(emphasizing imperial trusteeship and the protection of “native interests.”) Only later did the “collaboration and integration of progressive colonial bureaucrats and emergent indigenous elites” make possible a synthesis of “humanitarian” and “developmental” approaches to administration. (p. 211) Finally, La Ray Denzer’s study of three West African women who played prominent political roles in the early years of independence – Mabel Dove of Ghana, Aoua Keita of Mali, and Wuraola Adepeju Esan of Nigeria – is another original piece of social history, showing how these women had opportunities alternatively created for and closed to them by their fathers, husbands, and patriarchal political mentors.

In Denzer’s chapter, as in several others, we find scholars going beyond the main historical concerns of Michael Crowder. Appropriately so, the editors note, for he was “generously receptive to the best work of those who opened topics or essayed styles of historiography different from those in which he worked himself.” (p. xxv) The contributions to People and Empires in African History are broadly scattered in topic and approach. If the book lacks focus, however, it clearly demonstrates the continued fertility of the soil earlier cultivated by Michael Crowder, one of the pioneers of academic African history.

Kenneth R. Curtis (Long Beach)


Politics and Society in the Third World is the latest book of Mehran Kamrava, Assistant Professor of International Studies at Rhodes College (USA). Author of two previous studies, successively entitled Revolution in Iran: The Roots of Turmoil and Revolutionary Politics, Kamrava’s stated purpose here is to answer the following question: “Why is democracy absent from the Third World?” (vii) and to show “the interconnected nature” of seemingly diverse evolutions in the developing countries. Intending to remedy the “paucity of scholarship” on the subject, Kamrava has chosen to build his analysis from within a multidisciplinary framework and examine what he calls “the region” not only from a political standpoint, but from a social and cultural one as well.
His book unfolds in six chapters: “Political Systems and Processes,” “Industrial Development,” “Urbanisation,” “Social Change,” “Political Culture,” and “Revolutions,” followed by a general conclusion. Kamrava’s is a clear, step-by-step approach in which he tries to highlight issues specific to the Third World as follows: “In many Third World countries, much of the process of political institutionalisation is entrusted to the media” (118) and another significant psychological ramification of social change in the Third World is the development of a society-wide sense of inferiority vis-à-vis other social classes and members of other societies. In so far as the Third World is concerned, a society-wide inferiority complex is extremely acute at both the international and the intra-national level, but, perhaps not surprisingly, is rarely admitted or discussed by Third World scholars or political leaders. (127)

Each individual chapter of the book is concisely introduced, formulates the writer’s intentions, and benefits from its own short conclusive summary in which possible solutions are articulated. Kamrava carefully leads his readers, moving from a clearly defined problematisation to thought-out definitions of the concepts at hand (eg. political institutionalisation and legitimacy), and finally, to their implications. We finish our reading of the volume with a good grasp of what it set out to discuss, and are better informed about the fast evolving process of never-ending social, political and economic change which the Third World is experiencing.

There are drawbacks to Kamrava’s work. Paradoxically, these originate mostly from the author’s perceptible desire for thoroughness. While credit must be given to Kamrava for the breadth of his interests and for the daring quality of his project, he tends to over-generalize in his desire to be inclusive. Obviously knowledgeable about Iran and Latin America, he is not as persuasive when it comes to African politics. This could have been remedied had he provided precise examples to substantiate his assertions. As it is, several of his points on the Caribbean or on Africa seem over-extended and tentative. In his (valid) eagerness to establish traits common to “developing” countries, he jumps to conclusions and fails to convince. For instance, in the second chapter, entitled “Industrial Development,” which discusses the concept of modernisation and its applications in the 60’s and 70’s, he says:

Those two decades witnessed a proliferation of dictatorships bent on the rapid modernisation of their countries. Brazil, Argentina, Iran and South Korea, and to a lesser extent the Philippines, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Libya, plus the many one-party states that sprang up in Africa, were all governed by modernising dictators who, in various ways, wished to modernise all aspects of their societies except its politics.

Although Kamrava gets across what he wishes to express, the long list of countries, the cryptic use of expressions such as “to a lesser extent” and