



Africa

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Sanford Ungar surveys current African history through a well-organized series of glimpses of the sub-Saharan African nations. Following a brief summary of United States involvement in Africa, Ungar examines the four nations--Liberia, Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa--whose experience most clearly represents recent African developments.

Shortly after the euphoria of independence, the roots of the present African dilemma emerged in a manner common to most nations of the continent. Ungar first highlights the lack of political stability in Africa, as demonstrated by the enormous reliance on the coup as the means of succession. Next, he points out that the lack of agricultural development has left most African nations hungry and subject to the whipsaw economic impact of the commodities market in staple crops and the extractive industries. In Ungar's view, the deepening class schism in each nation will never be bridged until national wealth is more evenly divided and rampant corruption is eliminated. Finally, the blatant apartheid policies of South Africa must be resolved, for their continuance is an open sore within the continent and is a divisive force within American foreign policy.

The remainder of Ungar's study groups the various countries into the following categories: those with strategic American ties, the British possessions, the former French colonies, and those tiny new nations characterized as the "desperate cases." Into the first category fall Zaire, Somalia, and Sudan for reasons of rare mineral deposits or geopolitical interests. Ungar points out with a touch of sadness the currently deplorable state of Ghana, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Tanzania, all at one time, the pride of the British Empire and then with high hopes of freedom. The former French colonies also suffer in poverty and political uncertainty, although their ties to the French Union differ significantly from the relationship between Great Britain and its possessions. Ungar completes the picture with a brief look at nations such as Chad, Gambia, and Togo, which are locked in a day-to-day struggle for existence.

Such a survey might well have been a monotonous journey through Africa; in Ungar's hands, it is readable and absorbing. This well-written and well-organized volume is a masterpiece of description and analysis.

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