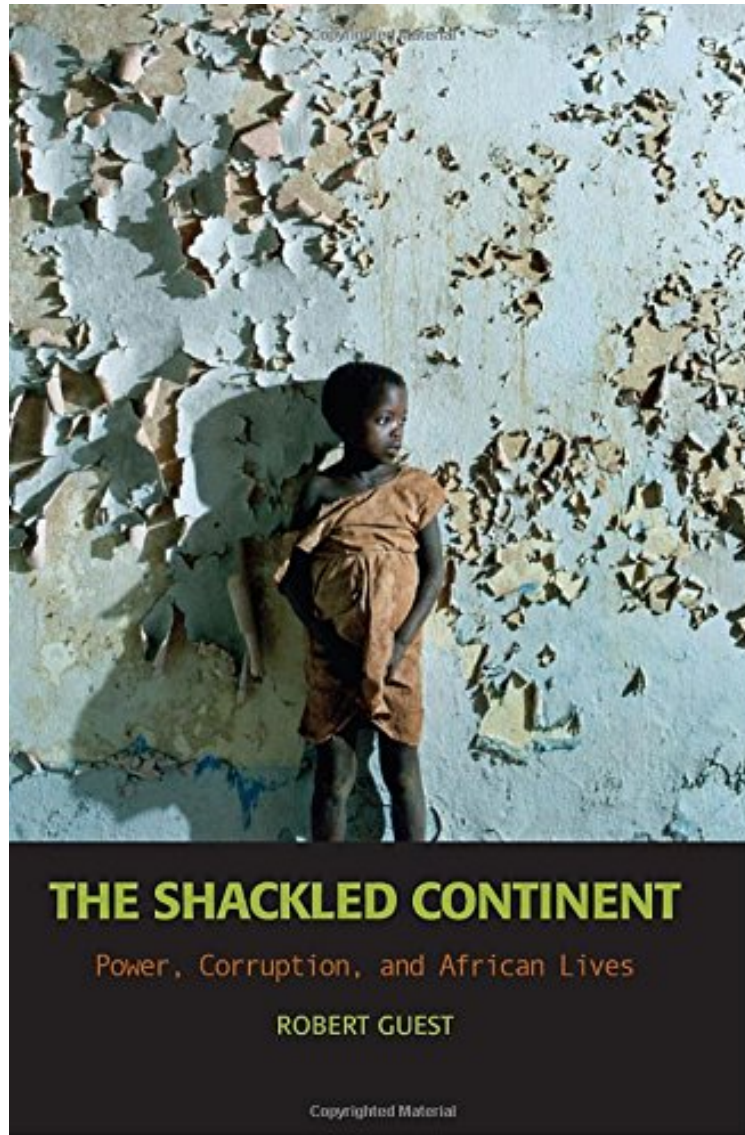


(Download) The Shackled Continent: Power, Corruption, and African Lives

The Shackled Continent: Power, Corruption, and African Lives

Robert Guest

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Robert Guest : The Shackled Continent: Power, Corruption, and African Lives before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Shackled Continent: Power, Corruption, and African Lives:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Today,Africa is still in chainsBy Augustine InvictusDefinitely 5 stars for this excellently written book. The narrative is smooth flowing,easy to read and follow, with admirable clarity and honesty of what is being told,interpreted,surmised,unraveled or analyzed.I read it from cover to cover. It's like

embarking on a journey through Africa and discovering, sometimes surprisingly, facts about this complex and beautiful continent which you were either unaware of, or just didn't care to know about before. As the author points out, tribalism, abuse of power and corruption of post colonial leaders are significant root causes of SubSaharan Africa's seemingly perpetual poverty. The deplorable conditions encourage educated professionals to emigrate to other (non-African) countries, thus depriving Africa of badly needed talent. But the author also stresses that elimination or at least significant mitigation of the widespread corruption and ineptness of the governing power will eventually lead the continent to prosperity. A new generation of skillful and educated Africans will inevitably and hopefully emerge to institute a massive cleanup of what the author calls "thugocracy". The book is a coverage of Africa from a journalistic and economist point of view, the author being both a good journalist and economist. And this coverage skillfully told in a very interesting understandable style. As I have mentioned previously in another African review, we have become too overly exposed to the conflicts of the Middle East to such a degree that we tend to ignore Africa (subSaharan) and its people. It is hoped that when you take this journey with Robert Guest, you will become more broadminded and feel more compassion and respect for this remarkable continent wracked by post colonial civil wars and their after effects, and receiving insufficient attention by the international community. Yet, despite all these devastation and painfully slow rehabilitation, the comments and anecdotes expressed by the people who can still afford to retain their sense of humor, somehow suggest hope. The progress which is reflected by South Africa may serve as a beacon of hope for the rest of the continent. This hope is somehow depicted in the last paragraph of the last chapter of the book: The author was talking to a 19 yr old youth who, after the civil wars, began raising and processing chickens for a living. The author commented that the Japanese labored for a century before they caught up with the West. The African boy shrugged his shoulders. "We can do it, too," he replied, "And besides, raising chickens is better than fighting." I highly recommend this book to everyone who knows plenty, knows little or knows nothing about Africa. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating take on the plethora of issues surrounding Africa with a hopeful outlook. By Steve Schwartz There are an abundance of books and articles hypothesizing the reasons why African nations are so poor, the majority of which blame rich countries and European colonialism. Robert Guest, African correspondent for The Economist, briefly discusses and then dismisses these arguments as being the primary culprits by putting them in historical context against other nations that have similar histories. Instead, Guest focuses on issues endemic to Africa, giving hope to improvements coming from within the continent and hope of a more stable, healthier and wealthier future. While Guest argues that there is need for aid in Africa, he outlines why, how and where the aid should be targeted, noting that much more can be achieved through less costly but better focused reforms. The Shackled Continent is a pleasure to read as Guest's style is both interesting and informative. He uses personal accounts, first-person interviews and historical reference to solidify his points and lends an overall hopeful tone to his book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars. By Customer Amazing insight of Africa

A former Africa editor for The Economist, Robert Guest addresses the troubled continent's thorniest problems: war, AIDS, and above all, poverty. Newly updated with a preface that considers political and economic developments of the past six years, The Shackled Continent is engrossing, highly readable, and as entertaining as it is tragic. Guest pulls the veil off the corruption and intrigue that cripple so many African nations, posing a provocative theory that Africans have been impoverished largely by their own leaders' abuses of power. From the minefields of Angola to the barren wheat fields of Zimbabwe, Guest gathers startling evidence of the misery African leaders have inflicted on their people. But he finds elusive success stories and examples of the resilience and resourcefulness of individual Africans, too; from these, he draws hope that the continent will eventually prosper. Guest offers choices both commonsense and controversial for Africans and for those in the West who wish Africa well.

From Publishers Weekly Guest, African editor of Economist, tackles the vexing issue of Africa's continuing poverty, and offers a surprising blunt answer. Africa is a shackled continent because of the abuse of power by "vampire states": authoritarian governments that have failed their people comprehensively. Guest details their abuses thoroughly. An emphasis on exploiting mineral resources neglects other aspects of economic development. Property rights are rarely secure in law or practice. AIDS ravages entire populations. Tribal loyalties overshadow state identities. Western aid is siphoned off by thugs and bureaucrats, or displaces the private investment that is the only basis for long-term economic growth. Comprehensive corruption discourages the mutual trust required for complex systems to function effectively. Technological innovation is discouraged by government micromanagement. A particularly scathing chapter focusing on Zimbabwe and South Africa describes how post-liberation governments and their supporting elites take the short cut of expropriating assets instead of developing their own. As a cure, Guest recommends "simple ideas, rigorously applied." Governments must concentrate on providing basics: primary education, essential health care, piped water. Elites must stop spending other peoples money on limousines, mansions and first-class flights to conferences. Finally, Africans must stop arguing that Africa's problems are someone else's fault. Guest recognizes that the economic modernization he advocates comes with a price, but he is nonetheless optimistic. Readers may be moved enough to find ways of being so, too. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights

reserved. Rarely does an author combine experience, common sense and humour when writing about Africa. It's even rarer when the analysis is as hard-hitting as in the writing of Robert Guest. Roger Bate, Wall Street Journal. I doubt whether there is a better brief introduction to the travails of modern Africa and their causes. Anthony Daniels, Sunday Telegraph. "An excellent book. Timely, provocative and written throughout with a passion for Africa and Africans." Bob Geldof astute and clever [Guest has] an extremely strong and rationalist grasp of the present, and travels with the classical economists David Ricardo and Adam Smith as inspiration. The Shackled Continent is a lively and provocative read. RW Johnson, Sunday Times. [Guest] is a lively and observant reporter. He portrays, with humour and some compassion, how nothing really works in most African countries. The reader can learn much from this lively and outspoken book. Anthony Sampson, The Guardian. Anyone who wants to be reminded of the horrors of Africa, economic or otherwise, will be interested to read this intelligent but light treatise. Christopher Ondaatje, Literary . It seems odd that Robert Guest causes as much trouble as he does. The 33-year old Africa editor of the influential Economist magazine is personable, witty [and] eminently reasonable. But [he] brings peoples blood to boiling point quicker than one can say The Shackled Continent. Jeremy Gordin, The Star, South Africa. This is the kind of book you read holding your nose. Even H.M. Stanley, the British journalist/explorer who lived fat on the weird stories about Africa he published in his journals, [would have been] ashamed of some of the views expressed by Guest. Osei Boateng, New African. This is the book for those who despair for Africa, but even more, it is the book for those who despise Africa. [Guest's writing reveals] his journalist's determination to unravel Africa's complicated, seemingly intractable problems and his economists' determination to rectify them. . . . You can't know how cynical and complacent you've become about the world's problems until you take this journey with Robert Guest. Debra Dickerson, author of The End of Blackness: Returning the Souls of Black Folk to their Rightful Owners. Guest recognizes that the economic modernization he advocates comes with a price, but he is nonetheless optimistic. Readers may be moved enough to find ways of being so, too. Publishers Weekly About the Author Robert Guest is a Washington correspondent for The Economist and regularly appears on CNN and the BBC. Previously, he covered Africa for seven years, based in London and Johannesburg. He has also worked as a correspondent in Tokyo and a freelance writer in South Korea. He lives in Washington, DC.