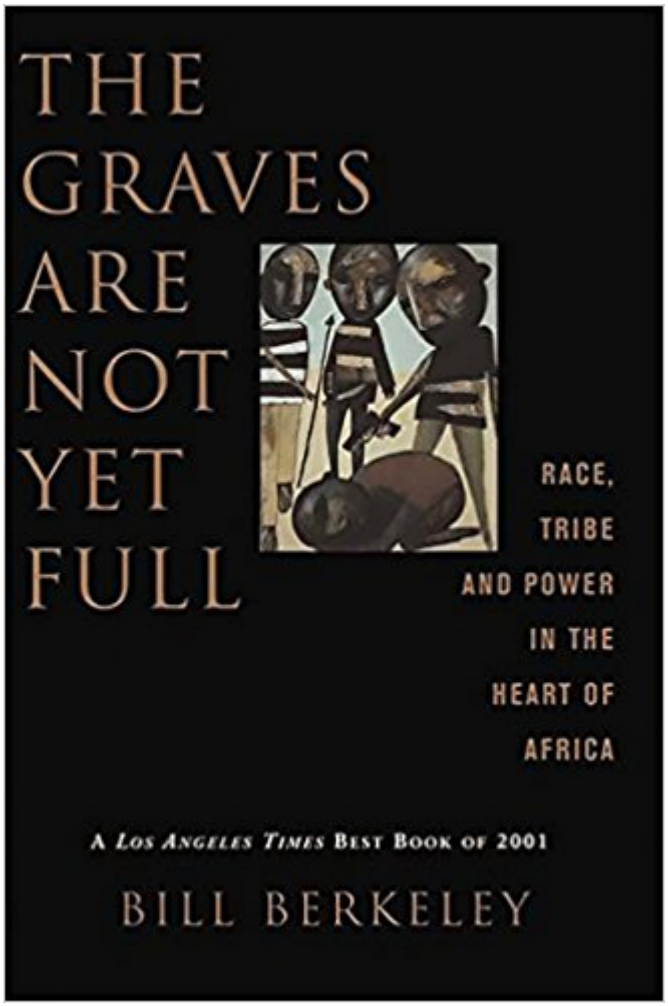
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# The Graves Are Not Yet Full: Race, Tribe And Power In The Heart Of America




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## Synopsis

Since 1983 journalist Bill Berkeley has traveled through Africa’s most troubled lands-Rwanda, Liberia, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, and Zaire-seeking out the tyrants and military leaders who orchestrate seemingly intractable wars. Shattering the myth that ancient tribal hatred lies at the heart of the continent’s troubles, Berkeley instead holds accountable the "Big Men" who came to power during this period, describing the very rational methods behind their apparent madness. A New Republic Book

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## Customer Reviews

"This is a book about evil." With these words, Berkeley launches into a gripping exploration of some of the worst African atrocities of the past 20 years, which he has covered as a journalist for the Atlantic Monthly and other publications. Focusing on several flash points the genocide in Rwanda, the political violence in Zaire and South Africa’s apartheid killings, for instance he avers that the violence that has permeated these societies is born of the same evil that motivated Hitler to kill six million Jews: racially and ethnically based tyranny, which, he says, is the result of Western colonization, not "age-old" hatreds. Berkeley is at his best when he is reporting; he conducted interviews with African leaders, such as Liberia’s Charles Taylor, with ordinary people and with high-level American officials involved in formulating African policy, like former Assistant Secretary of State Chester A. Crocker. He is particularly effective at pointing out the links between longstanding Western attitudes and policy and Africa’s atrocities ("Tribalism solved the colonial dilemma of how to

dominate and exploit vast numbers of indigenous inhabitants with a limited number of colonial agents"), and he shows how maniacal tyrants have exploited ethnic divisions. But the reader is still left wondering how so many people could have taken part in the mass killing of their own countrymen. Though Berkeley writes that "most African tribes live side by side without conflict," the book leaves the opposite impression. (Apr. 1)Forecast: This is one of several books about Africa due out this spring. Perhaps the critical mass will turn the interest of serious readers toward that strife-ridden continent. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Berkeley (writing, Columbia Univ.) has reported on African affairs for more than a decade. This moving, disturbing work focuses on recent examples of tyranny and civil disorder in Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, the Sudan, and Rwanda. Berkeley argues that the pain, suffering, and genocide in these nations were not the result of some mysterious primitive African tribal conflict. Rather, they came about because "Big Men," often supported by the United States, exploited ethnic tensions to create chaos from which they would allegedly "rescue" their societies. The only dim hope for these countries lies in "fledgling attempts to build institutions of law and accountability." Berkeley combines his reporting experience with first-rate historical analysis in a beautifully written, powerful examination of contemporary horrors. Recommended for all libraries. A.O. Edmonds, Ball State Univ., Muncie, IN Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Bill Berkley’s "The Graves Are Not Yet Full" gives an interesting perspective for the reader into the more recent events in Africa’s history. In the book, Berkley takes his journalistic experiences and knowledge he has gathered during his time spent in Africa to investigate and explain the source, or sources, for conflicts in countries like Liberia, South Africa, Sudan, Rwanda, and the Congo. The message propagated by the tyrannical leaders of these nations is that ethnic and "tribal" conflict was the source of this violence and was inevitable despite who may have power at the time but, by writing this piece, Berkley is attempting to dispel the stereotype that the conflicts are caused by tribal rivalries, but instead encouraged and exploited by the leaders to benefit themselves and those around them.While attempting to disprove the stereotype of ethnic conflict in Africa, Berkley hopes to bring attention the injustices the people of these countries suffered, as well as to force some accountability for rulers like Charles Taylor, Samuel Doe, and others who brought this violence on their people. However, despite his commendable intentions, I felt that there were flaws with the way

that Berkley went about in disproving the stereotype that has plagued Africa in the Western World for so long.The main problem that I had with this book, while I did enjoy the style in which Berkley wrote in, was that the "case studies", if you will, seemed to all blend together towards the end. In some instances, Berkley even used the exact same phrases and language to describe the atrocities. As you continue on, you almost feel like you could cut out the name of the country and the tyrannical ruler in power and replace them with the next case study and have the next chapter set up. While the idea of using five different examples to argue his case is fascinating, it almost seems to desensitize the reader to the violence and injustices the people were suffering. This is unfortunate because I believe the intentions of the author to be worthy but his means of presenting them do not completely do him justice.Despite this, I feel that overall Berkley brings a fresh approach of a Westerner writing about Africa. Rather than completely focusing on the "big men" of these nations, Berkley took the time in his travels to speak with people of all classes, ethnicities, and gender to attempt to create a more rounded perspective. This book allows us as readers from the Western World to get a better sense of the implication these events had on the rest of the world. We see the role that countries like the United States played in the development of these regimes as well as a brief look at possible motives politicians had for making the decisions that they did. While exploring the myth that African conflict is caused by tribal differences, we are able to experience some of the modern events that have plagued Africa in recent times in a refreshing new light.

Bill Berkeley’s book The Graves Are Not Yet Full is the outcome of his anger and disgust upon witnessing freshly slaughtered corpses in Kigali, Rwanda. His investigation of political leaders in Liberia, Congo, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda and Rwanda is intended to enlighten readers about unjustified killings across Africa. Berkeley’s argument is that explanations of tribalism, and primitive and "age-old hatreds" as the causes of Africa’s bloodbath are inaccurate. He argues that the real "evil" behind the suffering are the educated tyrants who promote conflicts among groups in order to sustain power. In the words of Berkeley, "Big men [are] using little men, cynically maneuvering for power and booty while thousands perish" (14).For the most part, Berkeley is successful in establishing a persuasive claim. His examination of intellectual leaders stirring up conflict in Africa is convincingly supported by the sophisticated oppressors. His concentration on tyrants manipulating "ethnic conflict as a form of organized crime" is also insightful based on his descriptions of how leaders and the government pit racial groups against each other. His analyses of Liberia and Rwanda are especially helpful in supporting his claim. However, the fact that Berkeley refuses to recognize the significance of tribalism as a cause of African anguish makes his analysis too

simplistic.Given his emphasis on tyrants, Berkeley focuses on countries where he can easily support his argument. In all of the countries he discusses, tyrants use the divide-and-rule tactic to inflame ethnic conflict. In the case of Liberia, the system worked in the favor of Charles Taylor, as the terror he inflicted upon African people established his presidency. In the case of Rwanda, leaders plotted the Hutus and Tutsis against each other in a battle for superiority. The conflict of the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda supports Berkeley's argument allowing him to reject tribalism as a cause of conflict as both groups live in peace in certain areas of Rwanda. However, Berkeley's focus on particular countries left me to wonder whether ethnic conflict plays a substantial role in African countries not examined in his investigation.Perhaps the biggest strength of Bill Berkeley's book is his firsthand perspective on the atrocities in Africa. Through his eye witnessed accounts, readers are allowed to share the experience of a man in Africa who is visualizing horrendous violence. Unlike other writings on Africa, Berkeley's account explores the madness in Africa over a 20-year span. The attention he brings to the tragedies in Africa appears to be directed towards a Western audience. His intention is to shed light on the extent of violence occurring in Africa since most Western people are oblivious to the reality.

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