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Donal B. Cruise O'Brien

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# SAINTS & POLITICIANS

Essays in the organisation of a  
Senegalese peasant society

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**Donal B. Cruise O'Brien**

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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The groundwork for these essays lies in research conducted in the Wolof zone of Senegal in 1966–7; some two hundred formal interviews, numerous other discussions and conversations which were supplemented by library and archival research in Dakar and Paris. Due reference is made below to written sources, which may be available for consultation (and verification) by others. Oral sources, on the other hand, are named only in a very few exceptional instances (Thierno Sow, Cheikh Kane, Momar Sakho, Sérigne Mbacké Nioro). This is not of course to deprecate the very great contribution of other Senegalese informants, but there seems little point here in referring the reader to individuals whom he may be most unlikely ever to meet (any concerned researcher need only request the necessary details).

Some of the results of this field research have already been published in book form (*The Mourides of Senegal*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), these essays being a substantial development and extension of that presentation. The essays are intended both to be more systematically interpretive of research findings already published and to cover a much wider area of concern.

Apart from the great debt which I owe to many Senegalese friends and informants, I should here acknowledge the help of those scholars (concerned with themes related to these essays) who have helped both in discussions and often in allowing me to see pre-publication drafts of their work

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### *Preface and Acknowledgments*

(Samin Amin, Jonathan Barker, Jean Copans, Martin Klein, among others). Valuable critical comments and suggestions have also been made, in various seminar discussions of drafts of these essays, by many colleagues – Ernest Gellner and M. G. Smith perhaps in particular. My thanks are due to Jack Goody, at whose original suggestion this collection of essays was written and compiled. Acknowledgment is also of course due to those who have separately published drafts or sections of some of these essays (in French or in English).<sup>\*</sup> Without prejudice to other friends and colleagues, I must finally recognise that my greatest scholarly debt has been to my wife Rita – an expert, patient and most gentle critic.

January 1974

D.C.O.B.

\* 'Cooperators and Bureaucrats: Class Formation in a Senegalese Peasant Society', in *Africa*, Vol. xli, No. 4, 1971, is extensively revised and adapted in Chapter 4 below. 'Chefs, Saints, et Bureaucrates', in A. Abdel-Malek (ed.), *Sociologie de L'Impérialisme*, Paris, Eds. Anthropos, 1971, is revised and much expanded in Chapter 3 below. 'Don Divin, Don Terrestre' is slightly revised (and translated) in Chapter 2, from *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, Vol. xv, No. 1, 1974.