Studies in Power and Class in Africa

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For Rita and Harvey

Preface

More fleeting than an English summer, most books about Africa are little read and less remembered. Even so, the coauthors of this volume labored over their articles as if chiseling in stone. Lengthy correspondences filed in thick manila folders, arguments that filled long seminar mornings, costly long distance telephone calls, and as many as four revisions attested to the seriousness of their effort. For their patience in attending the publication of this book, and for bearing with my constant nudging in matters large and small, I am grateful.

Contributors did not have to pay the price of any intellectual orthodoxy to gain admission to these pages. Although they differed in their approaches to problems of power and class, they all agreed that the subject of this volume was too important for the simple application of sterile formulas or automatic categorizations. My colleagues also had enough confidence in the significance of their ideas so as to want to express themselves clearly. The results in the words of one prepublication reviewer—and I hope that the reader will agree—are "clear and comprehensive description" coupled with "sophisticated analysis of technical and theoretical matters."

The contributors have agreed to donate all royalties to Oxfam America to support Oxfam's efforts in relief and rehabilitation as well as in African constructive development.

Kenneth Erickson, Douglas Friedman, Athumani J. Liviga, Janet MacGaffey, Francis Fox Piven, Dessalegn Rahmato, and Stuart Schaar read, and through their disagreements, improved my arguments in "Continuties in the Study of Power and Class in Africa."

Queens College is fortunate to have a community of scholars—much more so than most institutions of higher learning—people who continuously and critically discuss ideas and politics with each other, who teach together and who willingly put aside their own work to read carefully their colleagues' endeavors. John R. Bowman, John Gerassi, Alem Habtu, Michael Krasner, Peter T. Manicas, W. Ofuatey-Kodjoe, and Carl A. Riskin clarified my writing and my thinking. Henry W. Morton in his stewardship of the department of political science helped in many ways, above all through creating a deep calm which scholarship needs to flourish. Norma Sileo's friendly warmth and special competence enhanced the office atmosphere and made the department a pleasant place in which to work. Iris Braun and Florence B. Friedman willingly offered every possible assistance.

A Faculty Research Award from the City University Research Foundation, in conjunction with a Mellon Fellowship, and Faculty Fellowship in Residence, enabled travel and the study of problems of rural development in Senegal, Ghana, Tanzania, Kenya, and Ethiopia. A Presidential Research Award, introduced by Shirley Strum Kenny of Queens College, provided a full semester free of all

teaching and administrative responsibilities and facilitated the final writing and editing of this volume.

James N. Jordan, Dean of the Social Sciences at Queens College, Helen S. Cairns, Dean of Graduate Studies and Research also at Queens College, and Solomon Goldstein, Dean for Research and University Programs at the Graduate Center of CUNY offered significant material aid and encouragement. Michael R. Dohan made available the services of the Social Science Laboratory. Janet Gingold skillfully reconstructed and computerized the bibliography. Julia E. Kwartler, Eugenie P. Pagano, and Arlene Diamond, of the Office of Word Processing headed by Pearl Sigberman, once more uncomplainingly deciphered my handwriting and produced grant proposals, correspondence, and manuscript copy, rapidly and with exceptional accuracy.

Well thought out and properly grounded in effective administrative and financial resources, the National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminars provide a unique opportunity for advanced study and research with colleagues in areas of mutual interest. Every encounter was warm, courteous, and helpful. I would like to recall the aid of Richard Emmerson, Karen Fuglie, April R. Hall, Ronald Herzman, Peter MacDonald, Michael Roman, Connie Matthews, Jane Schumate, Steven Tigner, and Dorothy Wartenberg.

The "Power and Class in Africa" seminars brought together an outstanding group of scholars and teachers, men and women of remarkably diverse personal and disciplinary backgrounds. Somehow during each of the seminars, everyone brought out the best in everybody else. The net result was a series of most stimulating conversations and an intellectual experience remarkable for its intensity. When, for the first time, I tried out some of the ideas in the introduction of this volume during one of our sessions, my colleagues probed my unstated assumptions, queried the logic of my arguments, and wondered about the significance of my interests. They challenged, they cajoled, they argued, they gave advice. They improved my paper. I can only hope that I was of equal service in advancing their scholarly interests.

It was my privilege to direct three of the college seminars. Members of the 1981 group included Yohannis Abate, Agostino Almeida, Gary Baker, Risa Ellovich, Richard W. Franke, Robert D. Grey, Mary Ann Hanley, Ndiva Kofele-Kale, Anne Lippert, Deborah A. Sanders, and Jeffrey M. Schulman.

The 1983 seminar consisted of Patrick D. Bellegarde-Smith, Achameleh Debela, Donald R. Floyd, Barbara H. Chasin, Susan L. Gasster, Wendy Kindred, Lorna McDaniel, Alan L. McLeod, Gordon D. Morgan, Aihawa Ong, Frank A. Salamone, and Janice E. Weaver.

The 1985 members were Victoria Bernal, Sheila H. Carapico, Carolyn M. Clarke, Mohamed Diakite, Lawrence P. Frank, Diane S. Isaacs, Girma Kebbede, Craig N. Murphy, James A. Quirin, Penelope M. Roach, William H. Shaw, and Tekle Mariam Woldemikael.

The NEH Seminar for High School Teachers on "Great Issues of African Politics, Philosophy, and Literature" also provided the opportunity to try out some of my ideas and to expand my interests. These seminars for secondary school teachers raised for critical discussion classic issues of African political thought and literature within their social context and in terms of their historical development. Africa still receives a cursory place in secondary instruction. Evenworse, too frequently much of what is offered strengthens rather than di-

minishes old stereotypes, and the "traditional" approaches of both the liberal arts and schools of education have not remedied this situation.

The college seminars had not prepared me for the enthusiasm, commitment, relish for intellectual confrontation, and simply the hard work that the high school and junior high school teachers devoted to the study of our African materials. Members of the 1984 group who lived in the New York–New Jersey area continued to meet for over a year after our last formal session. The members of the 1984 seminar were Joseph Ball, Beverly G. Bond, Jeffrey Feinberg, Charlene Jassim, Esther Liberman, Andrea Libresco, Atiba Mbiwan, Michael Putman, Raymond Russo, Goldie B. Seiderman, Barry Smith, Robert Smithwick, Deanne Vandevert, Susan Weliky, and Marvin Williams.

Finally, members of my last seminar in 1986 include Joan H. Cohen, Thomas J. Determan, Barbara S. Ellery, Victor O. Emumwen, David P. Freudenburg, Patrick J. Gallo, Carl M. Gussin, Kate Hepner, Patricia Lyon, Brian C. Morrison, Scott P. Newkirk, Patrick G. O'Brien, Daniel H. Perlstein, Nicholas H. Spencer, and Jennifer J. Squires.

I would also like to note the special help with the preparation and conduct of the seminars of Alem Habtu, Thomas G. Karis, Michael Krasner, Jane R. Moore, W. Ofuatey-Kodjoe, William A. Proefriedt, Allan Stein, and Susan Weliky, as well as the special support of Sheila H. Carapico, Robert D. Grey, Mary Ann Hanley, Martin Kilson, Esther Liberman, Peter T. Manicas, James H. Mittelman, Henry W. Morton, Carl G. Rosberg, and Burton Zwiebach.

Susan Rabiner of Oxford University Press was a sensitive editor who strongly supported this volume from its inception.

Doris Suarez ably assisted in the preparations for both the seminar and the book.

My last—and first—obligation is to Ruth, my wife, who challenged me to think one step further than I otherwise would have done, who caused me to dig up the evidence for propositions that were less than self-evident, and who blue-penciled some of my most poetic images merely because of their vulgar grandiloquence.

Poetry aside, responsibility for matters of judgment, fact, and interpretation remain the editor's and the coauthors.

Bayside, New York I. L. M.

Contributors

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Thomas M. Callaghy is assistant professor of political science, associate director of the Research Institute on International Change, and research associate at the Institute of African Studies at Columbia University. He received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1979. He is co-editor and contributor to *Socialism in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Assessment* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1979); editor and contributor to *South Africa in Southern Africa: The Intensifying Vortex of Violence* (New York: Praeger, 1983); and author of *The State-Society Struggle: Zaire in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984). He has also contributed to several journals and edited volumes.

Richard W. Franke received his Ph.D. from Harvard University. He is currently professor of anthropology at Montclair State College, where he has taught since 1972. Professor Franke has carried out fieldwork in Surinam, Bougainville, Indonesia, and West Africa and has held grants from the National Science Foundation, National Institute of Mental Health, Harvard School of Public Health, and National Endowment for the Humanities. He has published several articles on underdevelopment, food production in the Third World, and ecology. In 1980 he co-authored (with Barbara H. Chasin) *Seeds of Famine: Ecological Destruction and the Development Dilemma in the West African Sahel* (Montclair, N.J.: Allanheld, Osmun, 1980). He is currently on the editorial board of the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*.

Robert D. Grey, who received his Ph.D. from Yale University, is a professor of political science at Grinnell College. A longtime student of Ethiopian politics, he has published articles in such journals as *The African Review* and *Northeast African Studies*. He has branched out into the study of both comparative communism and African international relations. His latest research focuses on the autonomy of African states in the international order.

Beverly Carolease Grier, who holds a Ph.D. from Yale University, was Fulbright Lecturer in the Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humains at the University of Niamey in Niger. She has published several articles on the political economy of Ghana and is working on a full-length manuscript on that subject. Her cur-

rent research interests are in the area of legal change under capitalist development in colonial and postcolonial Africa.

Hermann Giliomee is a professor of government at the University of Cape Town, formerly lecturing in history at the University of Stellenbosch. His books include *Ethnic Power Mobilized* (with Heribert Adam), *Afrikaner Political Thought: Analysis and Documents 1780–1850* (with Andre DuToit), *The Shaping of South African Society 1652–1820* (with R. Elphick), and, most recently, *Parting of the Ways: South African Politics 1976–82*. He is at present preparing a manuscript on the development of Afrikaner politics and ideology in late nineteenth-century South Africa.

Stanley B. Greenberg is associate director of the Southern African Research Program at Yale University and has held visiting appointments in political science at Wesleyan University and at the University of Witswatersrand. His books include *Politics and Poverty: Modernization and Response in Five Poor Neighborhoods* and, most recently, *Race and State in Capitalist Development: Comparative Perspectives,* a study of Alabama, South Africa, Northern Ireland, and Israel. His present work, *Legitimating the Illegitimate,* focuses on the state and labor markets in divided societies.

Martin Kilson, professor of government at Harvard University, received his B.A. from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and his Ph.D. from Harvard. He is author of *Political Change in a West African State African Diaspora: Interpretive Essays* (1976), and *African Autocracy: Patterns and Crises in Modernization* (forthcoming).

Ndiva Kofele-Kale received his Ph.D. and J.D. from Northwestern University. He is an attorney-at-law and professor of political science, Governors State University, Illinois. In addition to over thirty articles, his major publications include: *Comparative Political Culture and Socialization* (1976); *An African Experiment in Nation-Building: The Bilingual Cameroon Republic Since Reunification* (1980); and *Tribesmen and Patriots: Political Culture in a Polyethnic African State* (1981).

Sonia Kruks has a doctorate from the London School of Economics and has taught at colleges in London, New York, and at the Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique. As well as participating in research at the Centre for African Studies at the Eduardo Mondlane University, she has served as a consultant on projects in Tanzania and Kenya. She is currently assistant professor of political science at the New School for Social Research. Her research interests encompass not only African politics but also feminist theory and recent French political philosophy. Among her publications are a book, *The Political Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty* (1981), and two articles on women in Mozambique: "Mozambique: Some Reflections on the Struggle for Women's Emancipation," *Frontiers* (1983), and "The State, the Party and the Female Peasantry in Mozambique" (co-author), *Journal of Southern African Studies* 11,1 (1984).

Ronald T. Libby, formerly senior lecturer in government at the University of the West Indies (Jamaica), was visiting professor of political science at Northwestern University during 1985–86. He is the author of *The Economics of Power and Struggle in Southern Africa* (forthcoming) and *Toward an African-*

ized U.S. Policy Towards Southern Africa (1980). He is a contributor to *The Political Economy of Zimbabwe* (1984) and has published numerous articles on international political economy, African politics, and Central America in scholarly journals such as *World Politics, International Organization, Comparative Politics, The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics, Foreign Policy, The African Review,* and *African Studies Review*. He is currently engaged in research on the power of subnational political authorities to influence the major transnational corporations to restructure the world aluminum industry.

Anne Lippert, professor of French at Ohio Northern University, received her Ph.D. from Indiania University in (1971). She has held the NEH Younger Humanist Award as well as an NEH seminar grant. From 1973 to 1975 Professor Lippert was a Fulbright Senior Lecturer in Algeria and has continued to visit Africa frequently, most recently in 1982, under the auspices of a Department of Education grant through the Indiana Consortium of International Programs. She has written numerous articles on Africa and has testified as an expert witness at the Hearings before the Subcommittee on Africa and International Organizations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the U.S. House of Representatives. In 1984–85 she held the Ridenour Humanities Chair at Ohio Northern University.

Irving Leonard Markovitz, who received his Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley, is a professor of political science at Queens College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He has written *Léopold Sédar Senghor and the Politics of Negritude* (New York: Atheneum, 1969; London: Heinemann, 1970); *African Politics and Society* (editor and contributor) (New York: Free Press, 1970); and *Power and Class in Africa,* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977). His articles have appeared in major African journals.

Jeffrey M. Schulman is an attorney-at-law and part-time instructor of political science and law at Urbana College, Urbana, Ohio. He is a member of the International Law Section of the American Bar Association. In 1978, the author received the Rutgers Society Award for International Law and in 1981 was awarded an NEH grant to attend a seminar on "Power and Class in Africa," where this article was conceived. The author has visited the Western Sahara and written several articles on the war, including papers presented at the Hearings before the Subcommittee on Africa and International Organizations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the U.S. House of Representatives in 1979 and at the *Colloque sur les fondements juridiques et institutionnels de la RASD* at the French National Assembly in Paris in October 1984.

Kathleen Staudt has her Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin. She is an associate professor of political science at the University of Texas at El Paso. Professor Staudt has published articles in *Comparative Politics, Development and Change, Journal of Politics, Policy Studies Journal, Rural Africana, Western Political Quarterly,* and *Women and Politics*. She co-edited, with Jane Jaquette, *Women in Developing Countries: A Policy Focus* (New York: Haworth, 1983), and her book manuscript, *Redistribution Between the Sexes: Obstacles to Policy Implementation and Institutionalization,* is forthcoming from Praeger.

Contents

Studies in Power and Class in Africa

Introduction: Continuities in the Study of Power and Class in Africa

The studies in this volume demonstrate the explanatory power which a sophisticated framework focusing on social class brings to the analysis of contemporary African politics. Although most of these studies deal with class, they recognize the importance of the state, religion, ideology, gender, ethnicity, language, and international relations in the determination of policy and in the understanding of the real world. The authors address problems of major concern in the daily lives of ordinary people.

These essays show graphically how precarious life was for the mass of the population during and after the colonial period. They reveal how most people suffered an absolute decline in their standard of living, lived at the edge of economic dependence, and were bound in servile relations. They explain the thirst for education as a way out of exploitative economic and political conditions in the villages. They show how class conflict intensified with war and depression, how farmers fled to the city to maintain their independence, and how migrant workers struggled to protect their meager, declining standards of living. They picture the colonial governors, heirs of the Magna Carta and the Revolution of 1789, worrying that African nationalism signified "democracy gone mad," and that independence would "open the way for mob rule."

Above all, these analyses challenge the conventional wisdom about Africa as it appears in both the popular press and the mainstream social science literature. They also have clear implications which, if heeded, could affect policy as well as academic judgments. We can find only too vivid examples of what happens when even the well intentioned fail to consider the crucial power and class variables brought out in this volume. A tragic case in point is most of the television and press discussion of the recent drought and famine.[1]

I have found even the "best" analysis in the press disturbing. A front-page article by Alan Cowell in the *New York Times,* for example, is entitled "African War Against Famine: Dependence on Aid is Villain."[2] As compassionate and competent an observer as Cowell, blind to the social, political, and economic realities which provide the context for agricultural failure in Africa, ends by positing a seemingly hopeless dilemma. He appears to endorse a Social Darwinist perspective when he declares:

> Western consciences dictate that people should not be allowed to starve; but the specialist contends that by saving them, without finding a key to greater food production on fragile lands, too much pressure is placed on that land and it dies while dependence on outsiders increases.[3]

He goes on to point out that "it is acknowledged" that "the billions of dollars that have flowed into the Continent in the last ten years have worsened the plight of millions of people, and no one has found a solution."[4] I would acknowledge no such thing. The "billions of dollars" do not have a life of their

own. We must question who uses these monies, for what purposes, and who benefits. By Cowell's own account, less than eight percent of the $7.5 billion in aid monies poured into the Sahel by Western governments and international agencies actually reached "the poor peasants most affected by the drought." Who received the funds? Did those vast sums, like desert showers, simply evaporate?

There is no mystery. Africa's ruling classes and their foreign allies were the recipients.[5] Cowell knows that the World Bank pushed the expansion of cash crops for export, rather than food crops for immediate, local consumption, but he misses the link between indigenous decision makers and their foreign friends. He says that the tenfold increase of Africa's foreign debt between 1970 and 1982 led to policies which promote starvation.[6] But the "debt" didn't do that; Africa's rulers did. Again the problem is neither that "aid" projects are "ill conceived," nor that modern techniques of agriculture have failed because of an arrogant disregard for the practice of traditional farming. The famine is not due to "mistakes," plentiful though they might have been. Certain classes *did* benefit, and that was *no* mistake.

Cowell tells us that there is a "neglect" of small farmers and "an indifference by government towards the governed," but he doesn't tell us why, and he makes this neglect and indifference seem almost accidental. He gives the impression that if anybody is to blame, it is the "volatile poor" who live in shantytowns and whose threatened rebellion forces governments to feed them cheaply, which in turn robs the peasant farmer of incentive to produce for the market. This kind of presentation could easily lead the casual reader to the conclusion that "the volatile poor" are the basic cause of Africa's poverty, that aid is useless, and that it is pointless to try to save Africa's starving today because long-run solutions are impossible.

What is missing in Cowell's article is an understanding of the nature of Africa's ruling classes and their interested interrelationship with external agencies, including multinational corporations and the World Bank.[7] Without such an analysis, we are as likely to blame free sacks of grain and greedy cows, chomping those tufts of grass that hold back the desert, for a tragedy which *does* have identifiable human agents.[8] In contrast, Richard Franke, in his contribution to this volume, clearly demonstrates the value of a class analysis not only to understand the drought, but also to arrive at a series of remedial measures.[9]

The example of drought and famine is particularly vivid, but our understanding of other African developments—from the consolidation of nonparticipatory state structures to the continued exploitation of women—suffers as badly from lack of attention and outright hostility to class analysis.

BACKGROUND AND ORIGIN OF THIS VOLUME

The thirteen original studies of this volume all deal with aspects of a single theme: the "authoritative allocation of values" or, more simply, the question of who gets what, when, where, and why—and who gets left out.[10] Although they differ in their political perspectives and their disciplinary backgrounds, they focus on some aspect of "class" as a key variable.

Five of the thirteen studies resulted from a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) sponsored seminar on "Power and Class in Africa." Mem-