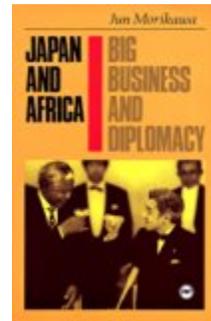


H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Jun Morikawa. *Japan and Africa: Big Business and Diplomacy*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1997. xii + 298 pp. \$79.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-86543-576-6; \$21.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-86543-577-3.

Reviewed by Richard Bradshaw (Centre College)
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This is an outstanding study of Japan's Africa policy by the world's leading expert on the topic, Jun Morikawa, whose previous book on Japan's relations with South Africa (1988) won an award from Japan's African Studies Association. A scholar-activist, Morikawa's aim has always been to both unmask the true nature of Japan's Africa policy and to encourage a better-informed public to perform a "watch-dog function" that can hopefully influence the development and implementation of Japan's Africa policy.

As background, Morikawa includes a critical account of Japan's relations with Africa prior to World War II, but his main focus is on the three decades between the establishment of the Foreign Ministry's Africa Division in 1961 and the end of white-minority rule in South Africa in the early 1990s. He argues that Japan's African diplomacy was shaped by the four general pillars of its foreign policy during this era, namely, 1) maintaining friendly and cooperative relations with the United States, 2) showing solidarity with the industrialized countries of the non-Communist world, including South Africa, 3) promoting friendly relations with anti-Communist and non-aligned nations of the Third World, and 4) engaging in both confrontation and dialogue with countries aligned with the Communist camp.

Those familiar with the literature on Japan's relations with Africa in the postwar period may be struck by the lack of narrow economic objectives on this list. Morikawa argues that "there is a general tendency to overemphasise the economic aspects" in discussions of the goals of Japan's Africa policy (p. 11). If so, then why is the book subtitled *Big Business and Diplomacy*? The answer is that the Japanese business community exerted

very strong influence on Japan's policy toward Africa.

Morikawa explains that 1) Japan relied mainly on economic means to display its commitment to Cold War strategy; 2) big business had the skills and capital to promote trade and to provide technical assistance to African countries; 3) having the business community take the lead reduced the chances of Japan being criticized for its "pro-white" policy with regard to South Africa; and 4) Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) politicians generally lacked any interest in Africa.

One of the many virtues of this book is that it reveals how Japanese business leaders cooperated closely with bureaucrats and politicians to pursue Japan's Africa policy goals without losing sight of the fact that specific economic objectives were always subordinated to Japan's primary goal to "become politically more powerful and influential on the world stage" (p. 3). Like most great powers, Japan was ultimately willing to sacrifice greater wealth for greater status.

The broad outlines of Japan's Africa policy were shaped by its alliance with the West against the East, but within this context, the business community in Japan helped formulate and implement the goals of this policy in a way which directly benefited it. For example, after the "oil shock" of 1973, Japan's leaders felt the need to promote the transformation of Japan's industrial structure from one based on chemical and heavy industries to one based on high-tech industries. It was important therefore to secure a staple supply of rare metals such as chrome, manganese, platinum and vanadium. Japan naturally chose to obtain these metals from South Africa since the Soviet Union was hypothetically its number one enemy. The goal of securing a stable supply of strate-

gic metals was not motivated by narrow economic interest but rather by Japan's need to maintain and enhance its national security. It was nevertheless Japanese businesses which actually took up the task of obtaining these strategic minerals, and profited greatly in the process.

One chapter is devoted to the development, practice, and demise of Japan's dual diplomacy, a term Morikawa uses to describe Japan's effort to be "both pro-White Africa and pro-Black Africa at the same time" (p. 7). Japan's White Africa policy attempted to provide economic support which would "prevent the diplomatic, social and psychological isolation of the White minority regimes" (p. 53). At the same time, however, Japan's Black Africa policy included showing special sympathy for African national liberation movements. For example, Japan's recognition of Guinea-Bissau in 1974, before other Western countries, is described as a diplomatic "coup designed to win support in Africa" (p. 82). Japan's pro-Pretoria orientation was so transparent, however, that its pro-Black Africa diplomacy often failed to achieve its goals. In 1978, Black African votes for Bangladesh appear to have been critical in defeating Japan's candidacy for a seat on the UN Security Council.

Another chapter is devoted to an examination of the three major actors in Japan's external decision-making structure: the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the bureaucracy, and the "zaikai" (which Morikawa prefers to translate as "organized business"). The LDP has generally been the least influential of these three, and yet the Japan South Africa Parliamentary Friendship League (JS-APFL), which was formed by LDP Diet members in 1984, appears to have at least briefly played a role in the formu-

lation and implementation of Japan's pro-Pretoria policy. Bureaucrats of various ministries and agencies (the Foreign Ministry, the Finance Ministry, and even the Imperial Household Agency, for example), were clearly more important actors and yet their options were often limited by "Cold War considerations, harmonious co-operation with the United States and Europe, and adherence to the dual diplomacy framework" (p. 100).

Morikawa also explores the relationship between Japanese NGOs and Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) by examining the role of the Sasakawa Foundation. The late Ryoichi Sasakawa was a right-wing superpatriot admirer of Mussolini in the pre-war period who established a motorboat racing empire in Japan after the war, and eventually used some of his enormous profits to establish a charitable organization dedicated to the prevention of famine in Africa.

This book not only provides a bold analytical framework for understanding Japan's Africa policy, but includes a remarkable amount of difficult-to-obtain detail about almost every aspect of Japan's relations with Africa. There are numerous tables, charts and lists in the text as well as in forty pages of appendices. Some may find Morikawa's view of Japan's relations with Africa too pessimistic, but anyone who takes the trouble to read it would almost have to agree that it is both the most informative and provocative book ever written on the topic.

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