

belongs to a different order of contesting creeds.

All said however, these grand themes merely act as a backdrop to the more interesting delineation of the personal thoughts and actions of the leading characters in the novel. It is a pity that not much attention is given to detailing the circumstances of the personal life of the Mahdi and a few other characters, but in the instances where this is done, truly human stories emerge. The personal aspirations and frustrations of the characters, the moments of doubt and despair, and their suffering are revealed.

The soldiers of the vagrant Ninth Company of the Khedive's irregular calvary are seen from their human and monstrous sides; the Khalifa's manipulation of power to his advantage exposes his primitive, megalomaniac instincts, Nejumi, the brilliant general, continues the battle even when he knows that all is lost, trusting simply in the unshakeable faith of going to heaven when he dies. The fated generals, Williams Hicks and Charles Gordón, are swept into the cauldron of the war while Captain Hamilton Ellesworth goes through a scorching experience from which he never recovers. The liberal journalist Sherwood Louth is taken prisoner of war and experiences firsthand the many horrors of war which his lackadaisical nature and intellectual cynicism had not prepared him for.

Within this bristling book of signs, it is the vagrant orphan of the irregular calvary, Kadaro, and Hawi, the itinerant scholar and seeker of truth, who are given a fitful glimpse into the nature and meaning of this profoundly disturbing historical experience. When Kadaro

is taken prisoner by the colonial army and he sees the engineers and engines and machine rails and 'the mountains of bale wire and fish-plates and spare broilers and machine tools and trolleys and a thousand other things whose purpose he could not even guess' he suddenly realises that the armies of the Khalifa, built on faith rather than tools and weapons, could never have withstood this force. 'And he understood them that the battle was not between men of different colours or faiths, but between two different ages.' He sums it all up by saying: 'This was a war between yesterday and tomorrow'.

In the end, Kadaro chooses tomorrow and becomes a railway stationmaster. Hawi, on the other hand, pairs up with Noon, the unusual girl who is some kind of spirit-child, once again choosing the mystical and metaphysical over the rational and scientific. But having seen so much, having been a participant in the Khalifa's brief reign when the new leader had inherited the obscene splendour and opulence of colonialism, he had also, without realising it, lost his faith. His final crucifixion on a telegraph pole for the sin of apostasy serves as a fitting conclusion to this tale. With Kadaro presiding over his hanging, the direction to tomorrow seems clearly stated.

This is the real lesson of this novel, a lesson that modern day Sudan can benefit from. Otherwise these signs may turn out to be mere delusions, detailing a historical tragedy about to repeat itself.

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Nigerian Book Publishing Index

THIS is the first edition of the Nigerian Books-in-print, a bold attempt by the Nigerian Publishers Association at giving a list of all published books in Nigeria as at December 1995.

With entries from some 65 local publishers, this index will be found a good reference material by students, book-sellers, librarians and researchers on available books in Nigeria and how they can be obtained.

The Nigerian-Books-in-print is divided into four sec-

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Ranti Osunfowora, Evans Madu, Leo Osuji, Ramon Akinbode (compiled) NIGERIAN BOOKS IN PRINT, Nigerian Publishers Association, Ibadan, 1996, 456 pp.

tions. Sections are further subdivided into pre-primary, primary secondary, tertiary, research publications and general.

Entries are made under author's name or title. Each of the sections are arranged in a

single alphabetical order under subject according to the main entry. Word by word order is maintained in the arrangement of all the entries. Each entry is allocated a number. A total of five thousand, seven hundred and sev-

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<< entry three entries are contained in the book. Each of the four sections has an Author Index which indicates the name of the author featured, the number allocated to the book(s) written by him. See also references are made where necessary to facilitate easy reference in the book.

A full entry consists of the following details where available:

Author, title, subtitle, volume or part edition, year of publication, edition (if, other than the first), the size of the book (length and breadth in cm) number of pages, ISBN, series statement (including the number of publication if part of a series),

and language (if the text is in other language other than English).

The date of publication for each entry is given as supplied by the publisher or as available in the source.

Prices of the materials are not included in the publica-

tion because of inflation and fluctuation in prices. Some titles merely distributed by reputable publishers are listed along with the publications of such publishers.

Publishers' names are abbreviated in some entries. The full meaning of these abbreviations, as well as their addresses, are contained in the publishers' directory.

Many of the entries by the apex publishers carry International Standard Book Numbers (ISBN) issued by the Bibliographic Section of the National Library of Nigeria, Ijora, Lagos. Those wishing to order are advised not to use the ISBN alone while ordering. An author index to the work is contained in pages 446-56. The name of the author whether single or jointly authored, along with the number allocated to the publications in the serial numbering of entries is given in the Author Index.

With the exception of a few anomalies, (for example some entries are made under editors

which negates the provisions of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules Second edition, 1978 now revised 3rd edition), the efforts of the NPA is commendable. It is hoped that the errors in the first edition will be corrected in subsequent editions and that the publication will be revised frequently.

The publication will no doubt create a national and International awareness of what educational books and data are actually available in Nigeria and where they can be procured.

Nigerian Books-in-Print 1996 like its counterparts *British Books-in-Print*, *African Books-in-Print*, etc. will make a unique contribution to the book trade in Nigeria especially for the identification and acquisition of materials. The work is valuable acquisition for libraries and book traders.

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In Pursuit of Publishing

Wumi Raji

Hans M. Zell & Cecile Lomer, PUBLISHING AND BOOK DEVELOPMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY, Hans Zell publishers, Oxford, 1996.

WHEN a definitive history of African publishing is written, Hans M. Zell, one of the two authors of the volume under review will stand out. Directly, Hans Zell represents our reason for adapting *In Pursuit of Publishing* the title of the autobiography of the late Alan Hill, initiator and facilitator of Heinemann's African Writers Series (AWS) as the heading for this review. Zell was the director of the Ife University Press for much of the Seventies. In that period, the press became the

model for University presses in Nigeria as well as in Africa - in the light of its distinguished scholarly publications and particularly then once famous but now deceased annual book fair it originated. In 1973, the press organised an international conference on the theme, *Publishing in Africa - a Dialogue for the Seventies*, an event that pulled participants from all over Africa and Europe and America. Zell later left Ife to found his own publishing company in the UK which is unambiguously focused on Africa publishing and book development.

But Zell also functioned as the intellectual, editing since 1975, *The African Book Publishing Record* (ABPR) a bibliographic journal produced in cooperation with well over one thousand publishers and research centres, learned societies and professional bodies spread over the continent. ABPR has listed titles in English, French and indigenous languages as well as publishing reviews, interviews and essays. Beside, Zell has written, compiled and edited

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