E. de Latour — *Landmasters and Warmasters.*

There are two pre-eminent groups among the Mawri: the aboriginal Gubawa, owners of the land rights and keepers of the ancestors cults, and the Arewa warriors, holders of the political power. Social order in the first group rests upon seniority and sacrifice, in the second one upon competition and strength-backed relations. A foundation myth accounts for the intergroup relationships in terms of marriage: the dynasty springs from the union of the first warrior to visit the region with the daughter of one of the landholders. This suggests a compact, with land affording legitimacy, weapons providing protection. This contract, reinforced by a set of rules, is put into effect through enthronement rites and war, but beyond these two main social experiments, each group keeps to its own representations. This leads to conflict concerning the management of affairs, with the Gubawa claiming pre-eminence due to anteriority of occupation, while the Arewa try to use their military power to reign by themselves. When cohesion is on the rise and rules are consolidated, there is a State in the offing. However concentration of power starts a process of segmentation: war, fission of princely lineages and group splitting. Yet this apparent frailty does not result into de-stabilization of a power which thrives on the conflicts it generates.

R. Otayek — *Crisis in the Upper Volta Moslem Community: Islam between Reform and Tradition, Autonomy and Subordination.*

The situation of Islam in Upper Volta is ambiguous: while dominant in numbers it remains in a subordinate position in the polity. Within the contemporary context of Moslem political awakening, peaceful Voltaic Islam looks like an oddity, whose origins lie in the history of Islamization. In the Mosi kingdoms Moslems occupied a marginal position and the vectors of Islamization were extraneous. Despite their role in the royal courts, Moslems were accepted only on tolerance and the political system was free of Islamic influence. While the colonial system did not bring any deep change in this status, the disruption of traditional structures accelerated the rate of conversions. Nevertheless, due to its divisions and to its inability to cope with modernization, Voltaic Islam has been unable to produce a political elite which could have claimed leadership in the post-colonial State or put forth a social design of its own. Islam remained thus exposed to the most various ideological, religious and secular influences, which perpetuated its subordinate position. This led to the 1983 crisis in the *Communauté musulmane de Haute-Volta,* the most serious since the creation of this important Islamic association.

*Cahiers d'Études africaines, 95, XXIV-3, 1984, pp. 385-386.*

Les associations féli et sàndè étaient au centre de la vie sociale vaï et les changements extrinsèques affectant leur structure ont eu un impact significatif sur la musique accompagnant leurs rites et cérémonies. Au début du prosélytisme manding chez les Vai, l’islam et les sociétés secrètes coexistaient harmonieusement. Toutefois, l’attitude des musulmans à l’égard du rôle de ces sociétés s’est transformée. En conséquence, le féli est quasiment inexistant dans certaines régions, tandis qu’une version musulmane du sàndè, appelée mili sàndè, a fait son apparition récemment. Les matériaux recueillis indiquent que l’assimilation d’idéologies musulmanes a conduit ces associations à des stratégies d’adaptation dans le domaine de la musique, des danses et des masques — stratégies discutées ici à la lumière de l’évolution des Vaï vers une conversion totale à l’islam.


Examen critique des points de vue de Meillassoux et Bagayogo, Sandbrook, Peil, Bromley et Gerry sur la formation des classes sociales et la conscience du prolétariat africain, en particulier de la théorie de l’« aristocratie ouvrière » comme distincte de, et en conflit avec, les prétendus Lumpen- et « semi »-prolétariats.

A. Adams — The Wallet in the Casket : Africa and the White People’s Future in the Novels of Nadine Gordimer.

The second part (see CEA 94) of a study of the views that the two foremost South African/British women novelists hold about race relations at the personal and group levels in today’s and tomorrow’s Africa. Nadine Gordimer’s novels are hardly less desperate than those of Doris Lessing, yet in most of them there is still a faint glimmer of hope. Instead of fleeing for good to a meaningless exile, her main characters finally choose to come back to Africa on a hopeless bet of survival in a fearful unknown and unknowable future.

J.-P. Chauveau — An Interdisciplinary Attempt in the Field of African Smithcraft.

In his review of a collective work on iron and copper working in Sub-Saharan Africa, J.-P. Chauveau tries to define and delineate the advantages— and possible shortcomings—of a multidisciplinary approach, associating, in this case, metallurgists, archaeologists, anthropologists, geographers and historians.