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### Review Of "Sir Garfield Todd And The Making Of Zimbabwe" By R. Weiss And J. Parpart

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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Sir Garfield Todd and the Making of Zimbabwe by Ruth Weiss and Jane Parpart

Review by: Timothy Burke

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SIR GARFIELD TODD AND THE MAKING OF ZIMBABWE. By *Ruth Weiss, with Jane Parpart*. London: British Academic Press, 1999. Pp. xx, 234; 12 illustrations. \$55.00.

Garfield Todd, prime minister of Southern Rhodesia from 1953 to 1958, is one of a handful of whites who seem to have emerged out of the history of European colonialism in Africa with something more than a one-dimensionally villainous profile. Todd's seeming recognition and eventual embrace of the inevitability of black majority rule in southern Africa has ennobled his historical reputation in exact inverse proportion to the sustained vilification of his tuggishly short-sighted segregationist opponents.

Todd's life story is a genuinely fascinating one, full of personal crises and turning points that seem to correspond to and define moments in the larger histories that surrounded him. Todd's supporters, most notably his daughter Judith, have often represented his tenure as prime minister as a moment when Rhodesian whites could have chosen reconciliation and negotiation rather than racism and violence, but failed to follow his prophetic lead. There has always been something vaguely unsatisfying and misleading about these celebrations. To be sure, the crude repudiation of Todd's historical role by some African nationalists and white radicals, their dismissal of him as a weak liberal and closet racist, is far less satisfying. But Todd's life—and the historical moment it exemplified—clearly calls for thoughtful and thorough examination with a keen awareness of its contradictory valences.

Ruth Weiss's biography of Todd, written with the assistance of Jane Parpart, is at least a start towards that goal. Full of useful and interesting details about Todd's life, many of which have not been extensively reported elsewhere, the book will be an important reference for scholars interested either in Todd or the political events with which he was most closely involved. In particular, the oral material that appears here, much of it solicited from Todd and his family, offers an intriguing window into his life and times.

However, little more should be expected of the book. It recounts Todd's life in a very literal and straightforward manner, and has little analytical content. It is in many ways stylistically reminiscent of an earlier class of colonial hagiographies of missionaries and explorers, except that it celebrates a different kind of political and social achievement. Legitimate questions about Todd's weaknesses and idiosyncrasies, let alone complexities and contradictions (including the sticky question of status in post-independence Zimbabwe), are pushed aside in favor of warmly celebratory praises. The book also has something of the oddly inbred feel of much Rhodesiana, that suffocatingly but also often deliberately cultivated parochialism of the white settler community which more astute memoirists like Peter Godwin and Graham Boynton have adroitly dissected, but which this book merely reproduces.

Scholars with an interest in Zimbabwe, in postwar British decolonization, or in settler society and culture, should find the time to read through this book. Todd's career, from his early suppression of a strike by his African pupils at Dadaya mission school through to his career as prime minister and then to his later delicate but daring support of nationalist guerrillas, could serve as the springboard for a compelling reassessment of colonial rule, settler society, and the rise of African nation-

alism. The information necessary for such a reassessment is present in this text, but not the accompanying insight and perspective.

TIMOTHY BURKE

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THE CRIMINALIZATION OF THE STATE IN AFRICA. *By Jean-François Bayart, Stephen Ellis, and Beatrice Hibou.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, and Oxford: James Currey, 1999. In association with the International African Institute. Pp. 126. \$39.95 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

This book is an important contribution to the search for new insights and interpretations that can enable the understanding of the recent trajectories of the African predicament, which seem to defy conventional wisdom on Africa. The authors tackle the increasing trends toward, and linkages between, domestic and global criminal activities and how they complicate the growing incapacity of the rhizome state, even while integrating peripheral African economies into the global capitalist system in significantly new, but domestic economy-destroying ways. What must count as the major strength of the book is the attempt by the authors, using Bayart's explanatory variable of *la politique du ventre* to draw continuities between state-related crimes of corruption and smuggling and jet-age global crimes involving drugs, advance fee fraud (p. 419), prostitution, money laundering, offshore banking fraud, and so on.

It is when the authors attempt to account for what they consider to be a pervasive African vocation that the book runs into serious problems. Those already familiar with Bayart's works will be irritated to find a rehash of his inglorious attempts to explain Africa's problems in autochthonous terms, suggesting that the problems manifest a return to the "heart of darkness" (slave trade, prostitution, war lordism, privatization of state power, etc.) from which colonialism momentarily saved Africans. In other words, criminal activities have been quite normal and acceptable in Africa since precolonial times, and therefore constitute an integral part of the original condition of the peoples on the continent. It would be interesting to see how this thesis applies to diaspora Africans for whom I suppose crime is also a natural tendency. Or how it would explain the criminal tendencies of the colonizers. These suggestions perhaps would help open Bayart's eyes to the falsehood and veiled racism of his analysis (witness how more than six times in this book he finds it necessary to apologize for any suggestion that crime is peculiar to Africans!).

Fortunately, despite Beatrice Hibou's efforts at Bayartism, both her chapter on "The 'Social Capital' of the State as an Agent of Deception" (a misleading title) and Stephen Ellis's chapter on "The New Frontiers of Crime in South Africa" contradict and invalidate the explanations offered in the first chapter by demonstrating that economic decline, forces of liberalization, and globalization are at the roots of the increasing criminalization of the African state. When it comes to writing on Africa, most non-African Africanists put on the garb of morality. What we did not know, however, was that they did so as "acknowledged guardians of international