Power and Nationalism in Modern Africa

*Essays in Honor of Don Ohadike*
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Simon Ottenberg is an Emeritus Professor who taught at the University of Washington 1955–1991 and has conducted extensive anthropological research among the Igbo of southeastern Nigeria and the Limba of northern Sierra Leone. He is the author of four books on the Igbo of Afikpo, and another Igbo tome on the colonial history of Abakaliki. He curated an exhibition of seven contemporary artists trained or associated with the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, at the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, wrote the accompanying text, and edited the related two-day seminar. His selected essays and articles have been published in two volumes by Africa World Press, edited by Toyin Falola.

Adam Paddock is currently a PhD student at the University of Texas at Austin in the history department. He received a BA in History from Mansfield University of Pennsylvania in 2006 where he was nominated for the MU outstanding senior award. Adam is interested in social and economic history in Nigeria and is focused on women’s resistance and child labor during the colonial period.

Carina Ray is Assistant Professor in the Department of History at Fordham University. She received her PhD in African History from Cornell University in 2007. Her current book project, Policing Sexual Boundaries: The Politics of Race in Colonial Ghana, focuses on the intersection between the racial and sexual politics of colonial rule in the Gold Coast. Specifically, her work theorizes the domain of interracial sexual relations in the Gold Coast as a space in which racial, administrative, gendered, and indigenous hierarchies were being constructed, contested, and reordered by a broad range of social actors, both African and European. Professor Ray is also the author of “Tales from the Archives,” a monthly column in New African magazine.

Ahmad Sikainga is a Professor in the Department of History at Ohio State University. He received his BA and MA from Khartoum University (Sudan) and his PhD from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Professor Sikainga’s area of expertise is African and economic social history, with a focus on slavery, emancipation, labor, and urban history. The geographical focus of his research is Sudan, the Nile Valley, and North Africa. His publications include: Sudan Defence Force: Origin and Role, 1925–1955 (1983), Western Bahr al-Ghazal Under British Rule, 1898–1956 (Ohio University Press, 1991), Slaves into Workers: Emancipation and Labor in Colonial Sudan (University of Texas Press, 1996), City of Steel and Fire: A Social History of Atbara, Sudan’s Railway Town, 1906–1984 (Heinemann, 2002) and several articles. He coedited Civil War in the Sudan, 1983–1989 (1993). His most recent publication is a coedited book titled Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Africa (Africa World Press, 2006). In 1991–92, Professor Sikainga was a Mellon Fellow at Harvard University and in 1996–97 he was a Fulbright Scholar in Morocco. His current research examines the role of slavery, ethnicity, and identity in the development of popular culture in contemporary Sudan.

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Preface and Acknowledgments

This book grew out of a symposium in honor of the memory of Professor Don Ohadike. Held at Cornell University, Ithaca, from September 22 to 23, 2006, the symposium attracted an international cast of speakers. The main goal was to provide a forum for intellectual exchange around the theme of “Nationalism and Power in Modern Africa” with Africa here viewed as a global presence and not just a mere geographic entity or locale. The symposium explored the trajectories that defined the interest and scholarship of Professor Don Ohadike. These include: “Colonial Order and Resistance in Africa,” and the understanding of Colonial rule in Africa in general and in Nigeria in particular, focusing on the nature of change and of agencies within a comparative perspective; “Diaspora Africans and Nationalism” dwelling on issues of global blackness; how it was framed, articulated, and expressed over time; and “Question of Modernity and Africa and its Diaspora,” interrogating African modernity and how it is constructed and articulated in comparison to other modernities including Western modernity.

The symposium and the book that emanated from it could not have been possible without the enthusiasm and efforts of many colleagues and departments. We acknowledge all the goodwill and hard work of many people and individuals who made the symposium a reality. We would like to acknowledge with gratitude the generous support from the Provost’s office for the symposium, and to thank Provost Biddy Martin for her enthusiasm for the idea from the moment of its inception, and for her unwavering support of the Africana Studies and Research Center. We are also grateful to the main cosponsors of this project, The Institute for African Development and its Director Professor Muna Ndulo, The Society for the Humanities, and to its Director Professor Brett de Bary, for her consistent support of activities in Africana Studies and Research Center. Our appreciation also go to Tim Murray, Director of the Rose Goldsen Fund, and to Professor Victor Koschmann, the Chair of the Department of History for their generous support of the symposium.

We would also like to thank all our colleagues in Africana Studies and Research Center for their enthusiasm and hard work behind the scenes to make the symposium a reality. It is also with gratitude that we acknowledge the hard work and efforts of the organizing committee in Africana, our colleagues Professors Robert Harris, N’Dri Assie-Lumumba, Abdul Nanji, and Ayele Bekerie. The utmost gratitude goes to Eric Acree, the chief librarian of the John Henrick Clarke Africana Library for preparing an exhibition and an extensive bibliography of the works of Don Ohadike and for providing videotaping documentation of the symposium as he does consistently with all events at the Africana Center.

Working with the staff of Africana, Cindy Telage, Sheila Towner, Judy Holley, and with Denine Kirby and Kim Cornish have been a delightful experience. They maintained their “cool” throughout a very stressful process, and very last-minute request or
demands. We are also grateful to Ken Glover for rallying students to help in the symposium in many ways; to Jamicia Lacky for volunteering to videotape our deliberations throughout the two days of the symposium; and to Ramez Elias, who provided a wonderful design of posters, symposium program, and its Web site.

Our utmost appreciation goes to our guest speakers—presenters, moderators, and discussants—for taking the time (from what we are sure are very busy schedules) to write papers, or contribute commentaries on the papers. We also appreciate the time they took to travel to Ithaca to be part of the symposium. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the presence at the symposium of Don Ohadike’s family: his two daughters, Ophelia Ohadike of Washington, D.C., and Sandra Ohadike, of Silver Springs, Maryland, and his son, James Ohadike, of Jersey City, New Jersey, and his wife Veronica Ohadike, and grandchildren.

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