



East Africa after Liberation

Between 1986 and 1994 East Africa's postcolonial, political settlement was profoundly challenged as four revolutionary 'liberation' movements seized power in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda. After years of armed struggle against vicious dictatorships, these movements transformed from rebels to rulers, promising to deliver 'fundamental change'. This study exposes, examines and underlines the acute challenges each has faced in doing so.

Drawing on over 130 interviews with the region's post-liberation elite, undertaken over the course of a decade, Jonathan Fisher takes a fresh and empirically grounded approach to explaining the fast-moving politics of the region over the last three decades, focusing on the role and influence of its guerrilla governments. *East Africa after Liberation* sheds critical light on the competing pressures that post-liberation governments contend with as they balance reformist aspirations with accommodation of countervailing interests, historical trajectories and their own violent organisational cultures.

JONATHAN FISHER is Reader in African Politics in the International Development Department at the University of Birmingham and Research Fellow at the Centre for Gender and Africa Studies at the University of the Free State, South Africa. His research focuses on the intersection between authoritarian rule, political transformation and (in)security in East Africa. His work has been funded by the AHRC, British Academy, ESRC, Facebook and the Newton Fund and has been published in journals such as *African Affairs*, *International Affairs* and *World Development*.

African Studies Series

The African Studies series, founded in 1968, is a prestigious series of monographs, general surveys, and textbooks on Africa covering history, political science, anthropology, economics, and ecological and environmental issues. The series seeks to publish work by senior scholars as well as the best new research.

Editorial Board

David Anderson, *The University of Warwick*

Catherine Boone, *The London School of Economics and Political Science*

Carolyn Brown, *Rutgers University, New Jersey*

Christopher Clapham, *University of Cambridge*

Michael Gomez, *New York University*

Richard Roberts, *Stanford University, California*

David Robinson, *Michigan State University*

Leonardo A. Villalón, *University of Florida*

Other titles in the series are listed at the back of the book.

East Africa after Liberation

Conflict, Security and the State since
the 1980s

JONATHAN FISHER
University of Birmingham



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-108-49427-4 — East Africa after Liberation
 Jonathan Fisher
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
 New Delhi – 110025, India
 79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108494274
 DOI: 10.1017/9781108665070

© Jonathan Fisher 2020

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2020

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd, Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Fisher, Jonathan, 1985– author.

Title: East Africa after liberation : conflict, security and the state since the 1980s / Jonathan Fisher.

Other titles: African studies series.

Description: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2020. | Series: African studies series | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019042626 (print) | LCCN 2019042627 (ebook) |

ISBN 9781108494274 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108714310 (paperback) |

ISBN 9781108665070 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: National liberation movements—Africa, Eastern. | Security, International—Africa, Eastern. | Africa, Eastern—Politics and government—1960–

Classification: LCC DT365.78 .F57 2020 (print) | LCC DT365.78 (ebook) |

DDC 963.071—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019042626>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019042627>

ISBN 978-1-108-49427-4 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-49427-4 — East Africa after Liberation
Jonathan Fisher
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

To Dominic

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-49427-4 — East Africa after Liberation
Jonathan Fisher
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Contents

<i>List of Maps</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xii
Introduction	1
Part I Insurgency	35
1 East Africa’s Post-liberation Elite and the Legacy of Insurgency I: Movement, State and Society	37
2 East Africa’s Post-liberation Elite and the Legacy of Insurgency II: From Rebellion to Government	74
Part II Liberation	109
3 From Rebels to Diplomats: Pragmatism, Aspiration and Mistrust, 1986–1995	111
4 Reinventing Liberation: Revolution and Regret in Congo and Sudan, 1995–2000	158
Part III Crisis	191
5 The Disintegration of the Liberation Coalition, 1998–2007	193
6 From Regional Conflict to Domestic Crisis: Regime Consolidation and the Fragmentation of the Old Guard, ca. 2000–2007	233
Conclusion: East Africa’s Second Liberation?	272
<i>Bibliography</i>	288
<i>Index</i>	312
	vii

Maps

1.1 Regions and Ethnic Communities of Uganda	<i>page</i> 43
3.1 Ethnic Federalism in Post-1995 Ethiopia	119
3.2 Ogaden Region Showing Border with Somalia	132
3.3 Somalia and Somaliland, ca. 1995	134
4.1 Sudan and Its Neighbours, ca. 1995	161
4.2 Eastern Zaïre and Refugee Settlements, ca. 1994–1995	176
4.3 The AFDL’s Advance Across Zaïre, 1996–1997	179
5.1 Location of Assab Port in Relation to Ethiopia and Eritrea	204

Acknowledgements

This book would not have gotten far without the immense amount of support, advice and encouragement I have been fortunate enough to receive from family, friends, colleagues, mentors, teachers and interlocutors during my career to date. Dave Anderson, my DPhil supervisor, occasional co-author and friend, first encouraged me to pursue this project – and, indeed, introduced me to the fascinating world of East African politics. Throughout the book’s germination, Dave has inspired and enthused me and offered reassurance and counsel during moments of doubt. I am also very grateful to Sally Healy for helping to give me the confidence to take on a work of this kind. I had the pleasure of working with Sally during an Honorary Research Fellowship at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 2013 and have benefitted immensely throughout our subsequent friendship from the many engaging conversations we have had – whether it be in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda or Oxford – on East Africa. Dave and Sally: I have learned so much from both of you and am so grateful for your unstinting confidence in me and for always filling me with ideas and inspiration. I am also greatly indebted to Maria Marsh at Cambridge University Press for her feedback and encouragement regarding this project from early in its lifetime. Thank you, too, to the Editorial Board of the African Studies Series for valuable input into the book and to the production team at Cambridge University Press for their hard work and support on the manuscript.

I could not have asked for a more supportive and stimulating environment to develop the book’s ideas than the University of Birmingham and its International Development Department (IDD). My friends and colleagues in IDD have been a constant source of encouragement and warmth throughout this project, and I feel very privileged to be part of such a fantastic intellectual community. I am particularly grateful to Birmingham friends who have mentored and supported me over the years – Danielle Beswick, Nic Cheeseman, Paul Jackson, Heather

Marquette, Fiona Nunan and Stefan Wolff – and to other friends and colleagues who have made working in Birmingham such a joy – Philip Amis, David Coble, Laurence Cooley, Raquel da Silva, Niheer Dasandi, Susan Dodsworth, Claire Groom, Tim Haughton, Tom Hewitt, David Hudson, Nick Lemay-Hébert, Claire Mcloughlin, Martin Ottmann, Sanne Weber, Kataryna Wolczuk, Christalla Yakinthou and many more. I would also like to thank Danielle, Heather, Nick, Nic, Stefan, Fiona, Adam Quinn, Catherine Durose, Mark Webber and Karen Rowlingson for supporting my various applications for travel funding and support throughout this project.

In this regard, I would also like to acknowledge support from IDD (Research Fund), the School of Government and Society (Research Fund) and the College of Social Sciences (Research Fund and Quality Output Scheme) at Birmingham. I am also very grateful to the Economic and Social Research Council for their support across three grants between 2007 and 2018 that have helped form the basis of the study: ES/F024509/1, ES/I028765/1 and ES/N008367/1. Thank-you too to Berouk Mesfin and the Institute for Security Studies in Addis Ababa for hosting me in 2015 during the development of the book.

I am extremely grateful to all those friends, colleagues and respondents who have engaged with the book during its development and who have provided much-valued feedback on its arguments and claims. Versions of the study – or of particular chapters – were presented at the British International Studies Association conference (2013), International Conference on Eritrean Studies (2016), International Studies Association conference (2016), UK African Studies Association conference (2016) and US African Studies Association conference (2015), as well as at the Universities of Mekelle (2016) and Oxford (Horn of Africa Seminars in 2013 and 2014 and Oxford Central Africa Forum in 2016). I would like to thank the organisers of and participants in all of these events for their helpful feedback. An earlier version of the book was also read and commented on diligently and constructively by Danielle Beswick, Nic Cheeseman, Christopher Clapham, Gabrielle Lynch, Ricardo Soares de Oliveira and Nina Wilén at a book workshop in Birmingham in January 2018, and I really cannot thank this amazing group of scholars enough for their engagement with the project and for the immensely helpful advice and guidance provided. Finally, I am very grateful indeed to Julia Gallagher and Michael Woldemariam for their invaluable feedback on an earlier draft of the

Acknowledgements

xi

study and for encouraging me to finesse and develop the argument. This book has been strengthened immeasurably through the advice and feedback of so many world-class thinkers, and I consider myself to be exceptionally fortunate to have benefitted so much from this counsel.

I would also like to thank the many other friends and colleagues who have supported, guided and inspired me throughout the development of this project. Aside from those mentioned already, these include Rita Abrahamsen, Yusuf Adan, Nasir Ali, David Angualia, Ron Atkinson, Jean-Nicolas Bach, Dominik Balthasar, Cedric Barnes, Pritish Behuria, Mark Bradbury, Stephen Brown, Abdullahi Busuri, Stephanie Cawood, Georgia Cole, Michaela Collord, Teresa Almeida Cravo, Catherine Dom, Barnaby Dye, Marie Gibert, Phillip Kasaija, Kidist Mulugeta, Josefine Kühnel Larsen, Cherry Leonardi, Marco Jowell, Nelson Kasfir, Nicki Kindersley, Sabiti Makara, Richard Moncrieff, Jason Mosley, Tanja Mueller, Dancan Muhanguzi, Simon Mulongo, Katharina Newbery, Sunday Okello, Will Reno, Meressa Tsehay, Justin Pearce, Ahmed Soliman, Stephen (Hippo) Twebaze, Harry Verhoeven, Marco Vieira, Hannah Waddilove, Sam Wilkins and Paul D. Williams. This also includes a number of friends and colleagues in Eritrea, Ethiopia and Rwanda who I have decided not to thank by name in writing given the content of the study and the fast-moving politics of the East African region. More generally, I am profoundly grateful to all those who gave up their time to be interviewed for this book, including at least one respondent now – despicably – imprisoned and several more who have since passed away.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for always filling my life with love and warmth – and for driving me forward with their semi-regular questions about how ‘the book’ is going. Isla, Michael, Nieszka, Alek and Muddy – thank you for welcoming me into the family all those years ago and for all the joyful times we have shared. Camilla, Charis and Rocky – I don’t expect you to read ‘the book’, but thank you for always inspiring me and making me smile; I love you very much. Lydia and Nina – I can’t wait until you are older and I can bore you with my insights (such as they are) on East African politics. Mum and Dad – thank you for always supporting me and encouraging me and for always being there. Dominic – my best friend and partner in all things, please at least read one of the chapters. I love you very much, and this book is dedicated to you.

Abbreviations

ADC	<i>Aide-de-camp</i>
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces (Zaire/Congo)
AFDL	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo/ <i>Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaïre</i> (Zaire/Congo)
AIAI	<i>Al-Itihaad Al-Islamiya</i>
ANDM	Amhara National Democratic Movement
ANC	African National Congress (South Africa)
AU	African Union
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (US)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ELF	Eritrean Liberation Front (Eritrea)
ENDM	Ethiopian National Democratic Movement (Ethiopia)
EPDM	Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (Ethiopia)
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front (Eritrea)
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (Ethiopia)
EPRP	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (Ethiopia)
ERA	Eritrean Relief Agency (Eritrea)
ESO	External Security Organisation (Uganda)
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)
FDC	Forum for Democratic Change (Uganda)
FRELIMO	<i>Frente de Libertação de Moçambique</i> (Mozambique)

List of Abbreviations

xiii

FRONASA	Front for National Salvation (Uganda)
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IGADD	Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development
ISO	Internal Security Organisation (Uganda)
MLC	Movement for the Liberation of Congo (DRC)
MLLT	Marxist-Leninist League of Tigray (Ethiopia)
MP	Member of Parliament
MPLA	<i>Movimento Popular para Libertação de Angola</i> (Angola)
MRNDD	National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development/ <i>Mouvement Républicain National pour la Démocratie et le Développement</i> (Rwanda)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIF	National Islamic Front (Sudan)
NRA	National Resistance Army (Uganda)
NRM	National Resistance Movement (Uganda)
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front (Ethiopia)
OPDO	Oromo People's Democratic Organisation (Ethiopia)
PAFO	Parliamentary Advocacy Forum (Uganda)
PDFJ	People's Front for Democracy and Justice (Eritrea)
PRA	People's Redemption Army (Uganda)
RANU	Rwandese Alliance for National Unity (Rwanda)
RC	Resistance Council (Uganda)
RCD	Rally for Congolese Democracy (DRC)
REST	Relief Society of Tigray (Ethiopia)
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front (Rwanda)
SEPDM	Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (Ethiopia)
SNM	Somali National Movement (Somalia/ Somaliland)

SPLM/A	Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement/ Army (Sudan/South Sudan)
SWAPO	South West Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO)
TNO	Tigrayan National Organization (Ethiopia)
TPLF	Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (Ethiopia)
UFM	Uganda Freedom Movement (Uganda)
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNITA	<i>União para Independência Total de Angola</i> (Angola)
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Front (Uganda)
UPC	Uganda People’s Congress (Uganda)
UPDF	Uganda People’s Defence Force (Uganda)
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development (US)
USARF	University Students’ African Revolutionary Front
USC	United Somali Congress (Somalia)
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
ZANU (P-F)	Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic-Front) (Zimbabwe)
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People’s Union (Zimbabwe)