

elimination of traditional ways of life and the humiliation of paternalism.

Most of these events are well known to the politically-informed reader. It is, however, refreshing to see them all together in one comprehensive presentation, based on facts and figures and illustrated by people who lived through them. On some issues, the book offers additional and very helpful insights, not only in the text itself but also through the sources listed for complementary reading. These issues include the political rejection of Leopold during his lifetime, the economic development of Congo during the period between the two World Wars, the changed international political situation after the Second World War and the end of colonialism — especially poignant in the Belgian case because of the particular importance of Congo during the Cold War — the lack of advanced education as a reason for failed independence, the history of ethnic tension in Eastern Congo caused by migration as far back as the 19th century and massive import of labor under colonial rule.

Many questions remain, however. The book ends with a government in Kinshasa still unable to establish authority throughout the territory. Will calm return? Can Congo survive as it is? Can the entire Great Lakes Region continue in the present format? Other questions also remain open: was lack of education really the reason for failed independence in 1960 — at a time when tertiary education was not widespread, not even in Europe — and why would the Chinese approach to cooperation in mining and infrastructure be better in the long run than the European development projects in education and health, as examples?

The value of this book lies precisely in raising these questions. Irrespective of its narrative style, the deep human approach in *Congo — The Epic History of a People* makes the reader think.

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Alden, Chris/Chichava, Sérgio (eds), *China and Mozambique: From Comrades to Capitalists*. Johannesburg: Fanele, 2014, 220pp.

Alden and Chichava put together a team of multidisciplinary, multilingual and talented scholars who used multiple sources and methods to discuss

different aspects of the relations between China and Mozambique, from the ideological cooperation of the past to the current business relationship. The volume uncovers the enthusiasm and challenges resulting from it. This is a valuable survey of studies contributing to scholarly debate of these complex and multifaceted relations and ultimately providing helpful political guidelines for improved relations between China and Mozambique and other African countries.

In simple and clear language, the authors use a prose-like writing style that compels the reader to continue reading. "*Samuel took a sip of his beer before continuing*" (p 72), "*Yeah ... it was pretty hot in there ... The entire day we were working without masks and without gloves ... Ah! The Chinese ... they are not really human ...*" (p 73). The well-aligned chapters present an impressive coherence, consistency and accuracy with regard to figures and dates. They can be read independently, depending on the interest of the reader. Each chapter starts with a clearly indicated objective, making it easier to understand the content.

The volume opens with an overview of the relations between China and Africa from its origins to the growing involvement of China in African affairs as a top trading partner and a source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in key sectors. This introduction also points at the awakening of Africa through efforts at continental, sub-regional and bilateral level to forge close ties with China. It reminds us how Chinese foreign policy in Africa has raised some concerns, dissatisfaction and criticism for failing to promote mutual benefits.

Chapter one examines the history of the bilateral relations between China and Mozambique from its origins in the early 1960s up to the present day, from the initial solidarity to the technical and financial cooperation that currently exists. This relationship has been described as being one of caution due to Mozambique's alliance with the Soviet Union in the past and its heavy dependency on Western aid and the influence of Western donors at present. It is also a relationship of compromise and collaboration at political party-to-party level, in government and in multiple areas ranging from agriculture and infrastructure to exploration of natural resources. The chapter closes with a warning against using Chinese investment for self-enrichment by the political elite.

The second chapter shows the increase of Chinese investment in the industrial sector in southern Mozambique (Maputo) and the tendency to divert towards the exploration of mineral resources in northern Mozambique. The chapter also provides an overview of different areas of bilateral commercial and financial cooperation. China is today one of the largest

investors in Mozambique, with the logic of solidarity now replaced by that of business. In the third chapter the book offers a brief overview of the Mozambican financial sector, with the focus on Luso-Chinese investment, particularly in the banking sector. It discusses the worrying Chinese business alliance with the Mozambican political and military elite.

Chapter four unfolds some of the challenges in the relations between China and Mozambique, namely the dissatisfaction over low wages and working conditions, corruption and the illegal logging and export of timber. By examining the profile of Chinese migrants, the chapter demystifies the Western perception that China intends to colonise Africa or that it has a 'master plan' for expansion on the African continent. Chinese migration is more individual than it is a government-controlled action.

Chapter five examines the socio-economic side-effects of Chinese investment in Mozambique, such as difficult relations between Chinese companies and Mozambican labour caused by difficulties in communication, cultural differences and another work ethic. It exposes the failure of Chinese companies to abide by Mozambican labour laws, which results in poor working conditions, unfair wages for Mozambicans and violation of workers' rights in general. The chapter describes the often poor quality of Chinese projects in public works, particularly in road construction, due to the use of cheaper, unskilled Chinese labour, combined with poor supervision and poor control by the Mozambican government, throwing some light on the weaker side of Chinese investment on the continent.

In chapter six, the myths and reality of Chinese involvement in the Mozambican agricultural sector are examined. With a thorough analysis of the historic Chinese engagement in the agricultural sector, the authors dismiss the portrayed image of Chinese neo-colonialism. They argue that Chinese involvement in Mozambican agriculture is more one of comradery as a development partner than of a coloniser or land grabber; food production is meant to be for the domestic market and is not aimed at ensuring Chinese food security. The claims of land leasing, land grabbing and mass-settlement of Chinese farmers are dismissed as unfounded.

Chapter seven refers to agricultural projects such as rice farming and the training of farmers, placing the focus on the Boane Agricultural Demonstration Centre as a symbol of Chinese investment in Africa, politically and economically. According to the authors, this Centre illustrates China's sincere commitment to improve agriculture through technology development and technology transfer, training and scientific research and increased productivity. Unfortunately, the work of this Centre is affected by

a lack of coordination, ambiguity between Mozambican institutions, ill-defined mandates and responsibilities as well as language and cultural barriers between institutions of the two countries, resulting in conflicting policies or in policies not being implemented.

Chapter eight indicates that Chinese investment, as any other FDI, is negatively affected by the greed of the local political elite using it for their personal benefit and not for the benefit of ordinary people.

Chapter nine examines the mutual perceptions between Chinese and Mozambican nationals and the implications for the relationship between the two countries. Government officials are enthusiastic about the Chinese and are favourable in their comments and attitudes. In contrast, the media and civil society harbour negative anti-Chinese sentiments, accusing China of illegalities, violation of ethics and human rights, exploitation of raw materials and economic threats. The labour disputes in Chinese companies caused by low wages, despotic and violent management behaviour, work pressure in poor working conditions, cultural differences, racism and lack of knowledge of each other due to language barriers and ineffective responses from Mozambican authorities are also points of contention. Chapter ten addresses the social identification, representation and mutual perception of the different Chinese communities from different waves of migration into Mozambique and scrutinises the somewhat tense intra-community relations, with the Sino-Mozambican settlers claiming to be Chinese, a status rejected by the Sino-Chinese sojourners.

In its conclusion, the book provides reflections on the meaning and features of the Mozambican-Chinese relationship that can lead to a better and broader understanding of the emergence of China across the continent. It has the merit of recovering the debate about important themes which mark the presence of China in Africa but which were not sufficiently explored in the chapters, such as land grabbing, the Chinese 'master plan' of expansion across the continent, Chinese-African labour relations and China as a new donor. The authors dismiss land grabbing and a Chinese 'master plan' of expansion as myths. Furthermore, they maintain that not only Chinese companies are to blame for poor working conditions and poor execution of projects but that also ineffective government supervision is to blame for it.

The volume clearly illustrates that all investors, Chinese included, have to work through political and military alliances to realise their projects; the result of this is that the benefits of such projects do not fully reach the population at large. The book closes with questions for

reflection on how the presence of China can benefit the majority in the country to narrow the gap between rich and poor; how the political will of the elite can be reflected on the ground; and how to ensure that Mozambique does not remain an exporter of raw materials and importer of finished goods, such as is often the case in the relations between Africa and the West.

The book has the merit of introducing a new understanding of China in Africa through solid research which was at times challenged by difficult access to information. Notwithstanding this, the authors were able to demystify several misconceptions around the Chinese presence in Mozambique. They, furthermore, took the opportunity to bring forward the voices of the oppressed.

Irrespective of all its merits, the book regrettably fails to give a message to Africa on how to deal with foreign investors and manage its resources sustainably for future generations.

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Mlambo, Alois S, *A History of Zimbabwe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, 277 pp.

A History of Zimbabwe is one of the most recent publications which provides a straight forward and coherent account of Zimbabwean history from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial state. The rationale for this book, as outlined (p 7) is to provide an accessible, informative, single volume on Zimbabwean history and politics for learning institutions.

The first chapter is introductory and chapter 2 gives a foundational reading of the rise and fall of pre-colonial states, (c.900-1900). The chapter is situated within the late 20th century debate on whether Africa had a history prior to its contact with Europeans. Outlining the early states from Mapungubwe (1040-1270), Torwa/Rozvi (1450-1685) and the Ndebele on the eve of British conquest, the book demonstrates that Africa had organised and functional political systems. Chapter 3 and chapter 4 focus on colonial conquest in 1890, African resistance and the organisation of the colonial economy and society until 1953. In particular, chapter 4 outlines the development of the colonial state from the British South Africa Company's (BSAC) rule to a modern state. This develop-