



# Africans: The History of a Continent (African Studies)

By John Iliffe

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**Africans: The History of a Continent (African Studies)** By John Iliffe

In a vast and all-embracing study of Africa, from the origins of mankind to the AIDS epidemic, John Iliffe refocuses its history on the peopling of an environmentally hostile continent. Africans have been pioneers struggling against disease and nature, and their social, economic and political institutions have been designed to ensure their survival. In the context of medical progress and other twentieth-century innovations, however, the same institutions have bred the most rapid population growth the world has ever seen. The history of the continent is thus a single story binding living Africans to their earliest human ancestors. John Iliffe was Professor of African History at the University of Cambridge and is a Fellow of St. John's College. He is the author of several books on Africa, including *A modern history of Tanganyika* and *The African poor: A history*, which was awarded the Herskovits Prize of the African Studies Association of the United States. Both books were published by Cambridge University Press.

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## **Editorial Review**

From Library Journal

Iliffe, an eminent African historian at Cambridge, offers a far-ranging survey of Africa from the development of the human species to the South African elections of 1994. He writes in a thematic rather than strictly chronological fashion. What sets his book apart from other such surveys (e.g., Basil Davidson's *African Civilization Revisited*, LJ 6/1/91, 2d ed.) is his treatment of the environment and population as factors in the development of Africa, including North Africa. Iliffe examines human coexistence with nature, the building up of enduring societies, and African reactions to outside forces; yet he always keeps the contemporary world in mind, focusing on the answers to such basic questions as why Africa remained relatively underdeveloped compared with Eurasian societies or why African states have experienced so many problems over the past couple of decades. Iliffe's excellent, well-written introductory text belongs in all collections of Africana.

*Paul H. Thomas, Hoover Inst. Lib., Stanford, Cal.*

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## **Review**

"Reading this seminal work afresh has made me appreciate just what an extraordinary achievement it really is." -John Parker, *Journal of African History*

From the Back Cover

In a vast and all-embracing study of Africa, from the origins of mankind to the South African general election of 1994, John Iliffe refocuses African history on the peopling of an environmentally hostile continent. Africans have been pioneers struggling against disease and nature, and their social, economic and political institutions have been designed to ensure survival and maximise numbers. These institutions enabled them to survive the slave trade and colonial invasion, but in the context of medical progress and other twentieth-century innovations the same institutions have bred the most rapid population growth the world has ever seen. This demographic growth has lain behind the collapse of colonial rule, the disintegration of Apartheid, and the instability of contemporary nations. The history of the continent is thus a single story binding living Africans to their earliest human ancestors.

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