

CHINA'S AFRICAN CHALLENGES. By *Sarah Raine*. London and New York: Routledge for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2009. x, 270 pp. (Maps.) US\$19.95, paper. ISBN 978-0-415-55693-4.

Standing between the inflammatory screeds of Western journalists who criticize China's "African safari" as a new form of neo-mercantilism, on the one hand, and the propagandistic historiography of Chinese scholars and officials to establish their country's benign connections with Africa going back to the Song dynasty, on the other, Sarah Raine adopts a middle ground. She exposes the intention of heralding 900 years of Sino-African relations as a Chinese public relations effort to reassure African and the West that its intentions have always been benignly commercial, while chiding Western critics that "any suggestion that Sino-African relations can be viewed simply in terms of one giant resource grab is outdated at best" (29).

A major theme of this book is that "China's interests in Africa have developed over the decades ... Contemporary relations look substantially different to previous periods of engagement" (35). She maps out the labyrinth of institutions that conduct Chinese policy towards Africa, including older party organs (Politburo, Standing Committee, and Group of Foreign Affairs, chaired by President Hu) and state ministries (Foreign Affairs, Commerce, and Foreign Assistance), but also newer key entities involved in commerce like the State-Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (formed in 2003 to supervise state-owned enterprises); China ExIm Bank (the only Chinese institution offering concessional loans to foreign governments); China Development Bank (one of the world's largest in terms of assets); China–Africa Development Fund (established in 2007 to support Chinese firms venturing into Africa); China Investment Corporation (founded in 2007 to manage China's foreign exchange reserves); China–Africa Business Council (established in 2004 to help investors find partners); and triennial FOCAC meetings between Chinese and African leaders. What she demonstrates convincingly is her argument that "the lack of a clear, established agenda binding them together impairs the impact that they can collectively have beyond their individual functions" (86).

Raine explores seven major charges leveled against Chinese businesses in Africa: 1) their unreasonable preference for Chinese labour and materials; 2) poor employment practices, especially low wages; 3) bribery and lack of transparency; 4) poor workmanship and the dumping of poor-quality products and fakes; 5) lack of respect for the environment; 6) unfair competition enabled by excessive state support; 7) exploitative relationships and the problem of trade imbalances. She then adds to this familiar list of charges an additional concern, 8) debt accumulation. "A failure properly to address enough of these challenges will invite unwelcome attention and undermine prospects for sustainability in Sino-African engagements" (130).

She provides evidence that the Chinese have tried to address these criticisms. In 2008 the Buffelsfontein project in South Africa employed only five Chinese out of a total workforce of 1,000. In 2006 an agreement was signed with Zambia to harmonize labour relations. In 2008 China joined G8 energy ministers in a joint declaration that endorsed the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). In 2009 an agreement was reached to bring Chinese products imported into Nigeria into conformity with national industrial standards. In 2004 the ExIm Bank adopted its first environmental policy requiring the submission of environmental assessments of projects it funds. In 2007 China removed tariffs on 450 commodities from least-developed African countries.

Some of Raine's most interesting evidence of evolution appears in the fourth chapter, where recent changes in China's long-standing doctrine of non-interference in domestic affairs of other countries have appeared. "For example, by 2007, the Chinese leadership appeared to have decided to step back a little from its hitherto close relations with Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe. When President Hu toured Africa that year, he visited South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia and Namibia, but not neighbouring Zimbabwe" (157). A case study at the end of this chapter (each chapter ends with one) also illustrates how developments in Sudan have also played a crucial role in modifying China's approach, highlighting the challenge it now faces as its large strategic assets in Sudan, and increasing number of its citizens there, give it a substantial stake in the country's stability. "What happens to China's interests in Sudan if the Comprehensive Peace Agreement falls apart? What measure might the Chinese state take to defend its interests on the ground and how would these fit with its doctrine of non-interference?" (152). "Africa is likely to be among the first arenas to present a real challenge to the Chinese state's attachment to the principles of sovereignty and non-interference, as it seeks to secure new and reliable sources of oil on the continent and protect its assets and personnel as it does so" (153).

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TELEVISION IN POST-REFORM CHINA: Serial Dramas, Confucian Leadership and the Global Television Market. Routledge Media, Culture and Social Change in Asia Series, 13. By Ying Zhu. London and New York: Routledge, 2008. xxii, 177 pp. US\$150.00, paper. ISBN 978-0-415-49220-1.

Much scholarly and journalistic attention has been paid to the instrumental role of news and informational media in China's epochal transformation. The past few years, in particular, have witnessed an explosion of literature on the Internet in China and its profound implications for China's rapidly evolving state and society relationship. Less systematic work, however, has been done to