

[PDF] The Fate Of Africa: From The Hopes Of Freedom To The Heart Of Despair

Martin Meredith - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: The Fate of Africa: From the

Author: Martin Meredith

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Starred Review. The value of Meredith's towering history of modern Africa rests not so much in its incisive analysis, or its original insights; it is the sheer readability of the project, combined with a notable lack of pedantry, that makes it one of the decade's most important works on Africa. Spanning the entire continent, and covering the major upheavals more or less chronologically—from the promising era of independence to the most recent spate of infamies (Rwanda, Darfur, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Sierra Leone)—Meredith (*In the Name of Apartheid*) brings us on a journey that is as illuminating as it is grueling. The best chapters, not surprisingly, deal with the countries that Meredith knows intimately: South Africa and Zimbabwe; he is less convincing when discussing the francophone West African states. Nowhere is Meredith more effective than

when he gives free rein to his biographer's instincts, carefully building up the heroic foundations of national monuments like Nasser, Nkrumah, and Haile Selassie—only to thoroughly demolish those selfsame mythical edifices in later chapters. In an early chapter dealing with Biafra and the Nigerian civil war, Meredith paints a truly horrifying picture, where opportunities are invariably squandered, and ethnically motivated killings and predatory opportunism combine to create an infernal downward spiral of suffering and mayhem (which Western intervention only serves to aggravate). His point is simply that power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely—which is why the rare exceptions to that rule (Senghor and Mandela chief among them) are all the more remarkable. Whether or not his pessimism about the continent's future is fully warranted, Meredith's history provides a gripping digest of the endemic woes confronting the cradle of humanity. *(July)*
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From **Starred Review** When the decolonization of European empires in Africa began 50 years ago, the process was greeted with jubilation and immense hope for the future. Blessed with bountiful natural resources and led by Western-educated elites, the continent seemed to have a realistic chance to create stable, prosperous, democratic societies. Why did it all go wrong, and can it be made right? Meredith is a journalist, biographer, and historian who has written extensively on modern African history. His massive but very readable examination of African history over the past century unfolds like a drawn-out tragedy. Of course, the arrogance and ignorance of European masters planted the seeds of many of Africa's current problems. But Meredith refuses to let Africans off the hook for the endemic violence, corruption, and political repression that plague so many African states. While he pays tribute to icons like Mandela and Senghor, his contempt for the venality and worship of power that has characterized so many leaders from Nasser to Mugabe is palatable and justified by extensive documentation. One hopes for shreds of optimism for the future, but Meredith remains skeptical. This is a brilliant and vitally important work for all who wish to understand Africa and its beleaguered people. *Jay Freeman*
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