

An Introduction to African History

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Preface

The primary aim in collecting together these chapters covering the African experience from antiquity to the present, and presenting them in this manner, has been to provide a basis for group discussion classes in secondary schools and, indeed, in the 8-4-4 university curricula. The general reader, nevertheless, who wishes to learn the living ideas of the late Kenyan eminent historians and educators, Matthias Ogutu and Simon Kenyanchui, should also find this form of presentation valuable. The choice of the authors' works for consideration hardly needs a justification here : their topics on the African history have an undeniable perennial interest, and their clarity of expression and honest arguments should be an excellent example of the way such topics should be treated. It is no disadvantage in a book of this kind that their views are provocative and controversial, for it aims precisely at provoking thought and discussion.

Chapter one of this book presents a synopsis of the sources of the African history, followed by a selection of sixteen chapters. Each of these chapters begins with a short introduction unifying them by indicating connecting links. As stated earlier, this book discusses salient points of intellectual controversy and provocation. For many years a number of scholars in the-so-called developed world believed and argued vehemently that the African has no history. No wonder, for many years during the colonial era most historical books on Africa only gave historical accounts of the events of the white people in Africa. The authors have negated this myth by lucidly giving a full account of the African existential reality from antiquity through the Medieval Civilisations of Africa, Africa Traditional Economies, Spread of Christianity and Islam in Africa, African Reaction to Colonial Rule, the Rise of Nationalism, Decolonisation of Africa, Wars of Liberation in Africa and finally The Independent Africa. The book is appropriately referenced with Bibliography and Index.

This preface would be incomplete without adding that I personally interacted with the late Professor Matthias A. Ogutu who until his death was Professor of History and Dean of the School of Social, Cultural and Development Studies at Moi University. Dr. Simon Shikuku Kenyanchui was Lecturer of History and Chairman of the Department of History and Government in the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Nairobi. May the Lord keep their souls in eternal peace as we continue to discuss their well articulated historical ideas.

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