

Union – was, with the state's patronage, ultimately established for the dockworkers in the mid-1950s.

Again, the process was slow and ponderous, resisted by employers and modified by the workers, but, supported by such Kenyan political leaders as Tom Mboya, it succeeded, and by the end of the colonial era the casual dockworkers had been transformed into stabilized dockworkers and the radical African Workers Federation had been replaced by the reformist Dockworkers' Union. In the process, Cooper argues, the Kenyan labour-force had been transformed, largely through state action, from a relatively homogenous one based on labour migrancy into a segmented and differentiated one in which workers in certain key sectors were stabilized and privileged and workers in other sectors were neither.

Cooper's excellent book on the final decades of colonialism reveals not only what happened in that period on the African waterfront. It also brings to mind a question that has puzzled many observers of post-colonial African politics: why the labour movement, which was viewed in the 1950s and 1960s as so centrally important in the anti-colonial political struggle, should have proved so prone to emasculation, co-optation, and marginalization by the one-party state after independence. Implicit in Cooper's study are answers. First, the colonial state, through its policies of registration and welfarism that were directed only to certain sectors of the economy, succeeded in breaking the unity of the working class before the end of the colonial period. Hence independent African states inherited an already fragmented and weakened working class. Second, many workers considered 'stabilized' in fact were able then, and have continued since, to maintain links with rural areas and 'traditional' culture that ensured a certain level of security outside the job. Thus jobs have been less crucially important for basic survival than for a European or American worker and militancy has suffered. Third, the period of effective strikes in Africa in the final decades of colonialism was coterminous with a period of general economic expansion, whereas the economic contraction that independent African states have experienced over the past twenty years has given workers naturally worried about their position in a faltering economy little opportunity to strike.

In sum, then, Frederick Cooper has written an elegant and persuasive book about Kenyan dockworkers which, transcending his subject, illuminates interesting corners of African history during the 1940s and 1950s and suggests areas for future research in the history of imperialism in Africa.

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EAST AFRICA THROUGH SOVIET EYES

Isotoriia Kenii v Novoe i noveishee vremia [History of Kenya in modern and contemporary times]. By IRINA IVANOVNA FILATOVA. Moscow: Nauka Publishing House, 1985. Pp. 380.

Afrikanskie praviteli i vozhdii v Ugande: evoliutsiia traditsionnykh vlastei v usloviakh kolonializma, 1862–1962 [African rulers and chiefs in Uganda: the evolution of traditional power under colonial conditions, 1862–1962]. By ALEKSANDR STEPANOVICH BALEZIN. Moscow: Nauka Publishing House, 1986. Pp. 279.

These two books were published at the very beginning of the *glasnost* era in the Soviet Union, and were presumably written in the last years of the Brezhnev regime, nowadays characterized as the period of stagnation. Since then, dramatic changes have been taking place on the Soviet academic scene, as indeed in the rest of Soviet society. These have included a strong tendency to reject theoretical

concerns in favour of an almost entirely empiricist approach, as well as the dismissal of earlier Soviet work on Africa – in vigorous and occasionally abusive terms – by some of the very people originally involved in its production. Nevertheless, Irina Filatova's work on Kenya is of interest not only as an acceptable synthetic account of its subject but also, perhaps, as a precursor of whatever kind of Soviet historiography may emerge from the new conditions of academic production.

Filatova's book is part of a monograph series, 'The History of African Countries', and it is published under the joint auspices of the Africa Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. and the Institute of Asian and African Countries of Moscow State University. It comes to us, therefore, with the imprimatur of the two major centres of African studies in the U.S.S.R., and is (or was) clearly intended as a 'definitive' account for the Russian reader. Since the publication of this book, Filatova has emerged as an important public figure in Soviet African studies, taking part in initiatives connected with the regional crisis in southern Africa. She participated in the Leverkusen meeting, in West Germany, between delegations from inside South Africa, from the A.N.C., and from the Soviet Union. In December 1989 she accompanied Professor Apollon Davidson, a senior Soviet historian of southern Africa, on a visit to Johannesburg and Cape Town, when he addressed the delegates to the Congress for a Democratic Future. This was the first visit by Soviet academics to South Africa.

Filatova's history of Kenya was well received in the Soviet Union, and was seen in some quarters as representing a break with the highly formulaic application of a dogmatic Marxism to African history which had characterized so much earlier Soviet work. Certain peculiarities of the pre-*glasnost* era are still evident: not only quotations from Marx and Lenin but a somewhat uncritical use of categories drawn from old-fashioned anthropology, and a strictly chronological, rather than thematic, approach to narrative history. It must also be noted that the only archives consulted were the Central State Archive of Military History in Moscow, and the Zentrales Staatsarchiv der D.D.R. Nonetheless, Filatova draws on a wide range of published sources, primary as well as secondary; and not only records of official and unofficial institutions and individuals but also the British, Kenyan and U.S. press: indeed, like other Soviet scholars, she seems to take British newsletters on Africa more seriously than they warrant.

The first quarter of the book is really an extended introduction: it reviews the settlement of the interior and coast, pre-colonial political economies and social institutions, and the growth of colonial penetration, from the Portuguese to the British. Thereafter, Filatova examines the impact of settler agriculture on African social formations and the emergence of organized anti-colonial resistance between the wars. She emphasizes the crisis in the colonial system after the Second World War, but gives only ten pages to Mau Mau. The last two chapters offer a pessimistic analysis of independent Kenya. The author observes that according to the 1979 census half the population of 15 million were under fifteen; 'in the mid-1980s, these youths will begin to fill up the ranks of the unemployed and the landless – and then the crisis will explode with full force' (p. 347).

Balezin's study of Uganda is chiefly based on work by Western and African scholars, but he also uses papers of Carl Peters and Emin Pasha in the D.D.R. archives.