



Book Reviews

Kings M. Phiri, John McCracken and Wapulumuka O. Mulwafu (eds.)
Malawi in Crisis: The 1959/60 Nyasaland State of Emergency and its Legacy
Zomba: Kachere Books, 2012. 418 pp. ISBN 978-99908-87-77-8

Reviewed by: Harvey C.C. Banda, Mzuzu University, Malawi

Malawi in Crisis, a book edited by seasoned Malawian and Malawianist historians, Kings M. Phiri, John McCracken and Wapulumuka O. Mulwafu, is a vivid reconstruction of the State of Emergency that occurred in Nyasaland in 1959. The Emergency marked an epitome of the high tide of nationalism in Malawian politics. As conspicuously indicated in the title, the book also sheds light on the commemorations during the aftermath, hence 'its legacy'. As has been rightly observed elsewhere, the 1964 Cabinet Crisis, at the onset of Dr. H.K. Banda's reign, inadvertently 'steals the show' in Malawi's political history. Such prominence is exemplified by Andrew C. Ross' *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis: A Political History of Malawi* (2009). Yet, in terms of significance, it is the Emergency which ought to be prominent as it shook the foundations of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and, most importantly, together with similar events 'abroad', provided a backdrop to the realisation of independence in British Central Africa.

Malawi in Crisis presents a lucid picture of the events as they unfolded largely using a case study approach. This approach, however, as expected, has its own grey areas. In this connection, John McCracken in the introduction admits the consequent loopholes: "There was nothing on the Emergency in Blantyre, by far the largest town and the hub of Malawian nationalist politics; nothing on the Lower Shire Valley, where relations between chiefs and the commoners were particularly bitter". This gap may be filled by Kings M. Phiri's chapter on the memories of the State of Emergency in Zomba District. Phiri rightly argues that "what was witnessed or experienced in Zomba (one of the major towns) during the State of Emergency also applied to several other districts in the country". If I were to contribute a chapter, it would have been titled "Mzimba boma vis-à-vis the 1959 State of Emergency and its Aftermath". Yet viewed from a different angle, the uniqueness of this book lies in the approach itself: it is a collection of the reconstruction of events in so-far clearly unfamiliar parts of Malawi. Examples abound, such as: Hendrina Kachapila Mazizwa's succinct account of the developments in Chiwaliwali Village.

This approach, it should be appreciated, presents a bottom-up reconstruction of the past, in line with social history and unlike elite history. The other interesting case is by John Lloyd C.

Lwanda, who presents the Emergency through a musical lens. This is furthered by Bryson G. Nkhoma in the last chapter on the politics of the Emergency commemorations. The songs he cites, ‘Zivute zitani, ife Amalawi, tili pammbuyo pa Kamuzu!’, for example, remind the reader of the rootedness and the impact of political propaganda, which was, on the whole, part of the process of indoctrinating the youth in post-colonial Malawi. All this is part of the Emergency-legacy equation. The other strength of *Malawi in Crisis* is seen from the chapters on ‘Central African Interconnections’ as, in this way, the Emergency can better be understood as part of the broader picture, that is, within the Federation discourse.

There are several cross-cutting themes, some of which ought to have come out clearly, or, put differently, ought to have gained more prominence in the book. One example is the nationalism-politics-security nexus. This is one of the overarching themes of the Emergency. The high tide of nationalism resulted in the declaration of the State of Emergency (here the colonial government had no alternative) and this had resounding repercussions on the human insecurity of Malawians. However, the effect in question was ambivalent: on the one hand, it instilled fear on Malawians, hence they ran helter-skelter; and yet, on the other hand, it filled them with unprecedented zeal as they were more determined (than before) to clash with the state machinery, unarmed, and, in some cases, poorly armed as they were. This is appropriately and imaginatively depicted by the cover photo: security personnel armed with guns; whereas the citizenry are armed with clubs! Is this not reminiscent of the Goliath-David scenario in the Bible?

On the whole, *Malawi in Crisis*, which presents cutting-edge research and analysis on the 1959/1960 State of Emergency, has been published at the right time – when there is a cry (amongst Malawians) for history books by full-fledged and real time historians. Most of the books published on Malawi’s history have, in earnest, been merely compiled by scholars, whose powers to analyse issues, itself a pillar in the process of reconstructing the historical past, are, candidly-speaking, in doubt. This book is, therefore, a must read for teachers and students, alike, and would serve as an effective academic reference at both college and university level.

Marcus Power and Ana Cristina Alves (eds.)

China and Angola – A marriage of convenience?

Nairobi: Pambazuka Press, 2012. 186 pp. ISBN 978-0-85749-107-7

Reviewed by: Just Castillo Iglesias, Osaka University, Japan

This volume, compiled by Power and Alves, resulting from a conference on Sino-Angolan relations that took place in 2011 in Luanda, presents a complete and well-analysed overview of the China-Angola partnership in-the-making, discussing the different aspects of these complex and multi-layered relations. While some of the issues dealt with in the volume are fairly familiar within the debate of Sino-African relations, which has gained a strong presence in academic and public debates over the last decade, this work helps demystify some of the pre-established

assumptions that surround this debate, and that often present a view in which China is the main party that has benefited from these bilateral exchanges, and in which the strategic implications that China's involvement has for African governments and development is underestimated.

Since the end of its armed conflict, Angola has rapidly become one of China's key oil partners, and their bilateral relations have since undergone substantial processes of change and transformation. The volume effectively presents how the Angolan elites have managed to anchor the partnership with China to national reconstruction and infrastructure development – much needed in the country after the 30-year-long civil war – in a context in which Western donors and markets have been unwilling to fund such projects. This, in turn has fitted well with their strategy for regime survival and stability. On the other hand, the book provides evidence of how, in contrast to many common assumptions present in the Sino-African relations debate, Angolan elites have been fierce in maintaining their sovereignty and bargaining power, and have managed to turn China's interest into a mutually beneficial exchange, keeping the door open to partnerships with other countries and protecting the interests of the domestic enterprises, rather than as a one-sided or unbalanced partnership in which China would be the main benefiting party.

This volume is thus a comprehensive monograph on this multifaceted partnership. It contains nine articles by different African, Portuguese and Chinese scholars. In the first two chapters, Alden and Malaquias, respectively, offer a detailed introduction to the formation and historical development of the Sino-Angolan partnership to date, contextualizing it in the growing Chinese interest in Africa's resources, debating how through its cash-for-oil loans China has become a fully-fledged alternative to partnerships with Western governments for Angola, and how change and constant adaptation are the dominant trend in the bilateral relations.

In chapter 3, one of the most insightful articles in the volume, Corkin describes how the Angolan elites have managed the Chinese oil-backed loans, yet how Chinese oil companies have not been awarded privileged treatment in comparison to others, particularly considering the deficits in exploitation technology that are necessary to extract oil from the country's deep wells. Corkin illustrates as well how due to Angolan elites' bid to diversify the country's finance partners, Chinese companies do not regard this country as a strategic location for their FDI beyond the ongoing contracts in the oil industry. Nevertheless, the Chinese Exim Bank has successfully managed to increase the presence of Chinese construction companies in the Angolan market amidst competition from international and other Chinese actors. In a similar direction, Fernandes discusses in chapter 4 how the influx of Chinese investments and activity in Angola have been generally praised and seen positively, how these are a significant milestone towards the country's rehabilitation, yet also drawing attention to the negative perceptions triggered by the influx of Chinese manpower and Chinese recruitment policies, which are more often than not unwilling to employ predominantly local workforce.

Chapters 5 and 6 continue with the analysis of the different aspects of the oil partnership. In chapter 5, Weimer and Vines re-examine the context in which the Chinese cooperation with Angola started to develop, and deconstruct the common myth that overemphasizes Chinese

influence in Angola's affairs, often present among Western voices, by arguing how the Angolan government has maintained a strategy of reinforcing bilateral political and commercial relations with third countries.

In the last part, composed of chapters 7 to 9, the authors evaluate the opportunities and challenges that the relationship with China poses to Angola, and argue in favour of consolidating domestic national institutions in order to continue maximizing Angolan benefits from this relationship – beyond the initial phase in which Chinese funds have efficiently delivered the needed infrastructure to bridge the negative legacy of the conflict. In these last chapters, the authors contribute with a detailed insight on the local perceptions of the impact of Chinese activities in local manpower and the labour market, debating that frequent negative perceptions among the local population are not only generated by the (often disrespectful) pre-agreed quotas of local workers in Chinese-led constructions, but also questioning the quality of the infrastructure developed and examining the role of Chinese micro-business and private entrepreneurs that escape the oversight of the Chinese government. Among the concluding remarks, the authors call for enhancing mutual knowledge and trust in order to boost all the potentialities of this incipient partnership.

Although some of the aspects reviewed are rather familiar within the debate of China's approach to Africa, the volume leaves the reader with a comprehensive picture of the complex, multi-layered, interconnected and sometimes conflicting interests between China and Angola. The authors, in some cases brilliantly, manage to shed some light towards the opaque and complex network of actors and interests that shape this marriage of convenience that is Sino-Angolan relations. Definitely, a recommended read for anyone with an interest on China, Angola or Sino-African relations.

Theo Neethling and Heidi Hudson (eds.)

Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa: Concepts, Role-Players, Policy and Practice

Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2013. 290 pp. ISBN 978 1775 820048

Reviewed by: Hussein Solomon, University of the Free State, South Africa

Almost half of all peace agreements fail within the first five years of implementation, Heidi Hudson reminds us in her introduction to this thought-provoking book. Why is this so? One major reason for this tragic failure lies in the poor implementation of post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) programmes on the African continent, despite the African Union adopting it as a priority area of its peace and security agenda in 2006. PCRD also features prominently in the aims of the United Nations as it moves away from traditional peacekeeping missions and embraces broader mandates relating to governance and development.

In the process, peace-building requires a broader range of tasks which, in turn, requires that militaries be re-trained and equipped accordingly. This is urgently needed since, as Maxi Schoeman points out in this volume, whilst soldiers' baseline training is combat-oriented – focusing on conventional warfare – the tasks they are now required to fulfil are far more complex than they were trained for. This shortcoming is acknowledged by the Chief of the South African Army, General Masedo who wrote the foreword to this book,

... the operationalization of PCRDR in Africa requires holistic rethinking of all concepts and strategies currently being developed. Military organisations should be reorganised, prepared and equipped to contribute to PCRDR by providing basic services and laying the foundations for sustainable development. This, in turn, demands a reassessment of the strategies, force design, force structure and capabilities/resources of the 21st-century African military organisations.

The book aims to provide the reader with penetrating perspectives of academics and practitioners on the role of the military and the interfaces and cooperation requirements among militaries, non-governmental organisations, international actors and local stakeholders in PCRDR. There are many reasons that make this volume unique in the vast literature on PCRDR. First, it is a publication on Africa emanating from Africa. This is especially evident in the chapter by Peter Deane-Baker which introduces readers to notions of African ethics underpinning the continent's prioritizing of PCRDR. Second, it provides the most diverse engagement by scholars, soldiers and non-governmental personnel on the subject of PCRDR. This rich diversity of views is reinforced by the approach adopted by the editors as outlined in the introduction:

With this project we do not wish to promote a consensus position on PCRDR in Africa. In fact, we are quite comfortable with offering a diversity of scholarly perspectives on the topic, ranging from those who question the idea of liberal peacebuilding (Seegers and Hudson) to those accept liberal peacebuilding but who want to reform it from within (De Coning, Baker, Murithi and Heinecken).

This approach also serves to render the book infinitely more readable as there is a sense of a debate between the authors of the respective chapters, keeping the readers' interest. The third reason which makes this volume unique is its scope – from uncovering PCRDR's conceptual roots to its critical examination of role-players in the African context to its interrogation of policy and practice. Fourth, is the amazing ease with which this volume moves from theoretical debates to policy recommendations as well as responding to dilemmas of PCRDR at each level of analysis. For instance, Lindy Heinecken, in her excellent contribution, convincingly argues that gender-neutral approaches to PCRDR are fundamentally flawed, as war and peace affect men and women differently. Immediately following Heinecken's chapter is Theo Neethling's penetrating study of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Here he examines PCRDR from the perspective of state-building, security sector reform and humanitarian conditions.

At the same time, there are some shortcomings of the study. First, whilst purporting to be an African study, it is overwhelmingly written by South Africans. Surely, other scholars elsewhere on the continent, and especially those in countries which have experienced PCRD, will have a different perspective from their South African counterparts. Second, I believe that the volume would have been greatly enhanced with specific chapters focusing on the role of the sub-regional security institutions such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It is in these institutions, after all, that the regional brigades are located and it is forces from these institutions that are deployed in peacekeeping and peace enforcement missions. Third, given the growing importance of hybrid peacekeeping in the form of the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) as well as the United Nations-African Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), it would have been prudent for the editors to have also included hybrid peace missions from the perspective of PCRD.

At the same time, the volume is very comprehensive as it is. Perhaps, the shortcomings mentioned above should be the subject of a second volume.