illustrates only too well the scale and deep-rooted nature of the problem (although the material is almost exclusively limited to just four countries: Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana and DRC). But Mbaku's practical solutions for tackling corruption are unconvincing. True, liberalisation of the market *should* eliminate bureaucrats from many of the discretionary decisions and active rent-seeking; true, constitutions that are written by all the people *ought* to remove elite privilege; true decentralisation *should* bring decision makers closer to the people and make them more accountable. But whether these new arrangements will actually make a significant difference is doubtful.

The book offers a good, if unduly repetitious, summary of the debates concerning the causes and cures of corruption, with a very comprehensive bibliography, but for remedies it is as disappointing as *Corruption and Democracy*. Would either the structural or the administrative approach have stopped Abacha's family seizing £2.7 billion from Nigeria's public funds; or have stopped Major-General Salim Salem of Uganda using a privatised bank over which he had influence, lending money to firms he partly owned; or have stopped the custom official demanding a payment off me to facilitate my departure from the airport?

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Post-Conflict Eritrea: prospects for reconstruction and development edited by MARTIN DOORNBOS and ALEMSEGED TESFAI
Lawrenceville, NJ and Asmara: Red Sea Press, 1999. Pp. xii + 362. $21.95 (pbk).

This book is a collection of essays on post-1991 Eritrea, prepared in the context of the 1995–98 'War-torn Societies' project (WSP), set up by UNRISD and the Graduate Institute of International Relations in Geneva. This interesting and ambitious project studied three other countries besides Eritrea, and was meant to produce new ideas and information for international and donor-country policy on reconstruction and development in such societies. (Although Eritrea was not seen as 'war-torn' in the accepted sense, it was a post-conflict society detached from another state after a successful war of secession.) As the director of WSP says in his Preface, in the early nineties hopes for peaceful post-conflict development were high but were dashed in subsequent years (e.g. Angola, Cambodia, Somalia). Doornbos and Alemseged finalised their editing just before and during the outbreak of the Eritrean–Ethiopian armed conflict in May 1998, a turn of events which provided a sad illustration of the insecure future of these war-torn societies.

The eight chapters deal with a variety of issues: the programme of reconstruction and development; social integration of ex-combatants and returnees; infrastructure; food security; and human resources development. There is a wealth of relevant data and statistics. The book offers essential material for an informed debate on the challenges of independent Eritrea. The parameters of that debate are clearly set out in Doornbos's introductory chapter, where also the aims and operational structure of the WSP and the

peculiar background of today's Eritrea are discussed. A long and interesting chapter by Alemseged discusses issues of governance in Eritrea. The final chapter is an overview of the research findings for Eritrea of the WSP Project, also by Alemseged. The authors of this book are all Eritrean scholars and administrators, except Doornbos. The latter notes some of his initial reserve (pp. 15–16) when in the early phase of the project the Eritrean counterpart (a Ministry) came up only with government officials as potential contributors to the WSP. The 'neutral space' that the director in his Preface (p. xi) hoped for was thus not entirely realised, because these officials could not be considered as independent researchers. This reflected Eritrea's commendable aim to be independent of external prescriptions and agencies ('national ownership' as Doornbos says, p. 24), but it may have carried the danger of 'ideologising' and co-opting the issues at hand.

The answer to the query implied by subtitle of the book – *Prospects* for Reconstruction and Development – is probably: not good. Not only because of the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia that started in May 1998, but also because of an authoritarian political system that sees development and reconstruction largely as a top-down project (cf. K. Tronvoll, 'The process of nation-building in post-war Eritrea: created from below or directed from above?', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 36 (1998): 461–82) and contains disappointingly few democratic elements and little respect for local social and cultural diversity. The chapters in this book nevertheless sketch some of the core elements that might have helped Eritrea in building a more peaceful and developed society. The country had made a promising head-start in 1991, without the burden of a national debt and amidst widespread enthusiasm. But by what can only be seen as a miscalculation it became engaged in the destructive war with Ethiopia the effects of which on local society – in terms of loss of young people, economic and environmental destruction, and the emergence of hatred – will be felt for a very long time. In the past two years the programmes and prospects set out in this volume have been seriously affected by it.

This is one of the reasons why one has to disagree with those who think that the outburst of the Eritrean–Ethiopian conflict itself does not have a direct bearing on the issues discussed in this book. That regimes revert to the option of using force is a sign of malgovernance, and one that impacts on other areas of national policy. Another reason is the apparent nature of Eritrean governance itself: too authoritarian, top-down, monolithic, and with an overgrown repressive apparatus – a general problem in Africa. Development and reconstruction policy should also be implemented in closer conjunction with the population itself, taking account of their perceived needs and social and cultural rights. In this context it is not clear that the 'participatory' aspects that ranked high in the program of the WSP (cf. pp. 3, 5) were fully realised in the Eritrean context: in the book there is little talk about or assessment of the views and needs of the various local communities in the country, what attempts, if any, were made to find out what these are, and how exactly these communities were 'in dialogue' with the project and the parties involved.

A review cannot deal with the contents of all the chapters, but it is clear that

much in them is very instructive and will retain its value. Reading them now nevertheless creates a sense of deception, realising what has been put in danger by a war the magnitude and disastrous effects of which are seriously underestimated. It is to be hoped that the insights and lessons of the WSP as laid down in this book will be taken up again very soon, with the appropriate policy adjustments. The material in this book can very well serve as a base for a real dialogue about future development policy and practice in Eritrea.

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Die beiden deutschen Staaten in Afrika: Zwischen Konkurrenz und Koexistens 1949–1990 (The two German states in Africa: between competition and co-existence, 1949–1990) by ULF ENGEL and HANS-GEORG SCHLEICHER
Hamburg: Institut fur Afrika-Kunde, 1998. Pp. 463. Pb. no price given.

In many respects, Ulf Engel and Hans-Georg Schleicher have written a remarkable book. In spite of the fact that 'Germany' for a number of years has been among the top four donors af development aid, German aid policy and German Africa policy have attracted very little interest from German and other scholars. Solely for that reason, it is an important book. The German case is both unique and of special interest because of the historical split between the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic. Therefore, it is necessary to talk about two German Africa policies, from around 1949 until the fall of the Berlin Wall. One of the two authors, Hans-Georg Schleicher, has special qualifications for contributing to the understanding of the Africa policy of the GDR as he was in the diplomatic service of the communist regime from 1969 to 1990. During these years, he was ambassador to Zimbabwe in 1983–88, and in 1989–90 he was the head of the diplomatic mission of the GDR in Namibia.

It is a central argument throughout the book that Africa was only of minor interest to the FRG, which is largely to be explained by the insignificant economic and security interests of the Bonn government in the continent. Therefore, for most of the period 1949–90 the Africa policy of the FRG was equivalent to its development aid policy. In this context, it is worth noting that the development policy was heavily influenced by French priorities due to the high priority in those days of having close relations with France – and with other leading Western powers.

Only in the period 1959–72 was the relationship (or lack of such) with the GDR important as a determinant for Bonn's Africa policy. In this period, Bonn deliberately used aid and promises of aid as an instrument in its policy with the clear aim of limiting the recognition of the Berlin government. Also, in the context of the Cold War, the FRG was looking for 'friends' in Africa, among other things in order to create a 'vote block' in the United Nations. These combined feelings of guilt and inferiority started to change when Willy Brandt became chancellor in 1969.

The foreign policy shift which started with Brandt did not affect the Africa policy of the FRG, which continued to be influenced by what Bonn thought were the expectations of its Western friends. During the 1970s, a number of very weak domestic interest groups including government institutions came into existence. Due to the almost insignificant German economic interests in the continent, formulation and implementation of Germany's Africa policy more and more became the field of responsibility of the Ministry for Development aid (the 'BMZ') leaving the Africa policy of the FRG as a battleground of institutions and groups which were highly influenced by moral and ethical considerations.

It is no surprise that the Africa policy of the Democratic Republic was strongly influenced by the ideology of peaceful coexistence and 'anti-imperialistic solidarity'. Within this political-ideological framework, the relationship with the Soviet Union was the determining factor. Therefore, the GDR very soon started to support the 'national liberation movements' in Africa starting with Algeria in 1954 and Egypt in 1956. However, this activist policy lasted only until the international diplomatic recognition of the communist government in Berlin. Thus, after 1972–73 Africa lost its significance in the overall 'international class struggle' and in the 'anti-imperialist struggle', due to the importance of promoting peace and stability in Europe. Also, the 1970s experienced a shift in the main focus of the international class struggle away from Africa and towards the Middle East, Vietnam and Chile.

In spite of the fact that the title of the book signals that the analysis stops in 1990, the two authors fortunately add a final chapter discussing the perspective of German Africa policy after unification. The first foreign policy goal of the united Germany was and still is 'to continue the European integration process', including to 'integrate the former communist states in the political and security architecture of the West'. Within this set of priorities, Africa almost disappears from the foreign policy agenda. It is indicated by the continuing fall of the German ODA/GNP and by the reduction in development aid within the overall Federal budget. This low priority means that German Africa policy to a very large extent lacks an independent profile. Instead, it follows the guidelines on political conditionalities and economic reforms which are formulated first by the two Washington institutions and secondly by the EU. Thus, the current Africa policy of Germany is marked by a high degree of continuity which is founded on the limited German interests in the continent.

Engel and Schleicher have written an interesting and very informative book. It certainly fills a gap in our knowledge of one of the biggest Western powers. It covers both the foreign policy issues as well as the domestic actors influencing the Africa policy of Bonn and now Berlin. Though it is no surprise, it certainly is depressing to learn what a limited space Africa has on the political agenda of one of the most affluent countries in the world. For those interested in such issues, they can find a wealth of information in this book which is very well researched and also has a clear line of argument. However, it is a pity that it is written in German, which limits its readership.

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