

Bill Freund. The Making of Contemporary Africa: The Development of African Society Since 1800. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1984. Bibliography, 338 pages.

In the past, the focus of materialist historians studying Africa has been directed toward either fundamental theoretical questions, or an analysis of specific historical epochs or processes, usually relying on individual case studies to delineate general trends in the movement of history. This is obviously a necessary mode of analysis and usually leads to groundbreaking research. Once in a while, however, a historian will break away from the narrow focus of "case studies" and attempt to analyze the continent in its totality. Two profound attempts include Endre Sik's multi-volume History of Black Africa and Walter Rodney's How Europe Underdeveloped Africa. Today, and perhaps a little overdue, Bill Freund has taken that bold and decisive step through the production of The Making of Contemporary Africa.

Freund's book testifies to the fact that as the class struggle reaches a higher level of sophistication, so does the production of knowledge. Analysing African society from 1800 to the present, Freund's work does not pretend to be a particular "history." Instead, his goal is simply to produce an outline or method of viewing African history. Freund begins the book with a critique of previous trends in African historiography, presenting a brief synthesis of its development. He then goes on to do some demystifying of pre-colonial African history in a chapter entitled "Material and Cultural Development Before the Nineteenth Century." This is a good starting point for the non-specialist. After outlining the general forms of European expansion, the trade in slaves, the penetration of capital, and the creation of structures of domination, he provides us with a very readable analysis of the process of colonial production. This chapter, entitled "The Material Basis of Colonial Society, 1900-1940" is extremely important since it is production relations, not exchange relations, that determines class formation and the forms of class struggle. He follows this up with an equally penetrating analysis of class relations under colonial hegemony and the cultural and political forms of class struggle. Since the development of South African society took on a radically different form from the rest of the continent during this particular period of time, he devotes a separate chapter to this racist bastion of international capital. After dealing with the period of "decolonization" and the rise of new classes, and therefore new forms of class struggle in post-colonial Africa, he closes with an analysis of the struggle for liberation in Southern Africa.

What is most commendable about Freund's book is his emphasis on class struggle, the most vital element in the history of

humankind. By presenting a class analysis of the internal structures of domination and exploitation, he moves beyond the petty-bourgeois nationalist perspective of glorifying the African past. Critiquing this view - a manifestation of post-colonial historiography - Freund warns us that, "Materialist history cannot possibly be reduced to an anti-colonial polemic." (p. xiii)

For a general text, he does not approach fundamental theoretical questions simplistically. Two examples are found in his treatment of merchant capital and the colonial state. He correctly argues that "merchant capital" as such neither underdeveloped Africa's economy, nor created the conditions of dependence. Instead, "surplus appropriating classes and strata in non-class societies actually reinforced their own positions through their command of trade objects and the violence accompanying the slave trade." (pp. 57-8). On the colonial state, he views its role as a mechanism "to promote capitalist enterprise through policies regarding labour, taxation, land and business." (p. 136). However, the state also served as a mediator of a variety of metropolitan interests, not separate from real social conditions and relations of production in Africa, but determined by them. This is why the colonial state had actually acted to "limit or even block capital penetration in the course of dissolving existing social relationships." (p. 136).

Like any other vanguard work, The Making of Contemporary Africa is vulnerable to criticism because of its broad nature. In the section entitled, "Culture, Class and Change in Colonial Africa," he argues that African religious sects were, "indeed a response to colonial conditions, not in the politics of protest but in the ideology of displacement." (p. 159). This is an unfortunate generalization since it narrows participation in these movements to its religious element. For instance, in the case of Kimbanguism or Matsouaism in Central Africa, or Maji Maji in Tanzania, not everyone joined the movement for the same reason. Since there were limited avenues for mass protest, the religious sects provided an outlet--even for those entirely devoted to political struggle. They also served as a means of mobilizing a political power base for aspiring opportunists. Furthermore, although he makes an attempt to break from a male dominated view of history, he falls far short of fully portraying the role of women in the development of African society. Twenty-four references out of a text comprising 288 pages gives some idea of the "invisibility" of over fifty-percent of Africa's labouring population. Finally, perhaps owing to editorial misunderstandings or typographical errors the Brazzaville Conference of 1944 was pushed back to 1942 while the overthrow of Fulbert Youlou in the Congo was moved ahead from August 1963 to 1964. (pp. 201; 252).

Nevertheless, Bill Freund was bold enough to do what needed to be done at this historical juncture: present a broad materialist analysis to the non-specialist. Now, Marxists not conversant with African history can be armed with a clearer understanding of the present stage of struggle on the continent; the committed historian studying Africa can gain clear insights into the application of historical materialism; and the new generation of scholars can begin their introductory courses to African history from a correct point of view. But this is only the beginning. We have quite a long way to go.

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Barry Munslow. Mozambique: The Revolution and Its Origins. Longman, 1983. Bibliography, Appendix, 183 pages, \$30.00 cloth, \$13.95 paper.

*. . . Force, however, plays another role in history, a revolutionary role; that, in the words of Marx, it is the midwife of every old society which is pregnant with the new, that it is the instrument by the aid of which social movement forces its way through and shatters the dead, fossilised, political forms. . .*

-Frederick Engels

*The armed struggle, acting like an incubator, has already created the conditions for the masses to be receptive to the ideas of progress and revolution.*

-Samora Machel

The revolutionary process in Mozambique is, no doubt, one of the most significant world-historical events. Commensurate with the victories of the people in Nicaragua, Cuba, Angola, and Vietnam over imperialism, the Mozambican revolution has shown Africa, and the rest of the world, that socialism and national self-determination can be achieved in the "periphery." Part and parcel of this process is the struggle to demystify the people's movement. In fact, one of the main sources for the overwhelming international support Nicaragua and the FMLN-FDR in El Salvador enjoy comes from the production of a series of popular books, pamphlets and articles portraying the true nature of their struggle. Unfortunately for Mozambique, it only receives media attention when it expels CIA agents or when it recently signed the Nkomati Accord. Otherwise, "specialists" hold a monopoly over the production and dissemination of information outside of the borders of Mozambique. Though stimulating, and at times true, the audience is so infinitesimal