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## A History of Malawi: 1859-1966

*By John McCracken*

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**A History of Malawi: 1859-1966** By John McCracken

This is the first comprehensive history of Malawi during the colonial period. Using a wide range of primary and secondary sources, it places this history within the context of the pre-colonial past. The book examines the way in which British people, starting with David Livingstone, followed by the pioneer Scottish Presbyterian missionaries and including soldiers, speculators, colonial officials and politicians, played an influential part in shaping Malawi. But even more important is the story of how Malawian people responded to the intrusion of colonialism and imperialism and the role they played in the dissolution of the colonial state. There is much here on resistance to colonial occupation, including religious-inspired revolt, on the shaping of the colonial economy, on the influence of Christian missions and on the growth of a powerful popular nationalism that contained within it the seeds of a new authoritarianism. But space is also given to less mainstream activities: the creation of dance societies, the eruption of witchcraft eradication movements and the emergence of football as a popular national sport. In particular, the book seeks to demonstrate the interrelationship between environmental and economic change and the impact these forces had on a poverty-stricken yet resilient Malawian peasantry. John McCracken is Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Stirling University. He has taught at University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, University College of Dar es Salaam and was Professor and Head of the Department of History at Chancellor College, University of Malawi from 1980-83 and returned as Visiting Professor in 2009. John McCracken was awarded ASAUK's Distinguished Africanist Award in 2008.

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### **Review**

A highly valuable contribution to historical writing on Malawi and provides a useful synthesis of previously published work. ... (It) will inspire a new generation of historians to deepen our understanding of these issues and many more that remain under-researched in the country's fascinating but often neglected history.

AFRICAN AFFAIRS A truly monumental achievement, and the fruit of a lifetime's work at the forefront of the study of Malawi. JOURNAL OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN STUDIES A masterful survey of Malawi's modern past (which) is bound to become the go-to text for students and scholars ... and must surely become a standard reference for those interested in Malawi's modern history, politics and economics. AFRICA(An) awe-inspiring book...McCracken has now delivered his long-awaited magnum opus. ... A towering scholarly achievement (that) will surely stand the test of time for generations to come. IJAHs An impressive work of detailed scholarship and a highly recommended addition to academic library International Studies and African History reference collections. MID-WEST BOOK REVIEW (A) magisterial account (and) a landmark event in the country's historiography. (.) It is a book so distinguished by the depth and quality of its analysis that it will take its place in the front rank of the literature addressing the colonial period in Africa. (.) Scholars, students and all interested readers will be grateful to have such a comprehensive, gripping and dependable account. THE SOCIETY OF MALAWI JOURNAL A good solid read. CHARTIST This major history (.) replaces all previous histories of the country (and) will stand as a foundation to all future research. Its breadth of treatment is as impressive as its immense range of primary and secondary sources. ROUND TABLE

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