

national réformateur et centralisateur autour d'un parti et d'un chef: Bourguiba qui s'imposa comme chef unique et incontesté après l'élimination de son principal rival politique, Salah ben Youssef.

L'expérience de modernisation national a touché tous les domaines de la vie: L'École moderne, le droit, et particulièrement le statut de la femme, la famille et l'environnement social. L'économie libérale cède vite la place à un dirigisme économique de type socialiste (le socialisme destourien) d'où le développement de pôles industriels étatiques régionaux et l'intégration de la paysannerie dans le système de collectivisation agraire fermement défendu par le puissant ministre de l'économie Ahmed ben Salah.

L'échec de cette expérience en 1969 et le retour à une économie libérale avec Hédi Nour, si il a permis de stabiliser l'économie et de reprendre un rythme de croissance et d'investissement soutenu, n'a pas abouti à la libéralisation politique. L'intermède pluraliste des années 1980, durant lequel ont émergé les nouveaux partis politiques (mouvement islamiste, socio-démocrates et formations de gauche) et la puissante centrale syndicale, n'a pas résisté devant les tendances monopolisatrices du champ politique par un Etat-Parti hégémonique. L'échec des élections législatives pluralistes de 1981 en est la preuve avec son corollaire la répression du mouvement islamiste.

La fin du régime de Bourguiba en 1987 intervint dans un contexte du vide politique et de fragilisation de l'économie et de la société. De ce point le président Ben Ali a pu rétablir les équilibres économiques, relancé la croissance et développé une politique sociale de lutte contre la pauvreté; il a redonné espoir aux élites politiques et intellectuelles modernes en optant pour la poursuite des réformes modernisatrices. Le pacte national élaboré en 1988 a rassemblé autour de ses principes les courants de pensées modernes les plus divers tout en confirmant le caractère arabo-musulman de l'identité tunisienne. Cependant cette orientation marque le pas avec la crise ouverte entre le pouvoir politique et le mouvement islamiste Ennahdha à partir de 1990 et la répression anti-islamiste qui s'en suivit. Le réinvestissement du champ politique par le pouvoir autoritaire se confirme pour montrer les limites des réformes politiques annoncées auparavant. L'Etat-Parti prend le dessus sur le processus de changement.

Par ses multiples dimensions, le travail de Kenneth Perkins ne se limite pas à scander et à analyser le politique tel que vécu par la Tunisie durant plus d'un siècle et demi, il se veut une large rétrospective tunisienne mettant à l'œuvre le travail de l'historien, du politologue, du sociologue et du critique littéraire. L'appréhension des multiples registres abordés par l'auteur, même si elle laisse quelques points dans l'ombre, elle permet au lecteur de saisir les plus importants repères de l'histoire de la Tunisie contemporaine et d'élucider quelques aspects de la spécificité tunisienne pour une meilleure compréhension des mécanismes du pouvoir en place ainsi que des dynamiques et des limites du mouvement politique autonome.

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AFRICAN-AMERICAN EXPLORERS IN WEST AFRICA

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African-American Exploration in West Africa: Four Nineteenth-Century Diaries.

Edited by JAMES FAIRHEAD, TIM GEYSBEEK, SVEND E. HOLSOE and MELISSA LEACH. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003. Pp. xi + 488. \$59.95 (ISBN 0-253-34194-9).

KEY WORDS: Precolonial, diaspora, Liberia, exploration/travel.

The editors of this engaging volume hereby served notice to authors of standard African history texts. This book features African-American explorers into the interior of Liberia during the nineteenth century. Maps of explorations now need revision to include African-Americans alongside European explorers into the so-called 'Dark Continent'. With an Introduction, the book contains seven chapters, and in Chapter 2, six maps show travels in the Liberian interior; similar maps of individual interior travels repeat themselves again in diaries found in Chapters 3-6.

The editors devoted much effort to locating the Americo-Liberians' diaries and sundry for inclusion in the book. Chapter 7 provides ethno-linguistic data and discusses indigenous knowledge and technologies, and the ubiquitous slavery, and makes place-name corrections to the interior travel accounts themselves. Endnotes are annotated with an excellent bibliography for further research at the Svend E. Holsoe Collection at Indiana University. While some of the standard history of Liberia appears in Chapters 1-2, the diasporic settlers themselves represented a bundle of dialectical contradictions resulting from the interplay of Atlantic world encounters. They were descendants of Africa through the Atlantic slave trade, slaves in a hostile and alien US territory, inheritors of transmitted mixed feelings for the continent of their descent because of their 'enemies' who sold them. As settlers through the American Colonization Society 'non-benevolent "disposal"' to Liberia, they found themselves treating the indigenous people as they were almost treated back in the antebellum USA. An alternative perspective emerged among some of the settlers within the Liberian government out of *realpolitik*. As the editors note 'to forge stronger and more equitable links with the African nations of the interior, ... would be mutually beneficial and would facilitate large-scale American colonization' (p. 1). Fearful of foreigners and colonial annexation, the Liberian government linked national pride to exploration and preservation of border expansion. Four aims emerged: to gain knowledge of the interior peoples and resources; to extend Liberian government control over the interior peoples through treaties and the ceding of territory; to negotiate with local polities to remove bottlenecks to trade; and to establish Christian missions, from the forest region of Monrovia to the savannah reaches of the Islamic and 'superior' Manding civilization of Musadu, located today in Guinea. Musadu was 230 miles (370 kilometers) from Monrovia by direct route, and '430 zig-zag miles' (690 kilometers).

Americo-Liberians forged far into the interior. Funded through a variety of sources from the US, their government and wealthy Liberian merchants, they studied geometry and other relevant subjects in preparation. Armed with appropriate instruments for astronomical calculations (maps, compasses, sextants, barometers, thermometers), and gifts (Liberia Lone Star flags, presents for chiefs, paper, porter-carriers, Arabic Bibles and guns for protection), they consisted of (with years of travel and places reached) Connecticut 'mullato' born James L. Seymour (1855-8, Monrovia to Bopolu-Wennwata), Virginia 'mullato' born James L. Sims (1858, Edina to Oussadu-Wosodu), Delaware 'free' born William Spencer Anderson (1870, Monrovia to Barline Country - Kpayekwele) and Baltimore 'full bloodied Negro' born Benjamin J. K. Anderson, who from Monrovia reached Musadu twice (1868-9, 1874) and 'deserves great credit as having been practically the only Liberian, who has made a direct contribution to geographical literature' (p. 241). The Smithsonian recognized Anderson with 500 published copies of his book in 1870, and the Royal Geographical Society 'placed Anderson's book alongside the works of Africa's other great explorers': Barth, Livingstone and Laing (p. 57). In efforts to invalidate the Franco-Liberian Treaty of 1892 that set Liberia's boundary at Nionsamoridu (just 17 miles south of

Musadu in Guinea), French explorer Captain d'Ollone, who never visited Monrovia, attempted to discredit Anderson's travels and astronomical calculations in a 1903 publication, *Bulletin du Comité de l'Afrique Française*: 'Add to all that, that Anderson, who many think to be an English person, or an American, is simply a black Liberian; that none of his brethren have ever dared adventure more than 10 km from the sea or navigable river ... he had only very ordinary education' (quoted on pp. 79-80). 'Africanist' and French Consul Maurice Delafosse to Monrovia deflected d'Ollone's charges as did Anderson in his five-page rebuttal published both in the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* and in the *Liberia Recorder* in 1903 (pp. 84-8).

Travel in the interior was risky. Settlers were 'black white men' to the interior peoples. Monrovia had 250 inches of rainfall per year and the savannah 70 inches; encounters with overflowing rivers and streams were frequent. The travelers had to be excellent swimmers, and often had to swim for their lives from bush-whackers, one of whom was believed to be Samori Touré (1858-9), who caused Seymour and assistant Levin Ash (from Indiana) to abandon their mission in 1858. Seymour swam away injured near Wosodo (South of Kuankan) but Ash was captured and enslaved:

stripped naked, and a large stick fastened to his leg by an iron strap ... kept in this condition for ten days ... one hand tied to his neck, and driven to large towns to be sold for a gun; but they could make no sale of him ... without clothes for fifteen days, they were restored to him.

Ash ran away later to freedom and rejoined Seymour, who never recovered from his wounds and died later at Paynesville, October 1860.

Finally, this collaborative work depicts a history of Liberia in its most 'prosperous' and 'populous times'. It should provide inspiration to the Liberian peoples in efforts to rebuild their nation in the millennium that began in 1847 as the first republic in Africa.

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NEW APPROACHES TO GERMAN COLONIALISM

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Impossible Missions? German Economic, Military, and Humanitarian Efforts in Africa. By NINA BERMAN. Lincoln NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004.

Pp. x + 271. £37.95 (ISBN 0-8032-1334-4).

KEY WORDS: Colonialism, historiography, postcolonial.

While in France and especially in Britain the respective colonial empires and imperialisms are still the subject of numerous engaging and controversial historiographical debates, there is far less discussion in Germany about the - admittedly comparatively short-lived - German colonial empire in Africa, the Pacific and in Shantung. All too often the history of German colonialism is treated as an appendix of the German Kaiserreich. In the meantime there are, however, a few solid though mostly fairly conventional surveys, at least packed with facts. Moreover, in the course of the last three decades, a number of academic monographs on various aspects of German colonialism have been published. Most of

these present the fruits of empiricist 'toil'. New approaches in international research on colonialism were reflected sporadically at best; ambitious theoretical outlines were hardly ventured. More recently some literary scholars and anthropologists, mainly from the United States, have made new attempts which can largely be subsumed under the heading of 'postcolonial studies'. Often on the basis of a relatively small set of contemporary texts, these scholars attempt to dissect the 'colonial discourse' in imperial Germany. Though most of this work ignores much of the empirical data available and shows a tendency to self-indulgent over-theorisation as well as a certain ignorance of the more violent realities of colonial rule, it opens up exciting questions, for example on race and gender. Now some younger historians in Germany, too, have taken up these ideas, looking at the short-term as well as long-term effects of the colonial experience on German metropolitan culture and politics.

The study by Nina Berman, a professor of German at the University of Nebraska, represents both the advantages and disadvantages of the new approaches to Germany's colonial past. Her book focuses on Germans 'who went to Africa with "good intentions" but whose interference in local affairs often had disastrous consequences for Africans' (p. 1). These individuals include Max Eyth, an engineer, who worked in Egypt in the 1860s; then Albert Schweitzer, the famous 'jungle doctor', who spent a considerable part of his life as a medical doctor in Lambaréné in French Equatorial Africa. After the Second World War, the already elderly Schweitzer was celebrated by many Europeans, especially in Germany, as an incarnation of the good Samaritan. Moreover, Lambaréné became a mythical site, a place where 'German culture' survived during the 'dark years'. Born in Alsace, Schweitzer was a French citizen; however, this did not prevent Germans celebrating him as 'their' hero. The third person in Berman's focus is Ernst Udet, an aviator who made a movie in East Africa in the early 1930s and was later eternalized in Carl Zuckmayer's much-performed theatre play *Des Teufels General* (The Devil's General). Another chapter is devoted to Bodo Kirchoff, a writer who visited the German army contingent in Somalia in 1993 and published a diary of his visit. The final chapter does not deal with an individual but rather presents the experiences of contemporary German tourists in Kenya who repeatedly return to the country and 'turn into aid workers', providing various kinds of support to Kenyans. This part is mainly based on ethnographic fieldwork and survey work conducted by the author.

According to Berman, the persons featuring in her book could be labelled as 'secular missionaries', promoting what they regarded as modern European civilization in African contexts. She teases out the often considerable discrepancy between how these Germans viewed their role in Africa and the material repercussions of their presence. Schweitzer, especially, is harshly criticized for his narrow construction of Africa and Africans and for his elitist cultural outlook. Berman is certainly right in claiming that the protagonists of her story failed to take account of the complexities of the historical and contemporary contexts of the African societies with which they were dealing. However, this does not come as a huge surprise. Moreover, the analytical framework seems fairly arbitrary and the author is not very careful, to say the least, in establishing the historical contexts of the various settings. For instance, Berman's accounts of East Africa in the early 1930s (where Ernst Udet's film was shot) and of Somali history are quite superficial.

Thus *Impossible Missions* provides some interesting details and insights, but lacks careful contextualization as well as coherence.

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