

Researched in many public and private archives, Langer's study is a balanced and incisive account of the decay of the Chuquisacan economy after 1895 and the adjustment of elites and peasants to the massive changes. Langer concludes that the success of peasant resistance depends on the strength of community institutions and the relative importance of the peasantry in the rural economy. Yamparaez and Cinti peasants were able to force the reestablishment of patron-client relations along traditional Andean lines. In Tomina, without the safety net of the hacienda, and Azero, where the recently reduced Indians were in debt peonage, community organizations were weak, and the peasants were unable to organize to resist change. Banditry and the collapse of traditional Indian culture were the results.

Langer's most valuable conclusion is that the emphasis on peasant rebellion and revolution has masked rather than illuminated other significant forms of rural resistance. Resistance, he says, is a type of adaptation which can lead to mutual accommodation. Neither elites nor foreign capitalists alone determined the nature and speed of change in the southern Bolivian countryside. The peasants were important players too.

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Endnotes

1. James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the peasant: rebellion and subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976); Samuel L. Popkin, *The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979).

McNamara, Francis Terry. *France in Black Africa*. Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1989.

At first glance, *France in Black Africa* by Francis Terry McNamara appears to be a high quality journalistic endeavor. Catchy chapter titles — "One Man's Family," "The Sword," "Was It Worth It" — capture the reader's attention. Photographs are liberally dispersed throughout the book. And the background of the author, a former US ambassador to Gabon, lends credence to this preliminary observation.

Happily, the book merits scholarly attention. It is one of the only comprehensive treatments of French policy in Africa written in English, since the two pathbreaking books by Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff published in 1957 and 1960.¹ Indeed, the author examines French political, military, economic, and cultural policy from independence to 1988, with both a deftness for generalization and an eye for substantive detail.

The author does not engage in debates on the scholarly issues which occupy much of the literature — the impact of dependency, the effects of class relations versus ethnic conflict, the relative importance of state-society relations in determining foreign policy. Rather, McNamara presents an excellent introduction to French policy in Africa from the French perspective. Based on his personal observations, buttressed by extensive historical research at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University and residence at National Defense University, McNamara has written a readable description of French policy for a generalist audience, unencumbered by social science jargon.

Three chapters report the historical overview of events found in the extant literature. Included are explanations of the colonial policies of assimilation and association, the description of the evolution of representative institutions, and an analysis of how francophone regimes fared in the immediate aftermath of independence. French military presence in Africa is evaluated in detail, including tables showing the trends in military-cooperation agreements, number of French bases, and numbers of French military personnel — up-to-date material not easily found in other works.

Three themes of *France in Black Africa* are covered competently and with a modicum of originality. First, and most importantly, McNamara (p. 230) argues, “The central pillar of French presence in Africa aside from the French language has been the extraordinary franc zone monetary arrangements.” Compared to most other writers, McNamara concisely describes the function of the franc zone, the operation of the central banks, and what France and the independent African states can and cannot do in monetary policy as a result of these critical monetary arrangements. Only the works of P. and S. Guillaumont (*Zone franc et développement Africain* (1984) and *Stratégies de développement comparées: Zone franc et hors zone franc* (1988) offer more detail. Similarly trade relations between Africa and France are examined as they are in most other works. But the attention given to the franc zone itself makes the book worth reading.

A second feature of the book which enhances its readability and general interest is the attention given to the role of key persons in establishing the tone of the French-African relationship. Sections describing these individuals as persons, General Faidherbe, Governor General Feleix Eboue, Charles de Gaulle, and Jacques Foccart, make intriguing reading. Unfortunately, less attention is given to the charismatic African leaders, but as the author states at the outset, the book is not written from an African perspective.

The third contribution of the work is the focused discussion of how French policy in Africa is influenced by internal politics in France — in particular, changes in governmental regime and the changing roles of the Ministry of Cooperation, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Defense. As Andrew L. Steigman aptly summarizes on the back cover of the book, “As France approaches major decisions about its “European vocation” vs. its “African vocation,” this book will provide the basis for understanding the French internal debate of the next few years.”

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In short, the Ambassador has helped to fill a gap in the English-language literature on France's role in francophone Africa. The book could easily be used as supplemental reading in an upper-division course on African politics.

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Endnotes

1. Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, *French West Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1957); and *The Emerging States of French Equatorial Africa* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1960).