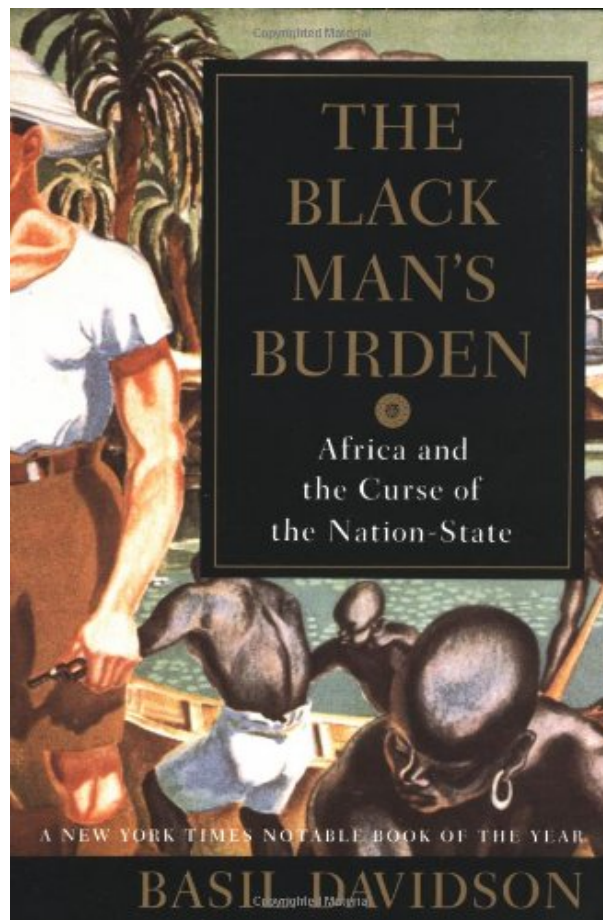
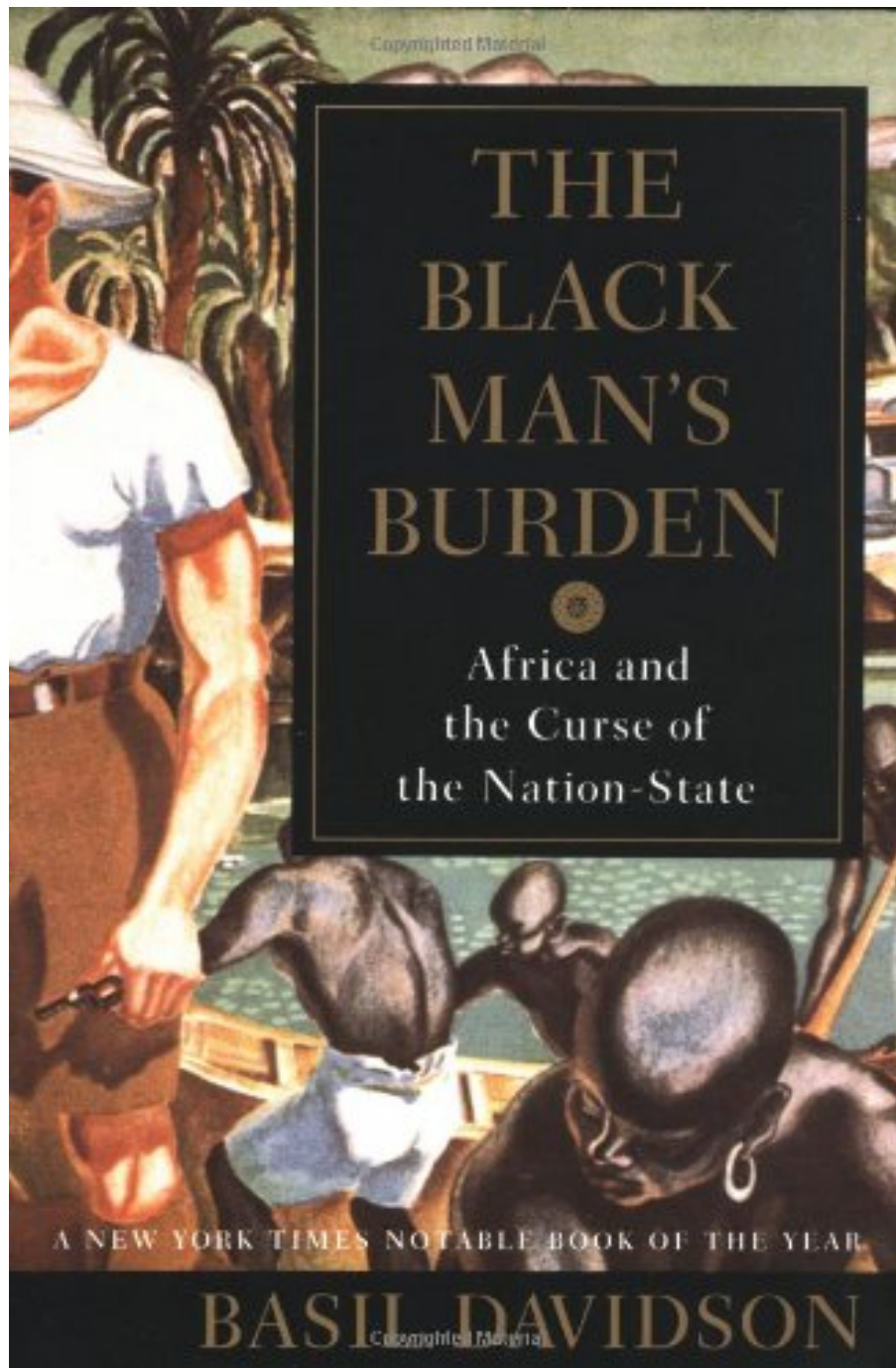


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From Publishers Weekly

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From Library Journal

In this thought-provoking book, Davidson, a prolific, longtime writer of African history and politics, discusses not only Africa and its overwhelming problems but also draws comparisons of the conditions and the causes of Africa's malaise with those of Central and Eastern Europe both in 1918 and today. He details the legacy of imperialism and the failures of the nation-states of Africa after independence. In a surprising conclusion, Davidson sees the ground for hope "in one or another mode of the politics of participation." He points to the Economic Community for West African States and the Southern African Development Coordination Conference as proposing projects that have "supposed a gradual dismantlement of the nation-statist legacy derived from imperialism, and the introduction of participatory structures within a wide regionalist framework." He reminds us finally that "even those most nationalist of peoples, the English and the French, might before long find themselves without sacred and sovereign frontiers between them." Recommended as a thought-provoking purchase.

- Maidel Cason, Univ. of Delaware Lib., Newark

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From Kirkus Reviews

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An absorbing, highly acclaimed examination of Africa's transition from colonialism to revolution to the social turmoil of today.

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From Publishers Weekly

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By Samantha

Just what i needed. great condition!

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Very important book

By Justice

This book is one of my favorite histories of Africa because of the sensitivity and knowledge with which the author devotes himself to the topic of the post-colonial nation state in the world's most maligned continent. This is a good book for non-specialists, which explains with good writing and apt analogies to other troubled nation-projects (namely in Eastern Europe) how Africa did in fact have many indigenous nationalisms prior to colonial rule, which were thwarted and distorted by the imposed shackle of the national boundaries drawn by outsiders who knew nothing of Africa's own traditions, people, or nations.

Many I've spoken to who do not have even the most rudimentary knowledge of Africa (most people that is!) are shocked when I tell them that the boundaries of all modern African nations were drawn at a conference in 1884 in Berlin with no Africans present, based on the geo-strategic concerns of the imperial powers, NOT on any linguistic/cultural unity in the territories created. But this basic fact, so crucial to understanding the fundamental problems facing 20th and 21st century Africa, deserves repeating, and nowhere have I seen any author treat it with as much concern and care as Davidson.

Davidson's contribution to African history cannot be overstated; he has over the years earned the affection and trust of many Africans, who trust him perhaps more than they do any other European to write their history. More than most Europeans, Davidson emphatically and repeatedly asserts that Africa has the history and tools to build successful political entities based on their own values, not those imposed on them from outside. They did so prior to colonial rule, and they can in the future. Davidson is a treasure and this book is as well.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Fine book from one of the leading historians of Africa

By Ein Kunde

In "The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State" Basil Davidson argues that indigenous African societies were developing into nation-states much as Europe had during the last few centuries, and that colonialism -- far from being necessary for people who could not govern themselves -- actually fouled up everything. This book focuses mostly on Africa in the 20th century, which, for most of the continent saw the last decades of colonialism and first decades of independence. Davidson draws on lessons learned over a lifetime to describe the nation-state both in Africa and Europe (a surprising amount of the book describes the advent of the European nation-state). He also describes many personal experiences from decades spent studying Africa. This is one of many fine books by one of the 20th century's best historians.

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