

“one of the most evil politicians in Hungarian history. Without doubt he was the ugliest” (p. 30). While some may wish to debate the issue of Rákosi’s physical attractiveness, it can hardly be considered relevant to a critical appreciation of his rule; furthermore, it seems to this reviewer to be difficult to see how a blanket condemnation of any politician as “evil” can be justified by evidence, or be seriously sustained as scholarly analysis. At other points in the book, Lendvai blurs the lines between scholarly analysis and opinion. In a discussion of the likely levels of support for non-communist political parties after the apparent triumph of the Revolution at the end of October, he states that “it is extremely likely that in the prevailing atmosphere the Social Democrats would have come out the winners in free elections” (p. 133). This statement is made in the face of the fact that there exists no reliable evidence of the likely levels of political support for new parties that had only been formed a matter of days previously, leaving any such judgements a matter of pure speculation.

Despite the shortcomings of his account of the Revolution itself, Lendvai’s discussion of the ways in which the memory of the Revolution was distorted and manipulated under János Kádár, and has been contested politically since 1989, are the strongest part of the book. He shows how 1956 has become implicated in a longer history of political polarization within Hungary during the twentieth century that has shaped the way it has formed part of political culture in the country. As the official commemoration progressed in conference and concert halls and in other public buildings during autumn 2006, it was this more contested legacy that played a role in events on the streets. This ought to point the attention of historians to the ways in which the events of 1956 were acted out in the context of longer-term polarization: those who argued within the party, took to the streets, or built the Kádár regime alongside the Red Army, had experienced the trauma of defeat, revolution, and counter-revolution in 1918–1919; the territorial contraction and its impact on interwar Hungary; World War II and the Holocaust; and the building of the socialist regime. The politically contested experience of these prior events clearly acted as a backdrop to the decisions of individuals and groups during 1956.

Hopefully, by the time of the Revolution’s sixtieth anniversary historians will have abandoned the Cold-War myth – that has survived in the culture of Hungary’s official post-socialist commemorations of 1956 – of the nation unified against the system. Should they do so, we will gain a more nuanced and accurate understanding of the course of events in Hungary in October and November 1956, that situates these events in the context of political division across the twentieth century.

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ECKERT, ANDREAS. *Herrschen und Verwalten. Afrikanische Bürokraten, staatliche Ordnung und Politik in Tanzania, 1920–1970.* [Studien zur Internationalen Geschichte.] Oldenbourg, München 2007. vii, 313 pp. € 49.80; doi:10.1017/S002085900900011X

In recent years, the literature on colonial history has increasingly addressed the phenomenon of “mediators between cultures”. Thus, a number of biographies have already appeared, including in German, on African missionaries, mercenaries, or – as in the present example – African bureaucrats in colonial service. Native teachers, interpreters, servants, assistants or linguistic informants would make worthwhile subjects for historical research.

In the book discussed here, Eckert does not limit himself to “simple” biographical sketches of his actors, but rather integrates his subject into a broader framework, namely

the process of developing a nation-state in East Africa on the European model. Such a political model is apparently becoming obsolete in the “Dark Continent” nowadays, however. The future of the nation-state, the author notes in his introduction, is “in many respects uncertain” (p. 1). In fact, this view coincides with the published and discussed opinions of various other experts in the field, who – despite viewpoints that differ in the details – proceed from the assumption that in Africa, wars, crises, and violence are evidence of a social upheaval in the course of which whole societies are reinventing themselves, and the nation-state is therefore disintegrating. Eckert quite correctly comments that “Prophets may be able to predict where this voyage will end, but historians cannot” (p. 3).

The author explains the intentions of his book against this background. He hopes to contribute to an understanding of the emergence and development of the territorial nation-state using the example of the formerly German, and later British, colony of Tanzania between 1920 and 1970. He focuses his analysis of an impressive number of archival sources and a substantial secondary literature on those Africans who initially held positions in the colonial state apparatus and then, after national independence from the British colonial power, inherited the legacy of the European colonial rulers. In so doing, he examines the interactions between the institutions and the pillars of state authority.

The author avoids the pitfall of studying the autochthonous bureaucracy or individual bureaucrats as objects of sociological interest. Instead, he attempts in a relatively brief space, and keeping as close to the sources as possible, to present a political history of Tanzania over a period of some fifty years, centered on African civil servants and (colonial) state structures. After all, African administrative employees assumed a central role in the colonial order and acted as mediators and translators between the colonial rulers and the colonized population. This position afforded them, at times, substantial room for manoeuvre as well as certain opportunities to overstep the relatively narrow bounds of their official duties.

And Andreas Eckert would not be Andreas Eckert if he did not take the opportunity of such an extensive monograph to direct our attention to debates and approaches in the recent historiography on Africa and colonialism, and to assess and confront them with empirical material from his own field of research, while stressing that he chooses not to take a position in these academic debates. He regards three research fields as particularly relevant: authority and bureaucracy, the colonial state and colonialism, and actors and elites.

Despite the, at times, extremely detailed research, he never fails to take adequate account of global developmental processes in the period in question, and deploys a variety of historical methods, including the use of oral history sources. Consequently, the book represents a successful marriage between area studies and global history. The professor of African history at Berlin’s Humboldt University convincingly demonstrates thereby that the historiography on Africa is neither methodologically nor thematically exotic, although it does have specific characteristics which he clearly enumerates and discusses.

Eckert has divided his revised *Habilitation* thesis into five chapters, each with a number of sub-chapters. The first complex introduces theoretical aspects of the subject and describes sources and the like. After a brief overview of the German colonial period in East Africa, the second complex, which is divided into five sub-chapters covering the period from 1920 to 1940, begins with a detailed presentation of the doctrine and practice of the indirect rule favoured by the British administration. Eckert addresses the difficulties that arose, for this centuries-old pattern of rule could no longer be applied in the presence of certain population groups, especially those that existed outside the traditional communities – in this case the groups he mentions are rural capitalists and the urban underclass. The third complex treats the period of decolonization and colonial development initiatives, that is, the years from 1940 to 1960. Here the focus is on political changes in British colonial policy.

The fourth main chapter is devoted mainly to the biographies of several African bureaucrats and thus has a scholarly value in its own right, not least for the relatively young historiography on Tanzania, for the author combines a detailed knowledge of the history of this East African country with an analysis of European sources. The fifth and final substantial complex provides insights into the place of the new Tanzanian nation-state in an international order shaped by the Cold War and East–West competition. The author then examines certain central ideological and political projects characterized by such terms as “Ujamaa”, “Arusha Declaration”, or “one-party democracy”.

Concluding reflections, acknowledgments, an appendix with important lists of archival sources and a bibliography as well as a detailed index confirm the book’s high scholarly value.

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