

emphasising the combination of army discontent over the continued war in the north with widespread economic failure throughout the rest of the country as key factors, his analysis is necessarily constrained by limitations of space and, to some degree, lack of access to information. The latter is evident in his apparent dependence on a sole source of reference (various issues of *Africa Confidential*), which nevertheless highlight the re-entry of the United States to Ethiopian affairs as broker of various bi-partisan talks.

The final third of the book is consequently somewhat unbalanced, with coverage of the 1980s confined largely to constitutional issues (chapter 10), a conclusion (chapter 11) in which he returns again to the causes of the revolution, and a postscript which indicates the main factors involved in Mengistu's eventual fall from power. His reference in the latter, moreover, to the possible 'disintegration of one of the oldest sovereign states in the world outside Europe and the Americas' (p. 365) is indicative of a tendency, recurring throughout the book, to indulge in question-begging generalisations, which might have been better edited out.

Despite the rather misleading claim by the publishers that *The Ethiopian Revolution, 1974-1987* is 'the first sequential exposition of events, and thus of the history of the revolution', and that the author is 'the first Ethiopian national to write a book on this subject', readers may be disappointed that Andargachew Tiruneh has added so little to what is already known about the early years of the revolution apart from some new insights into the student movements of the time, and has not incorporated a wider social analysis into his account of the later period.

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**FIS de la haine** by RACHID BOUDJEDRA

Paris, Editions Denoël, 1992. Pp. 141. FF69.00 paperback.

**De la Barbarie en général et de l'intégrisme en particulier** by RACHID MIMOUNI

Paris, Le Pré aux Clercs-Belfond, 1992. Pp. 173. FF98.

The first genuinely free legislative elections since Algeria's independence in 1962 were held on 26 December 1991. The first ballot was won by the *Front Islamique du Salut* (F.I.S.), the main beneficiary of a democratic process that theoretically ended 30 years of single-party rule by the war-time liberation movement, the *Front de libération nationale* (F.L.N.). Had the second ballot, scheduled for 16 January 1992, not been interrupted by the military five days earlier, Algeria would now be run by an Islamist régime and an *assemblée nationale* composed overwhelmingly of Islamists. The army's action was condemned by many intellectuals and so-called democrats in the country and elsewhere, as well as by governments and media in the West, for they saw in the suspension of these elections an end to the democratic process itself. They have argued that had the F.I.S. come to power, it would have proved

incapable of fulfilling the electorate's expectations and would have lost its popularity after a few years, thus putting an end to its reign, and even making Algerians aware of the necessity of separating religion from politics.

Two prominent figures of Algerian literature in both French and Arabic, Rachid Boudjedra and Rachid Mimouni, welcomed the military's intervention, which they perceived as salvation for the country. Both rejected the arguments expounded by those who favoured the continuation of the electoral process. Despite their different approaches and temperaments, neither man shows the slightest sympathy for the Islamist movement regardless of the reasons that account for its rise. For them, radical Islamism is a historic regression, a return to barbarity, and an impediment to social, cultural, and technological progress. In their view, the F.I.S. is nothing less than a fascist movement which, like the Nazis, would accept the democratic 'game' only as a ploy to come to power and establish a totalitarian régime. Consequently, it was vital to stop its ascent.

*FIS de la haine*, an emotional, yet well-written short book whose title can also be read as 'the son [*fil*s] of hatred', is a merciless, uncompromising attack on the F.I.S. and the Islamists in general. However, the title is somewhat misleading, for Boudjedra does not limit his attack on the F.I.S.; he spares no one: the official West (governments and media), the successive Algerian régimes, intellectuals (himself included), and the population at large. In spite of his angry, resentful and, at times, abusive tone, Boudjedra makes use of history, sociology, and psycho-analysis to support his analysis, thus confirming his broad intellectual power. Hence, beneath the fiery diatribe, there are thoughtful insights about the movement and the conditions, both internal and external, which helped its advance.

*De la Barbarie en général et de l'intégrisme en particulier* provides an interesting, albeit less passionate, account of the Islamist phenomenon in Algeria. Mimouni's mastery of economics – he taught until recently at the University of Algiers – helps to give the book more analytical depth, and it won the Albert Camus prize. Further, the illustrations that he furnishes throughout reveal the obscurantism and regressive nature of the Islamist movement.

Boudjedra and Mimouni published their works only a few months apart. Their main objective was to offer an explanation for the reasons which led to the rise of radical Islamism in Algeria, and to awaken people's consciousness to its dangers as an essentially violent, anti-democratic, anti-modernist, and barbaric movement.

The F.I.S. is the *fil*s of the F.L.N. The successive Algerian régimes favoured its growth oftentimes for demagogic and political reasons. For instance, they shamelessly allowed it to take control of the mosques, on the one hand, and strengthened the national-religious trend each time they wished to oppose the left-wing of the F.L.N. and the *Parti de l'avant garde socialiste* (P.A.G.S.), on the other hand. They also called on the Islamists to counter the Berberist movement, as happened during the explosion in the Kabylia region in April 1980.

Although the F.L.N. had a record of great achievement and had tried to modernise Algeria, the organisation 'failed because it did not make the right choices... because it was authoritarian, corrupt, condescending, dictatorial,

perverted, to an unbelievable degree' (RB, p. 14). Unlike Boudjedra's somewhat more balanced view of the F.L.N. régime, especially when headed by President Houari Boumédiène, Mimouni's critique is merciless. For him, the austerity programmes imposed on the population in the name of modernisation, worsened people's conditions of living. The dislocation of the traditional structures, and the inability of the uprooted peasants to adapt in the cities, compelled them to seek salvation through religion. Boumédiène's expectation that the new proletariat would be less attached to religion once its material conditions were improved did not materialise.

Both Boudjedra and Mimouni concur, though, that Chadli Bendjedid's administration made things worse, for it was under his leadership in the 1980s that corruption had become institutionalised and social inequalities had widened. The drop in the price of oil inevitably threatened the durability of the régime. One of the consequences of the severe socio-economic problems was the social explosion of October 1988 – although Boudjedra argues that this was a 'palace' rather than a 'popular' revolution. Bendjedid's economic policies – dismantling of state enterprises, import of luxury goods and other unnecessary commodities, etcetera – had dire repercussions, the most obvious of which were the emergence of a privileged class and the impoverishment of many Algerians.

Even though Bendjedid was the President who made the biggest concessions to the Islamists, his predecessors also helped their ascent. Ahmed Ben Bella made Islam the religion of the state, whereas Boumédiène surrendered Algerian schools to 'semi-literate Egyptian fundamentalist teachers', with scant knowledge of the Koran (RB, pp. 39–40, RM, pp. 121–2). The F.I.S. leaders, except for Abassi Madani, were the products of those schools. The programmes of study there and in the universities were inadequate and favoured the rise of intolerance, opposition to art, and to practically everything that symbolised modernity.

As many as 47 per cent of all Algerians are illiterate, despite the fact that the state has been spending 30 per cent of its recurrent budget on the educational system, whose catastrophic condition has been worsened by an uncontrolled demographic growth of 3.2 per cent annually. Among the negative consequences of the phenomenal expansion of the population, Mimouni and Boudjedra cite the increase in the number of failures in schools – which helps swell the ranks of the radical Islamists, for the unemployed and semi-literate constitute the bulk of the F.I.S.'s clientele – the overcrowding of cities, the continued import of foodstuffs (about 60 per cent of Algeria's needs), the collapse of family units, the loosening of the old solidarity, and the degradation of values.

The two authors denounce what they describe as the pathological behaviour of the Islamists, especially their harsh attitude towards women. According to Boudjedra, 'Very few Islamists become sexually obsessed... They transform their sexual drive into needs for death, through which one reaches ecstasy and orgasm, by simply cancelling out the other, the object of desire, in this case the obscene and lustful female who carries all the temptations and thus all the dangers' (RB, p. 78). As Mimouni puts it, 'The woman is for the Islamists what the Jew is for Hitler; an obsessional fixation' (RM, p. 29). He devotes

many pages to the issue of women, highlighting the discrepancies between the teachings of Islam and the archaic practices of the Islamists. For Mimouni, in today's Islamic societies, men use the sacred to legitimise their privileges. 'They have superposed only those pre-existing customs, Koranic provisions, and restrictive interpretations that limit women's rights' (RM, p. 39). The 1984 Algerian Family Code falls within this scope because it attempts to reduce women to the condition of sub-humans. The culpability of the state in helping increase the power of the Islamists is therefore unmistakable.

Boudjedra and Mimouni leave no doubt as to the barbarity of the Algerian Islamists, the fascist nature of their movement, and the deceptive character of their leadership. Similarly, one cannot but wonder about the complaisant attitude adopted by the West as well as by Algerian intellectuals. Both writers present convincing explanations. For Boudjedra, the F.I.S. gained prominence thanks to the French media, fascinated by a rampant 'green' fascism, and he blasts at the official West, especially France. The latter, which never accepted its defeat in Algeria, has sought revenge through neo-colonial policies, including the concept and promotion of *la francophonie*. Boudjedra even argues that 'the FIS has been engendered by, among other things, Western contempt for the Arabic language and the dominant Arab-Islamic identity in Algeria' (RB, p. 34). He denounces without naming François Mitterrand, who advocated staunch repression against colonial peoples and had no respect for their human rights while Minister of Justice and of the Interior during the 1950s, but who presents himself today as the spearhead of human freedom. There is no doubt that France had collaborated until recently with the F.I.S., a movement that has made no secret of its aversion to democracy. Yet, this West that committed genocides now 'gives lessons in democracy to peoples torn by tribalism, misery, lack of political culture, civic illiteracy, and long colonial nights' (RB, p. 90).

For Mimouni, the West 'cared more about the disease than about the patient' (RM, p. 49). In other words, it showed no concern for the millions of Algerians opposed to the F.I.S., who would have paid a dear price in the event it had come to office – popular tribunals, execution of artists, communists, intellectuals, public stoning of 'adulterate' women, etcetera. The belief that, once in power, the Islamists, would moderate their position is simply unfounded. It is easy for 'Westerners in their comfortable chairs' to make such naïve judgements (RM, p. 154). Furthermore, Mimouni perhaps correctly rejects as fallacious the argument that one cannot compare the Iranian experience with what would have happened in Algeria because of the alleged differences between Sunni and Shi'a Islam.

In the current zeal for 'democracy', both the West and the pseudo-democrats in Algeria and elsewhere have become 'fundamentalists' by demanding the implementation of democracy at all costs, regardless of whether the conditions for its exercise are propitious (RM, p. 152). They fail to understand that it was only in order to make people accept economic de-socialisation, or liberalisation, that Bendjedid and his cohorts threw 'democracy as a bone' to the people – 'jetèrent l'os de la démocratie au peuple' (RB, p. 49). The real beneficiary, though, was the F.I.S.

Boudjedra, allegedly a Communist, and Mimouni wrote their books not

against Islam, but against the interpretations made of it by the Islamists. Although they can be criticised – Boudjedra for his often violent and disrespectful tone as well as for his contradictory assessment of Boumédiène's rule, and Mimouni for his somewhat pathetic appeal to the West – both have provided daring analyses of the Islamist movement and the dangers of fanaticism. In particular, Boudjedra's conclusion about the psycho-pathology of the F.I.S. deserves further study, for as he put it: 'Between the fire at the Reichtag in 1933 and the fire in the little apartment in Ouargla in 1989' – the outcome of the incendiary attack on the home of the widowed woman suspected of receiving male guests was that she lost her baby and received third-degree burns to her face – 'there is more than an analogy. There is the whole world of barbarity and insanity' (RB, p. 141). Whatever reservations one might have, these two books ought to be read, for they underscore not only the question of Islamism in Algeria, but also the polarisation between modernists and traditionalists and the concurrent crisis of identity which has pervaded Algerian society.

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**American Enterprise in South Africa: historical dimensions of engagement and disengagement** by RICHARD W. HULL

New York and London, New York University Press, 1990. Pp. xx + 419. \$56.50.

This well-documented study is, as claimed by the author, the first 'that focuses specifically on the full range of American activity in South Africa – missionary, social, cultural, business, and educational – from its very beginnings to the present day' (p. xiv). Although Richard Hall's lucid and fascinating survey is primarily concerned with the historical dimensions of American business 'engagement and disengagement' from the late seventeenth century to 1988, its rich substantive content also provides valuable material for students of business, economics, and political science.

*American Enterprise in South Africa: historical dimensions of engagement and disengagement* traces the involvement of the private sector of the United States in southern Africa to the arrival in Massachusetts of slave cargoes from the northwest coast of Madagascar in 1689, and thereby departs from more traditional accounts which link American slavery almost exclusively with West Africa. Hull's descriptions of New York's wealthiest slave merchants, most notably Frederick Philipse and his son Adolphus, whose profits exceeded 'several thousand pounds' per voyage (p. 4) seem timely in light of the current debate over the Afrocentric perspective which criticises American business for financing the slave trade. Yet, the author's account of the disproportionately large rôle of American enterprise, notably via its reliance on New England timber to construct slave ships and warehouses, seems historically significant regardless of whatever stance one chooses to adopt. Indeed, American involvement in the African slave trade, including the transport of slaves from as far away as Mozambique and Madagascar in the Indian Ocean, raises