



## African Eldorado: Gold Coast to Ghana

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read the polemic phraseology will understand why Saro-Wiwa has been desperate for so many years to put across the case of his beleaguered people. Ogoni is clearly Nigeria's shame, and the international community certainly ought to do something about it.

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**African Eldorado: Gold Coast to Ghana** by JOHN CARMICHAEL  
London, Duckworth, 1993. Pp. viii + 224. £12.99 paperback.

John Carmichael was made an honorary white chief in 1988 by being enstooled as the Asafohene of the Fete Traditional Area in the Central Region of Ghana, 'having been educated astride two cultures' (p. 213) at the Ridge Church School in Accra and at Clifton College and Oriel College, Oxford. This helps to explain the ambiguity that stems from two perspectives, as may be detected even from the title of his publication. On the one hand, he has written a history which reminds me of T.H. Elkiss, *The Quest for an African Eldorado: Sofala, Southern Zambezia, and the Portuguese, 1500-1865* (Brandeis, MA, 1981), but at the same time he has attempted to tell the story of Ghana from ancient times to independence. The book starts with an introduction that covers the origin of the African continent to the present day in 30 pages – what a condensed style! – and ends with a postscript that briefly discusses 'Development Twinning: a strategy for the twenty-first century'. This looks to the future by discussing a twinning project between the City of Bristol and the Fete Traditional Area which 'to be meaningful in a north-south context... must be more than recreational, more than symbolic or ceremonial. Ideally, it should enhance the levels of education and development in both communities' (p. 213).

*African Eldorado: Gold Coast to Ghana* contains some interesting illustrations, including archive documents and photographs, but can hardly be described as a scholarly work since it adds little to our knowledge of the country, and ignores recent work about the origins of the Ghanaian people. Carmichael appears to have relied on the views presented in W. E. F. Ward, *A Short History of Ghana* (London, 1957), about the migrant Akans being split into three sections, and that they were still arriving when the Portuguese landed on the Gold Coast. Small-scale movements of peoples and cultural contacts have been regular features in the evolution of most societies, and linguistic and archaeological evidence suggests that these took place in what is now known as Ghana 'at least three hundred years before the sixteenth-century date given by Ward and some other historians', according to Adu Boahen, 'Ghana before the coming of Europeans', in *Ghana Social Science Journal* (Legon), 4, 2, 1977, pp. 93-106.

The period between A.D. 600 and 1100 witnessed a transition from prehistoric villages to urban complexes characterised by commerce and some high-level technology, as pointed out by B. W. Andah and J. Anquandah, 'The Guinean Belt: the peoples between Mount Cameroon and the Ivory Coast', in M. El Fasi and I. Hrbek (eds.), *Africa from the Seventh to the Eleventh*

*Century* (Unesco, Paris and London, 1988), pp. 488–529. It is known that from around the sixth century the Brong were establishing permanent settlements at Bono Mansa, and that this became a pioneering Akan region for the evolution of iron-age civilisation. Ladoku and Shai were the focus of numerous villages during the period 600–1400, and Dangme settlers in Prampram, Dawhenya, and Shai were evolving a life-style of subsistence and a socio-theocratic system by the year 1000. Various research findings do not support Carmichael's conclusion that 'The Ga and Adangme appeared on the coast around the same time as the Portuguese' (p. 61).

The book contains other general statements of dubious validity. For example, 'The structure of these early Akan states evolved out of the logistical organisation required to manage the gold trade and the need to rationalise the production to meet demand' (p. 56). We have to ask why and how. In fact, studies have shown the existence of a more complicated and diversified economy in Akanland, where the inhabitants were involved in gathering, hunting, farming (plantain, bananas, yams, and rice), raising livestock, (poultry, sheep, goats, and pigs), and fishing, as well as making salt and mining gold. All these activities must have had an impact on their social structure and the process of state formation. Although the early Europeans who came to Akanland were solely interested in gold, this was by no means the only factor in the economic life of the Akan.

There are a few self-contradictory dates: for example, Madeira was discovered in 1418 (p. 63) and by 1420 (p. 68); Osei Tutu, the famous Asante king, reigned from 1697–1731 (p. 95), but was killed in 1717 (p. 96)! Carmichael suggests that Maclean served as Governor of the Gold Coast for 17 years (p. 121), whereas he was only President of the Council appointed to administer the forts and castles. Swollen shoot was first found in Koforidua in 1936, and continued to damage cocoa trees thereafter, not 'since 1943' (p. 203). As for the 20 ruled-off inserts in the book, they have a tendency to distract attention from the main text, albeit designed to emphasise the significance of the various topics covered.

The author's Eurocentrism may be seen from the many cross-headings used to describe either Europeans or their activities, such as 'Abolition and enlightenment', 'The British anti-slavers', 'The age of humanitarianism', and 'The great Mankata' (Sir Charles Macarthy) in the chapter on 'The Campaign against the Slave Trade'. And, later, 'A governor of distinction' (George Maclean), 'The new model soldier' (Sir Garnet Wolseley), 'Mr Stanley, I Presume', and 'The "Father of the Hausas"' (Captain John Hawley Glover, R.N.). In the chapter on 'The Making of a Model Colony', only two pages cover 'The rise of nationalism', while the section entitled 'The March Towards Independence' has four revealing sub-titles: 'Progressive paternalism', 'The Burns Constitution', 'The year of '48', and 'The Watson report and the Fabians'. Cocoa, one of the most important factors in modern Ghanaian history is only awarded a one-page insert, and the 1937 cocoa protests are not mentioned at all. By way of contrast, there is a four-page insert devoted to Maclean's wife: 'Letitia Elizabeth Landon, or L.E.L. as her readers knew her, had been writing romances and poems for the "magazines" since she was 14' (p. 118).

Consciously or unconsciously, the Asafohene of Fete has written a story of Europeans in Ghana instead of a history of Ghana and her people. Over 30 years ago Hugh Trevor-Roper declared that there was no African history, only the history of the Europeans in Africa, 'The rest is darkness'. Is there still darkness? Definitely not.

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**Ivoirien Capitalism: African entrepreneurs in Côte d'Ivoire** by

JOHN RAPLEY

Boulder and London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993. Pp. x+198. \$35.00. £31.50.

This study argues that the Ivoirien model of development has been the basis for the creation of an indigenous capitalism and a national bourgeoisie, contrary to common assumptions of studies conducted within dependency and neo-Marxian frameworks which emphasise its limitations. As explained in his introductory chapter, John Rapley considers that 'Ivoirien capitalism is healthy and dynamic' (p. 4), having been shaped by three related factors: the nature of the class which inherited the colonial state, its ability to transform this into an instrument of bourgeois rule, and its political capacity to regulate shifting constellations of capitalist fractions.

*Ivoirien Capitalism: African entrepreneurs in Côte d'Ivoire* traces the economic origins of the bourgeoisie to the indigenous planters that emerged in the 1930s, a class that was content with the colonial political framework until World War II when, denied access to migrant labour on which expansion of commodity production was predicated, it formed the *Syndicat agricole ivoirien* (SAA) to preserve its economic interests. The party of independence, the *Parti démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (PDCI) which, led by Félix Houphouët-Boigny, helped to create the *Rassemblement démocratique africain* (RDA) in francophone West Africa, 'remained a thoroughly bourgeois organization in both its leadership and policy' (p. 46) even after widening its membership. The 'political triumph' of the bourgeoisie was early affirmed by its resistance to rapid Africanisation of the bureaucracy, a condition which ensured the development of comparatively superior administrative capacities through a prevalence of organisational over personal ideologies in the workings of state institutions. It stayed secured by over-representation of capitalists in the central and local organs of state administration.

Relying on a common two-stage periodisation of the post-colonial political-economic trajectory, the author explains the mechanisms whereby the state mediated the growth of an indigenous capitalism and bourgeoisie. During the 1960s to the early 1970s, the régime of accumulation was based on import-substitution industrialisation under the direction of foreign capital. Dominated by the planter class, the state's rôle was confined to mobilising capital via peasant exports. By the end of this phase, the 'plantocracy' had been supplanted by a group of younger capitalists formed wholly within the urban sector. This helped to inaugurate an emphasis on export-oriented development