

Overall, though, this is an exceptionally fine book. It is already prompting debate (see, for example, an extended discussion by André Wiesner in the November 2003 issue of the journal *Pretexts*). It would be very good to see the publication of a South African edition.

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**A History of the University College of Fort Hare, South Africa, the 1950s: The waiting years**, Studies in Local and Institutional History, volume 4, by Donovan Williams. New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001. viii + 628 pp. £89.95 hardback. ISBN 0-7734-7398-X (cloth). Foreword by Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene.

Fort Hare has become something of a symbol of modern African nationalism, priding itself on its illustrious alumni which include many of the great names of the modern black elite in southern Africa. During most of the apartheid years, however, it stood as a symbol of discrimination for Africans, providing a very small fraction of them with university education of doubtful standards. The paradox of this becomes easier to understand, when it is considered that Fort Hare had its origins in the liberal missionary tradition, with all its ambiguities, and that its graduates included later homeland leaders and nationalist politicians, functionaries of segregationist and colonial states, as well as major African political and cultural leaders.

For many years, Fort Hare was the only institution in eastern, central and southern Africa to provide higher education to Africans. Among those who later became prominent in the field of politics, for instance, are Robert Mugabe, Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki, Robert Sobukwe, Kaizer Matanzima and Mangosuthu Buthelezi. With older roots than the educational site of Lovedale under missionary auspices, the South African Native College was founded in 1916, as the first college instituted for the higher education of black people in southern Africa and linked to the University of South Africa. In 1951, it was affiliated with Rhodes University and renamed the University College of Fort Hare. In 1959/60, as part of the Nationalist government's project to control Africans by dividing them ethnically, Fort Hare was brought under the Ministry of Bantu Education, as a college for Xhosa students, leading to the dismissal of some staff members and the resignation of others. As a result of the introduction of university apartheid, it became one of four segregated 'ethnic' colleges (not counting later homeland universities). Nominally autonomous in 1970, Fort Hare entered a dark period first under South African government control and then under the puppet Ciskei homeland regime. It began to emerge from this system in the early 1990s, though the scars from this period are still evident. Because of the latest wave of mergers, Fort Hare is again developing close links to Rhodes University.

Considering the importance of Fort Hare for black South African history, its historiography is remarkably underdeveloped, as documented by Sean Morrow in his article from 2000, on the records of the University of Fort Hare. The nearest to a general history has so far been Alexander Kerr's memoirs published in 1968. Kerr, the principal of Fort Hare from its foundation until he retired in 1948, was a crucial figure in the development of the college, but his book is a somewhat disappointing institutional history. A few other studies of particular themes exist from this period, such as Beard's essay on student life at Fort Hare. More recent works like David H. Anthony's describe his career at Fort Hare from 1922 to 1936. D. E. Burchell has thrown light on aspects of Fort Hare in the 1940s and 1950s. F. R. H. White has

looked at the educational ideas of Z. K. Matthews. Beale has discussed the 1960s at Fort Hare, when the apartheid government took the university firmly in its grip. Later, works by Cynthia Kros, Zolani Ngwane, Monica Wilson and others have more or less indirectly dealt with Fort Hare issues. Further titles can be found in Williams's impressive bibliographical essay.

Donovan Williams has written a solid and thorough book based on sound sources and critical principles. He worked at Fort Hare from 1952 to 1959, first as a lecturer and later as professor and head of the department of history. Williams's book explains the situation in the 1950s, examining how staff and students opposed the legislation to place the college under government control and transform its staff to obedient apartheid civil servants. Campus disturbances and protests are linked to the wider application of apartheid. This is an insider's closely-observed record of the fateful 1950s at Fort Hare, a most dramatic decade, featuring the successive crises of, firstly, its startling self-closure in 1955 and, secondly, its forcible conversion into a tribal college and a government-controlled department answerable to the Minister of Bantu Education in 1959. As a faculty member, Williams's intimate observations include a critical correspondence with the late Professor Arthur Keppel-Jones and are further enriched by Williams's ability to draw on minutes of the Fort Hare Senate and of the detailed deliberations of the students' Representative Council. He complements this material with interviews with former staff and students of Fort Hare.

Williams deploys a nuanced pluralist approach. Black lecturers are not seen as a monolithic group, and the whites are analyzed into such cliques as confrontational English-speaking liberals determined to take the fight into parliament, a middle pragmatic 'group of 14', and an old guard committed strictly to rather authoritarian missionary values: a constellation which eventually led to a breakdown of confidence by the students. For Williams, discipline was an Achilles' heel of Fort Hare, often because it was administered by a visible white administration and thus obviously subject to the interpretation of 'oppression'. We learn, too, of the not always ideal relationship with Rhodes University, of the rapid exodus of English-speaking staff and their replacement by Afrikaans-speakers, and of the centrality of campus life. Many chapters are strong on personalities, representing veritable portrait galleries.

The book is to a large degree a personal journey, reflecting the author's own experiences. Obviously, no one who lived through the 1950s at Fort Hare could record what happened there without emotion and involvement. It is obvious that the uneasy fifties at 'The Fort' forged enduring relationships, probably unequalled in the history of education in South Africa. Even with its limitations, Williams's book will stand as an important source for studies concerned with the development of the black middle class in South Africa and in British-influenced southern Africa, in general. Together with the still unresearched parts of the Fort Hare archives, it has the potential to throw light on aspects of many individual careers, on government policies in this century towards black higher education, as well as on the attitudes and influence of liberal and church groups in South Africa.

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**Honour in African History**, by John Iliffe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 430 pp. £16.99 paperback. ISBN 0521546850 (paperback).

This is a typical John Iliffe book — which is to say that it is very unusual indeed. There is an even more extraordinarily far-ranging list of secondary reading than