

February 2014

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Recommended Citation

Nnoromele, Salome C.. "Review of Allina, Eric. *Slavery by Any Other Name: African Life under Company Rule in Colonial Mozambique*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012, xiii + 255 pp.." *Journal of Retracing Africa*: Vol. 1, Issue 1 (2014): 55-58. <https://encompass.eku.edu/jora/vol1/iss1/8>

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In *Slavery by Any Other Name*, Eric Allina gives an impressive account of life in Mozambique during the time of its colonization by Portugal. Mozambique is historically significant largely because it had the most extensive as well as the longest Portuguese colonial presence in Africa. Allina's argument that the Mozambican colonial experience was not fundamentally different from that which had prevailed elsewhere in colonial Africa pales in the face of the magnitude, length, and dominance of the conscripted or forced labor system adopted by the Portuguese administration, especially in the Manica and Sofala territories. Allina uses official documents and records from the long-lost and unexplored colonial archive as well as interviews from more than one hundred surviving Mozambicans to gain an understanding of both the process and consequences of colonization and forced labor for Mozambique. These documents reveal the depth of colonial brutality, the ideologies that informed the Portuguese colonial attitude towards Africans, the complex and calculated process through which company officials and colonial administrators negotiated and sustained colonial policies, the impact of forced labor on African lives and the various strategies Africans used to subvert colonial policies.

The book is divided into eight chapters, with substantial introductory and concluding chapters. The chapters offer progressive accounts of the substance and length of the colonial servitude imposed upon the Mozambicans, which Allina unequivocally defines as enslavement for the benefit of the white settler populations who required both local knowledge of agriculture and labor to farm and sustain the cultivation of maize and, then cotton, and also hut taxes from the inhabitants of the region to fund the colonial administration. Allina argues that while slave masters in South Carolina's rice plantations or Jamaica's sugar plantations were unpretentious about their slave dealing enterprise, colonial officials in Mozambique "camouflaged their coercion of Africans behind the legal fiction of 'contracts'...The Portuguese administrators who oversaw subcontracted slave labor claimed that compelling Africans to work [for the benefit of empire], 'by force if necessary,' would improve their moral and material well-being" (6).

Chapter one traces the history of Portugal's settlement in southeast Africa, heralded by the arrival of Vasco da Gama and his crew on the east coast of Africa in 1498, on their way to India. By the end of the sixteenth century, Portugal had shifted its attention to the interiors of south-central Africa, famed for its abundance

of gold. Although met with malaria and fierce resistance by the locals, by mid-nineteenth century, Portugal would succeed in establishing its colonial stronghold in Mozambique, clothed in its two-pronged rhetoric of “suppressing slavery” in the African hinterlands and “civilizing the blacks.” For Portugal, this process of “civilizing Africans” was conducted through forced or conscripted labor. As the author notes, “Africans in Mozambique—and, indeed, all ‘natives’ throughout the Portuguese empire—were required to work for a period of time required by local authorities” (33). “Work” for the African was defined as forced labor in vast estates owned by white farmers for little or no pay for a period of six out of twelve months, with inadequate shelter, insufficient food, and little or no medical care.

Chapter two documents the vastness and brutality of the forced labor practices in Mozambique during the colonial period. According to Allina, “the territory’s enormous demand for African labor, employers’ unwillingness to pay wages sufficient to draw voluntary workers, the company’s political and financial investment in the concession-holder’s success, and the near-total autonomy of local administrators all meant that there was little to stand in the way of pervasive enslavement of the African population” (47). And, contrary to the colonial rhetoric of forced work as needed to improve and advance Africans, many reports point to the opposite effect. The inhumane treatment of the Mozambicans led to the death of many, as well as the impoverishment of African communities deprived of much needed labor since their most abled and skilled men were conscripted to work for the colonial government and Portuguese owned farms, even during the planting seasons.

In Chapter three, Allina documents the failure of the League of Nations to effectively address the question of contract or forced labor (slavery) when the issue was brought before it during the early part of the twentieth century. Neither the 1924 nor the 1930 Convention of Slavery succeeded in curtailing forced or slave labor, primarily because those charged with evaluating the question and drafting the resolutions consisted of colonial agents who themselves were well aware of European reliance on forced labor in colonial Africa and, hence, were unwilling to oppose it. Chapters four and five deftly tackle the challenges of forced labor and the various tactics employed by locals to subvert and circumvent colonial policies of enslaving Africans in their own homelands. Tactics included “melting” or disappearing into the hills, flights and border crossings. Since these strategies resulted in the loss of labor and tax revenues for the colonial government, the Portuguese countered by instituting laws and practices to limit freedom of movement and other forms of resistance. Offenders received punishment that ranged from brutal flogging to unpaid forced correctional labor for up to forty years. Rebellions were squelched decisively and with terrorizing force. Services

of chiefs in recruiting and maintaining conscripted labor were obtained either through force, intimidation, or voluntary compliance due to fear of reprisal.

In chapters six, seven, and eight, Allina traces the political and social impact of forced servitude on African lives in the Mozambique. Forced labor did not only relegate Africans to the positions of slaves in their own country, but it also effectively thwarted the precolonial political relations that had existed in the communities. The heavy reliance on able men for conscription undermined traditional respect for elders who were now deemed “weak” and “useless” in their customary role as protectors of the youth and the community. The tendency of older men to offer up their young in order to avoid slavery severely damaged the communal system of support by which elders nurtured and groomed the youth, and the youth respected the elders in return. If the elders lacked integrity to protect the youth, the youth felt they could no longer rely on the elders to protect them.

The narrative Allina provides in *Slavery by Any Other Name* is a bit redundant, and the focus of the book is rather narrow. Exploring primarily how official documents illuminate the complex ideologies and influences that initiated and helped sustain Portugal’s extensive forced labor systems in Africa, the book neglects to examine the roles Africans played in helping to extricate themselves from the clutches of colonial slavery and exploitation. Allina does suggest that an essential aspect of the narrative is its inclusion of African voices and reflections on their experiences. But, those perspectives focus largely on general disgust for forced labor, complaints, and strategies used to withstand oppression. The narrative fails to address the nature, extent and roles played by the nationalistic movements that eventually won independence for Mozambique in 1975, and, hence, effectively ended Portuguese direct rule and the forced labor system. Additionally, the book’s concluding chapter raises more questions than it addresses. The chapter offers cursory mention of the role of the Christian missionaries in colonial Mozambique as well as the negative impact of colonial legacies on post-independence Mozambique’s economic and political policies and practices. Mentioning these pivotal topics in the conclusion, without adequate examination, is problematic. For instance, it is never clear if the missionaries had been there all along during the colonial regime, serving as both agents and critiques of empire, or if they became a later introduction as Portuguese colonial rule began to wane in the 1960s and 1970s.

Nonetheless, despite its weaknesses, *Slavery by Any Other Name* is useful in placing the story of Mozambique within the larger framework of African colonial history. In spite of the substantial existing scholarship on the European colonization of the African continent, the depth and extent of the phenomenon and its impact on the African experience are yet to be fully explored or understood. This

book draws attention to that fact. The recovery of the Mozambique's Company's colonial archives might also prove useful, as Allina suggests, in assisting scholars to uncover the relatively still unknown biographies of the men who helped perpetrate such atrocities on Africa and its peoples, and their larger role in Africa's colonial history.

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