

YEARBOOK OF AFRICAN LAW (JAHRBUCH FÜR AFRIKANISCHES RECHT),
Volume 5. By KURT MADLENER. [Heidelberg: C.F. Müller Juristischer
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THIS is an interesting publication, covering similar territory as other journals, such as the *Journal of African Law* (University of London). The yearbook is the publication of the African Law Association, based in and dominated by academics from the Federal Republic of Germany but with a membership representing most African regions. It follows that an important difference between this and other publications surveying African law, lies in the Yearbook's language. As with the other volumes, this most recent book contains articles in German, French or English; occasionally, there are translated summaries in the other mediums. Aimed at the whole of Africa, the Yearbook nevertheless reflects a stress on sub-Saharan anglophone Africa, although there is some work from the francophone area. The editors acknowledge this unequal weightage, and appeal for more material from francophone Africa. As with other attempts at covering Africa, however, there is nothing from Arab Africa.

The yearbook offers material under five headings, with an appendix of the constitution and membership of the African Law Association. The main headings are: Articles, Research Projects, Conferences, Book Reviews and Documents.

This particular volume focusses on southern Africa, currently a particularly troubled region on a troubled continent. There are articles on the attempts to break free of South Africa's economic domination (the Southern African Development Coordination Conference, SADCC), on Zimbabwe's Refugees Act of 1983, on the South Africa-Mozambique *Nkomati Accord*, on self-determination with the *apartheid* zone, on the codification of the criminal law in Zimbabwe and on internal conflicts of laws in Botswana. The useful "Documents" section lists recent non-aggression documents, exchanges of letters, and accords between South Africa and some of its neighbours. Another useful section, "Conferences", lists conferences on Africa, with summaries of the papers and addresses to which correspondence and inquiries could be directed. Southern Africa again dominates this list, with conferences on law and politics in southern Africa. Roman Dutch law in Lesotho, and conflict accommodation in South Africa. In addition, however, record is made of conferences on legal services in rural Africa (Geneva), on the national judiciary (Dakar) and of the conference of the African Law Association itself (Freiburg).

In addition to the southern focus, however, there are interesting papers and materials from other regions. One particularly interesting article by Jonathan Fabunmi (University of Ife, Nigeria) looks at how “indigenisation” was used as a means of gaining control of the economy in Nigeria.¹ Another important paper with an economic theme is from Umesh Kumar (National University of Lesotho) on African responses to the international economic order.²

Of the research projects noted, particular mention should be made of Filip Reyntjens’ group who are gathering up-to-date summaries of African constitutional and political systems in four loose-leaf volumes, to be published as *Constitutiones Africae* in English and French. The volumes promise to be invaluable basic comparative material for all who are interested in Africa.

In this yearbook, fifteen books are crisply summarised and reviewed. The books and reviews are in all of the three languages of this publication, though the language of review is predominantly German.

In sum, for the English-language reader this Yearbook contains plenty of useful information about the legal world of Africa. One has to congratulate the editor for bringing comparative material together. Further, this book goes some way to bridging the language barriers, and such must always be useful for Africanists. That said, for a vast continent and given the repetition of translation, the book is painfully thin and it certainly cannot be described as even a reasonable summary of African legal developments in 1984. The southern theme of this volume is useful, particularly given the presentation of documents. And there are other interesting aspects and articles. But we will have to hope that this Yearbook will grow with increasing cooperation in Africa and amongst Africanists.

ANDREW LADLEY

¹ “Indigenisation law as a means of economic control: the Nigerian experience.” See p. 13 of the Yearbook.

² “African responses to the International Economic Order: Lagos Plan of Action and the Preferential Trade Treaty for the Eastern and Southern African States.” See p. 81 of the Yearbook.