Africa in the Time of Cholera

Written in a style attractive to nonspecialists, this book combines evidence from natural and social sciences to examine the impact on Africa of seven cholera pandemics since 1817, particularly the current impact of cholera on such major countries as Senegal, Angola, Mozambique, Congo, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. Cholera’s explosion in Africa involves such variables as migration, armed conflict, climate change, and changing disease ecology. Myron Echenberg highlights the irony that this once-terrible scourge, having receded from most of the globe, now kills thousands of Africans annually – Africa now accounts for more than 90 percent of the world’s cases and deaths – and leaves many more with severe developmental impairment. Responsibility for the suffering of thousands of infants and children who survive the disease but are left with acute developmental impairment is shared by Western lending and health institutions, and by often venal and incompetent African leadership. Cholera is no longer a biomedical riddle. Inexpensive and effective oral rehydration therapy can now control the impact of cholera, and modest investment in potable water and sewage infrastructure would help prevent major outbreaks. If the threat of this old scourge is addressed with more urgency, great progress in the public health of Africans can be achieved.

Myron Echenberg is former Chair of the History Department at McGill University, where he is now Professor Emeritus. He is a former editor of the Canadian Journal of African Studies and previously served as President of the Canadian Association of African Studies. Professor Echenberg is the author of Plague Ports: The Global Urban Impact of Bubonic Plague, 1894–1901; Black Death, White Medicine: Bubonic Plague and the Politics of Public Health in Colonial Senegal, 1914–1945; and Colonial Conscripts: The Tirailleurs Sénégalais in French West Africa, 1857–1960, which won the Herskovits Award of the African Studies Association for the outstanding original scholarly work published during 1991.
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A list of books in this series will be found at the end of this volume.
Africa in the Time of Cholera

A History of Pandemics from 1817 to the Present

MYRON ECHENBERG

McGill University
In memory of my mentors at McGill University

and at the University of Wisconsin,

Robert Vogel and Philip D. Curtin
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### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
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<td>ARV</td>
<td>antiretroviral drugs</td>
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<td>AWD</td>
<td>acute watery diarrhea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCF</td>
<td>The Concerned Citizens’ Forum (South Africa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFRs</td>
<td>case fatality rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSATU</td>
<td>Congress of South African Trade Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DWAF</td>
<td>Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (South Africa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENSO</td>
<td>El Niño Southern Oscillation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAR</td>
<td>Forces Armées Rwandaises (Rwandan Army)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRELIMO</td>
<td>Liberation Front of Mozambique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEAR</td>
<td>Growth, Employment, and Redistribution Strategy (South Africa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNUC</td>
<td>The Greater Nelspruit Utility Company (South Africa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMS</td>
<td>Indian Medical Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>IOPH</td>
<td>International Office of Public Hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISCs</td>
<td>International Sanitary Conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOWAM</td>
<td>Johannesburg Water Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>LCBC</td>
<td>Lake Chad Basin Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDC</td>
<td>Movement for Democratic Change (Zimbabwe)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MERLIN</td>
<td>Medical Emergency Relief International (Britain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNR</td>
<td>Mozambique National Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSF</td>
<td>Médecins Sans Frontières</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>nongovernmental organizations</td>
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</table>
Abbreviations

NIH National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland
OCVs oral cholera vaccines
ORT oral rehydration therapy
PAC Pan-Africanist Congress
ProMED Program for Monitoring Emerging Diseases
RPF Rwandan Patriotic Front
SADC Southern African Development Community
SADF South African Defence Force
SAMWU The South African Municipal Workers’ Union
SAPs Structural Adjustment Policies
SDE La Sénégalaise des Eaux
SICAP Société Immobilière du Cap-Vert (Senegal)
SONEES Société Nationale d’Exploitation des Eaux de Sénégal
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF United Nations International Children’s Fund
VIPs ventilated improved privies
WER Weekly Epidemiological Record, published by the WHO
WHO World Health Organization
ZADHR Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights
ZANU Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU Zimbabwe African Peoples’ Union