kapitel („10. *Cosmic Powers*“) eingehend in religiösen Vorstellungen verwurzelte Organisationsformen des nigerianischen organisierten Verbrechens.

Das Thema von *This Present Darkness* ist heiß. Nicht allen wird gefallen, was Ellis zu sagen hat. Manchem wird sicher von verschiedener Seite widersprochen werden. Festzuhalten ist deswegen an dieser Stelle, dass es sich um eine gut und ausgewogen recherchierte Arbeit handelt. Die Quellen, auf deren Basis das nigerianische organisierte Verbrechen untersucht werden kann, sind, wenig verwunderlich, durchaus prekärer Art. Leute, die in der Illegalität operieren, legen ihre Verfahrensweisen selten freimütig offen. Dementsprechend greift Ellis vielfach auf polizeiliche Ermittlungsergebnisse und andere administrative Quellen zurück, ergänzt um zahlreiche Forschungsarbeiten insbesondere nigerianischer Akademiker. Interviews und die breite Rezeption nigerianischer Medien erschließen auch ein reiches Feld von lokal geäußerten Meinungen und kolportierten Gerüchten, die Ellis einer kritischen Interpretation unterzieht. Die umsichtige Interpretationsarbeit von Ellis beeindruckt; ebenso seine klare Sprache. Ellis zögert nicht im Geringsten, auch unangenehme Realitäten zu benennen und deutlich Stellung zu beziehen, und ist bemüht, gleichermaßen sachlich und nüchtern im Ton wie engagiert in der Sache zu argumentieren. Er verweigert sich einfachen Schuldzuweisungen, klagt jedoch Verantwortungen ein – bei jedem Einzelnen.

Darin steckt ein bleibendes, beispielhaftes Vermächtnis, das dieser engagierte Afrikawissenschaftler hinterlässt. Die „Finsternis der Gegenwart“ zu erhellen, tut not. Die Arbeit von Ellis zeichnet ganz besonders aus, dies ohne die Sicherheit der „Rüstung Gottes“ zu tun – jener Wappnung also, derer uns Paulus noch versicherte, die zu beanspruchen Ellis aber mit gutem Grund verzichtet (und deswegen nicht zitiert). Darüber hinaus ist ihm mit *This Present Darkness* weit mehr als eine originelle und kritische Untersuchung des nigerianischen organisierten Verbrechens gelungen. Leserinnen und Leser finden in dem Buch eine sehr schön geschriebene, kurz und prägnant erzählte Geschichte Nigerias im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert.

SONDEREGGER, Arno (ed.). 2015. African Thoughts on Colonial and Neo-Colonial Worlds: Facets of an Intellectual History of Africa. Berlin: Neofelis. 220 pp. ISBN 978-3-95808-023-2

reviewed by

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From the 3rd century geographer Solinus to classical Greco-Roman writers and European Enlightenment philosophers through the American revolutionary leaders down to the twentieth century colonial and post-colonial eras, Western scholars and thinkers have persistently theorized Africa within the discourse of negativism and nullification. Africa was, and to many remains, a continent bereft of civilization, advanced cultures and any semblance of intellectual tradition. Africans supposedly lacked the mental and intellectual capacity to think and theorize complex ideas about politics, economics, aesthetics, arts, philosophy, etc. This is part of the broader Hamitic hypothesis which depicts Africa and Africans as reflectors and mirrors of Western intellectual history and traditions. African thinkers, if at all they existed, were copycats who lacked originality, but relied on, and copied from, Western traditions.

In November of 2014, however, a group of African and Africanist scholars gathered at an international conference organized by the Department of African Studies, University of Vienna, to engage this seemingly unending debate about, and denial and caricature of, African intellectual history and tradition. Their major task, it appeared, was to take on, and complicate Western skepticism about, and denials of the authenticity of, African intellectual history. The outcome is this collection of essays that not only establish, unequivocally and unambiguously, the wealth of Africa's intellectual history and traditions, but also its complexity and most importantly, its complication of Eurocentric intellectual history and ideologies.

In the opening essay titled "The Role of the Japanese Model in Ethiopian Political Thought (1900-1936)" Sara Marzagora discusses the influence of Japan on Ethiopian political theorizing and understanding of modernity. She contends that Ethiopian leaders opted for a top-down approach to modernization. As arbiter and architect, the state, therefore, helped advance modernization through the provision of scholarships to deserving students.

However, many of the intellectuals, products of these scholarships who came of age in the 1920s, and 30s, soon developed an uneasy relationship with the government. They rejected colonial-imposed approaches to modernization, and sought instead a uniquely Ethiopian approach. Their desire to modernize Ethiopia led to search for an appropriate model of modernization that was similar to Ethiopia. They looked for a small nation that modernized successfully against all odds and gained a respectable position among the big nations. They considered Japan a perfect exemplar. Japan exemplified the top-down, monarchy driven approach to modernization which Ethiopian intellectuals sought to replicate. This conception of modernization as the “effect of kingship” shaped Ethiopian intellectual approaches till the 1960s. Marzagora describes them as “Japanizers” who favored “appropriate appropriation” of Western modernity to Ethiopia. Their conception of modernity called for borrowing from the West, while maintaining “the best” of Ethiopian indigenous cultures and traditions. Despite their critical orientation, Marzagora argues that Ethiopian intellectuals were co-opted by, and became an extension of, the state (monarchy).

In her “Africa and Neoliberal Circuits of Intellectual Value Production,” Paulina Aroch-Fugellie uses the writings of the Tanzanian scholar-activist Issa Shivji as framework for analysis of the period from the rise of the New International Division of Labor in the late 1960s to the present. She argues that though African intellectual production sought acceptance of the “enabling global circuits of production and consumption of cultural capital” it nonetheless occupied a prioritized and independent position when it comes to “production of meaning”; that is, the “socially relevant” and “intellectually transformative” functions of theory. She invokes Shivji’s writings to establish that African intellectual tradition was rich and very much a contributing, albeit critical, component of the global circuits. Lena Dallywater’s “In Search of ‘African Aesthetics’” analyzes the writings of four West African scholars (two Nigerians, i.e. Godfrey Okechukwu Ozumba and John Isola Ayotunde, and two Cameroonians, i.e. Engelbert Mveng and Mbog Mbombog Bassong) to engage the debates on the relevance and essence of African aesthetics. She discusses the “areas of tension” about African Aesthetics, Philosophy, Arts and questions of diaspora minority identities and forms of racial and cultural nationalism.

Collectively, the four scholars argue for the authenticity of African Aesthetics.

Anaïs Angelo's "Virtues for All, State for No One," looks at the political ideas of Jomo Kenyatta and his discourse of post-colonial. Kenyatta was critical of reliance on, and cautioned against the seductive and destructive power of, colonial miseducation. Africa constituted the core of his modernization theory. He believed that modernization has to preserve Africa's traditional forms and culture. According to Angelo, Kenyatta was very critical of the "detraining" effect of urbanization. He prioritized instead preserving and respecting tradition. The family, whose moral authority Kenyatta upheld, was central to his philosophy. He considered the family the ultimate social basis of the state, and conceptualized the state as strictly a legal institution, and not an instrument of social transformation. Though Kenyatta's political imagination was molded by both Kikuyu and Western cultures, he would not sacrifice his Kikuyu traditions for the West. Ever cautious against the force of "colonial mentality", Kenyatta sought to preserve the best of African tradition.

In "The Making of Biko," Myra Ann Houser discusses Steve Biko's role in bringing *Black Consciousness* to the fore of the international anti-apartheid struggles, and enhancement of the work of the *South African Project of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights* in its efforts to become active in the anti-apartheid movement. She analyzes the Project's association with the Biko led *South African Students Organization* (SASO) and *the Black People's Convention* (BPC) in the Terrorism Trial of 1975-76. She highlights Biko's activism and intellectual contributions to the anti-apartheid struggles.

In "Bwanamvinyo, Protean Nyerere, and the Battleground of Ideas," Lutz Diegner highlights and analyzes the intellectual worth of neglected African language literatures, specifically Swahilophone intellectual literature from Kenya and Tanzania. This subject remains a neglected theme in African intellectual studies and discourses. When critically analyzed, the author argues, Swahili fictional texts provide rich insights into the wealth of East African intellectual history. In their writings, these neglected African thinkers (Euphase Kezilahabi, Said Ahmed Mohammed, and Mwalimu Julius Nyerere) use the medium of Swahili to interrogate neocolonial history. They contribute to East African intellectual history in numerous ways not the least by engaging the idea of the "great thinkers" of East

Africa, Africa and Asia in order to challenge colonial and neocolonial epistemological criticisms of Africa.

Ninja Steinbach-Hüther's "Near and Far: African Academic Literature in France and Germany" challenges the notion that African academic literature is either nonexistent or on the margins of global knowledge production by showing the wealth of African intellectual production in French and German publishing houses. Through this quantitative analysis of academic writings by African intellectuals in the Social Sciences and Humanities published in France and Germany, Steinbach-Hüther challenges and complicates the prevailing Eurocentric nullification and devaluation of African intellectual heritage.

In "Knowledge Production about the Cameroonian State," Janine Kläge challenges the established tradition of colonial discourse in which knowledge production regarding Africa was the exclusive domain of European terminology or shaped by "institutionalized" description produced in non-African contexts. African thinkers have challenged this claim and produced knowledge about Africa in both colonial and post-colonial eras. Through interviews conducted in urban areas with intellectually-engaged activists, the author analyzes how knowledge about the Cameroonian state is produced and circulated among the people. Cameroonian intellectuals were however divided on how they perceived the state. The division was largely between Francophone and Anglophone intellectuals, with the former preferring the Western "Welfare State" and the latter the "Liberal State" model. Contrary to Western mischaracterization of the African state as "weak" and "failing", these Cameroonians perceive their state and government as being in need of reform but not necessarily weak, or failed or illegitimate. Nonetheless, Kläge contends that Cameroonian intellectuals' construction of knowledge about the state is influenced by Western models. However, their perception of the state is derived from personal experiences which contradict Western notions.

In "Ethiopian and Ghanaian Thoughts on Asia's Rise," Felix Müller discusses how intellectuals of both countries looked to Asia for models of development and modernization in their quest for "development" models that could locally be adapted. Through cultural transfers, Ghanaian and Ethiopian intellectuals and state representatives were heavily influenced by what they perceived as the success of the Asian approach. Based on

interviews conducted in Ghana and Ethiopia in 2013-14, Müller theorizes that intellectuals in both countries challenged the capitalist and socialist orthodoxies. They turned instead to China, Korea, Malaysia and Taiwan. Inspired by the Asian models, this developmental-state approach challenged neo-liberal and socialist orthodoxies.

Joanna Tegnerowicz's "Rebel against Colonial Ties," is a critical appraisal of the neo-colonial and post-colonial thoughts of the Nigerian cultural critic, Chinweizu (born Chinweizu Ibekwe), as represented in his seminal but neglected book *The West and the Rest of Us* (1975 and 1987). She describes the book as a scathing rebuke of the West and its influences on African intellectuals. In Chinweizu's view, Tegnerowicz contends, the West had nothing but negative and destructive influences on Africa, particularly the intellectuals whom he derided as lackeys of Western influence. Chinweizu seemed to valorize African intellectuals who are rooted in traditional cultures. He blamed colonial education for what he characterized as his "miseducation" and internalization of negative and self-loathing consciousness. Colonial conditioning had alienated Africans, especially the Western educated intellectuals many of whom had become what he termed "Ariels" who had been seduced to become instruments and defenders of Western interests. He accused them of equal culpability for Africa's predicaments. He highlighted the psychological aspect of power and exploitation; and the ability of the exploiter to induce the exploited to internalized values and attitudes that perpetuate exploitation and subordination. Tegnerowicz contends that Chinweizu's ideas and critique of colonialism and neocolonialism remain relevant and enduring rebuke of, and answer to, Western discourses on Africa's alleged intellectual inferiority.

In the final contribution, "Which Way Africa?," Arno Sonderegger reexamines George Padmore's 1956 publication "Pan-Africanism or Communism?" in the light of debates about the directions of African states in post-World War 2 era. In Padmore's view, this period confronted Africa with the critical challenge of choosing a path to the future that could enhance economic and political freedom. Padmore was sceptical of the "nation-state" approach; given the colonial situation and its stranglehold as well as the endemic ethnic and regional differences and divisions. He did not think it was possible for a nation to effectively lead and free its people under those conditions. He also rejected capitalism as an option due to its

exploitative and divisive character and tendencies. The choice as Padmore saw it was between Pan-Africanism and Communism. Of the two, Padmore was convinced that Pan-Africanism was the more viable for Africa. He deemed Communism incapable of dealing with the complex realities of Africa. Sonderegger describes Padmore's ideas as perceptive and indeed prophetic. The failed paths taken by African states since independence were precisely the ones Padmore had warned against: Capitalism and narrow "Nation-state" models. Padmore's perspectives, according to Sonderegger, derived from his understanding of the mechanisms of colonialism, neo-colonialism, capitalism and imperialism. This led him to suggest Pan-Africanism. Sonderegger concludes that the question Padmore asked in 1956 "Which Way Africa?" remains unanswered and relevant today.

African Thoughts on Colonial and Neo-Colonial Worlds is a collection of essays that makes a compelling case for the wealth and complexity of African intellectual history. The authors, from different backgrounds and disciplines, and utilizing different methodologies, successfully unravel entrenched Western and Eurocentric discourses and claims about Africa. African intellectuals theorized about their states, their societies, about colonialism, about neo-colonial and post-colonial challenges. Their ideas were equally inwardly directed and self-critical. They engaged the social, economic, political and cultural challenges of their respective nations. Their writings and contributions have garnered international attention and interests. They complicate prevailing discourses that nullify and argue against the authenticity of African Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Epistemology. The study also underscores that even as African intellectuals challenged and complicated Eurocentric discourses, in their quest for solutions to some of their pressing national challenges, they often turned to foreign (Western, Asian) models. Some argue for combining the best of both African and foreign models and ideals. Others reject the West, emphasizing instead, the potency of indigenous institutions and values.

This book is a must-read for anyone interested in understanding not only the dynamics of African intellectual history and heritage but also the sophisticated and advanced nature of colonial and post-colonial critical knowledge production among Africans.