

seminal *Strategies of Containment* (1982) mounts an interpretation which foregrounds the perceptions of leading political players rather than provable facts as shaping developments within the period and the attraction of this approach is that it opens up comparisons between diverse documents of the Cold War. Alan Nadel's outstanding *Containment Culture* (1995) has also taken a lead from Gaddis revising the latter's "codes" into narratives which inform political rhetoric, film and fiction alike. Nuclear strategy was the most hypothetical narrative of all since the threatened war could scarcely be imagined and should be avoided at all costs. In that sense Eisenhower emerges from Craig's account as the archetypal Cold War politician, threatening an ultimate event which must never happen. Within this context, politics took on a dimension of posture and theatre which emerges constantly throughout Craig's history. When McGeorge Bundy said of the closing of the West Berlin border "the problem was essentially one of propaganda," his statement was true to the game-like rules of megapolitics, but offered little comfort to those Berliners shot while trying to escape to the west. Craig's Eisenhower was enough of a realist to oppose the nuclear shelter programme because that appeared to condone limited nuclear war; but, Eisenhower objected, "there would be no way of living in a situation of such large casualties." By contrast, the Kennedy administration at the time of the Cuba crisis distributed thousands of leaflets offering largely useless advice about how to convert dens into nuclear shelters. This action showed a dangerous blindness to the message implicit within such a policy that nuclear war was imminent. Craig demonstrates how Eisenhower refused to countenance such measures because they would have compromised his conviction that nuclear war was unsustainable and because the Soviets would have inferred that actual preparations for such a war were under way. Craig thereby disposes once and for all in his study the notion that Eisenhower was a political amateur bumbling from one problem to another. On the contrary, he played a key role in sustaining a policy which minimized the risk of nuclear war.

David Seed
Liverpool University

Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain, 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Communism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1998).

Many African nationalist leaders were confirmed in their opposition to colonialism by the racism they experienced as university students in Britain. But relatively little is known about what African students actually did while they were still students. Hakim Adi has set out to fill part of that gap by studying West African students' political activities during the first six decades

of the twentieth century. As it turns out — and this should come as no surprise — the nationalist leaders of the '60s were not the first African students to encounter racism or to oppose colonialism: they were in the forefront of the struggle against colonialism throughout the twentieth century.

Adi weaves his narrative around three themes: West African students' opposition to the racist treatment they received in Britain, the students' efforts to create organizations that could provide them with a sense of solidarity and protection, and the students' emergence into the world of anti-colonial politics. From nearly the moment they arrived in Britain, West African students experienced sorts of racism that they had probably never known in their home countries, beginning with the extreme difficulties they faced in finding rooms and flats to rent, hotel accommodations, and restaurants that would serve them. The colour bar extended beyond these fundamental necessities, and students found themselves harassed and discriminated against in nearly every aspect of daily life.

Understandably, African students formed organizations that could provide them with a sense of solidarity and that could affirm their identity. Perhaps the most long-lived and successful of these organizations was the West African Student Union (WASU) founded by Dr. Herbert Bankole-Bright in 1925 and led by Ladipo Solanke, secretary general of WASU until 1950. WASU and other organizations of West African students aimed to create a figurative "place," a space where students could share their ideas and their troubles. WASU went one step further, aiming to create a literal "place" where West African students could be safe: a student hostel run by Africans for Africans.

But the opening of the first hostel in 1933 marked the beginning of tensions that would grow between the Colonial Office and WASU over the next twenty-five years. The Colonial Office objected to the assistance and support WASU received from critics of British colonialism in West Africa, particularly the Communist Party. At the same time, Solanke and WASU were becoming increasingly outspoken in their criticism of colonialism in general. The confrontations between WASU and the Colonial Office grew more strained as global politics led toward the Second World War. WASU and other African students challenged Britain's abandonment of Ethiopia to Italian invasion in 1935, and the African students went on to challenge the duplicitous gap between the words of the Atlantic Charter, which called for self-determination for all peoples, and the practice of continuing colonial rule. WASU's decision to participate in the Manchester Pan-African Congress of 1945 indicates that these students saw themselves as part of a critique of colonialism that went far beyond events in West Africa.

WASU and other African student groups played a prominent role in exposing colonial oppression during the 1930s and '40s, but the students' prominence began to end soon after the Second World War. When West African people began to demand self-government, the Colonial Office's attention

shifted from students in Britain — the students whom colonial officers once had hoped would be models for new relationships between Britons and Africans — to people in West Africa. West African students were transformed from being leading critics of colonial oppression to one group of foreign students among many. Emblematic of that change was the effective end of WASU as a political organization in 1958, when it joined the Committee of African Organisations, an umbrella group aiming at general pan-African concerns.

Hakim Adi's work shows a willingness to see ambiguity — and maybe even failure — in the success of WASU. The deftness of Adi's touch shows through in two key differences between his history and the sort of group hagiography that one might expect in this kind of work. First, the West African students' experience confounds the usual trajectory of success: rather than being catapulted into power, their success in challenging colonialism resulted in the loss of their authority as critics of colonialism. Second, their trajectory of success was also considerably flattened by the continuous oppression the West African students faced in their daily lives. As I noted above, students formed WASU in 1925 to try to counter the colour bar and endemic racism they faced in Britain; yet, by the early 1950s, the colour bar had changed very little, if at all, and the changes may well have been for the worse. Despite having played an important role in bringing about the end of colonial rule in West Africa, West African students in Britain may have been worse off personally in 1960 than they were in 1925. They had succeeded in their global struggle against colonialism, but they had not yet succeeded in their struggle against oppression.

Hakim Adi's book is well-written and very accessible to any reader, and it is likely to serve two important roles. It is, of course, an introduction to West African student politics in Britain during the first half of the twentieth century. It will also prove to be a crucial research tool for historians striving to understand better both the nuances of colonial oppression and the aims of those people and groups who opposed that oppression.

Leslie Bessant
Ripon College

Denise J. Youngblood, *The Magic Mirror: Moviemaking in Russia, 1908-1918* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999).

Denise J. Youngblood's survey of pre-revolutionary Russian film-making could be described as a sort of prequel to her two earlier and justly admired books. *Soviet Cinema in the Silent Era, 1918-1935* (1985) was a trenchant analysis of the Soviet film canon. *Movies for the Masses: Popular Cinema and*