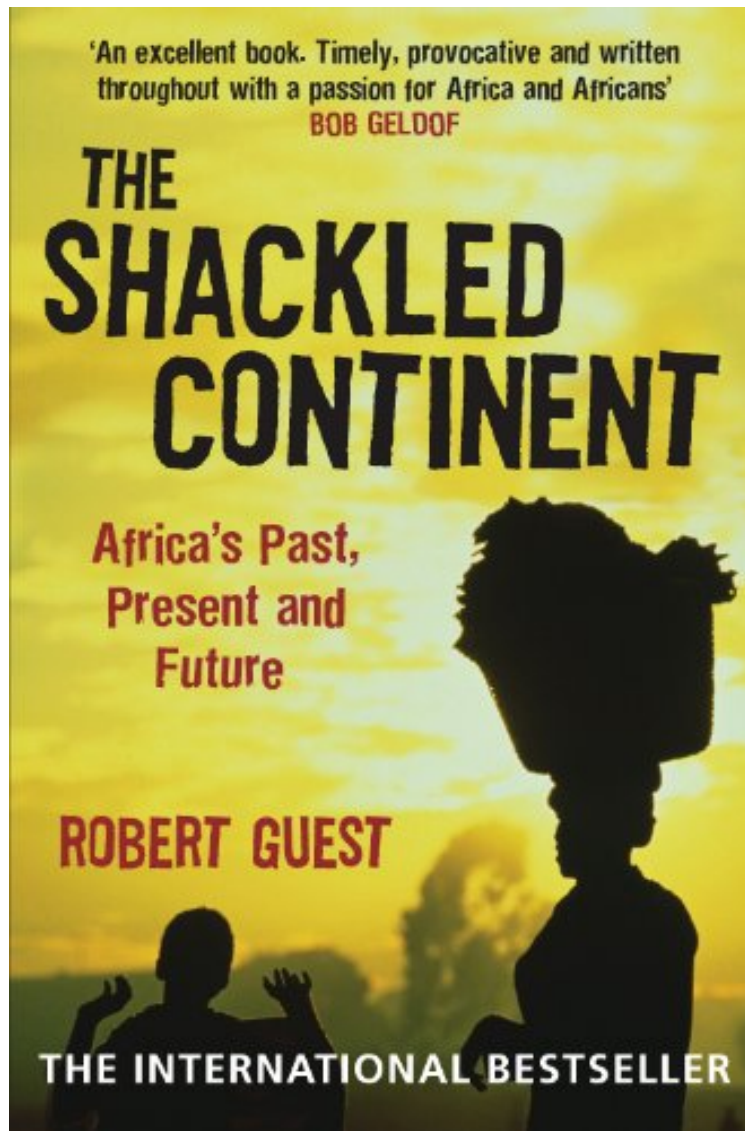


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## The Shackled Continent: Africa's Past, Present and Future

*Robert Guest*

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**Robert Guest : The Shackled Continent: Africa's Past, Present and Future** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Shackled Continent: Africa's Past, Present and Future:

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. The enigma of Africa - it's problems and potential By T. Faranda This excellent book of 288 pages is an examination of Africa and all it's problems and potential, by a reporter for the London-based The Economist magazine. Robert Guest was one of their African correspondents for seven years, residing for most of the time in Johannesburg, South Africa. This book was recommended to me by a friend who's travelled extensively in Africa and whose wife is African. A term frequently used for Africa is "an enigma." In this book Guest looks at the historic and current reasons why Africa is so poor, and what can be done about it. It is a book

about sub-saharan Africa, so the issues of Arab North Africa or of Darfur and the Sudan never come up. Despite the serious, indeed tragic subject matter, Guest manages humor and a breezy style. A brief sample of some things he touches on - African Socialism (the failure of) - Mugabe and the gradual destruction of Zimbabwe - Nigerian Petrodollars and Nigerian Tribalism - progress in South Africa - the fall of Zambia, from a promising position the 60's to total basket case - success in Botswana - how first world trade protectionism costs Africa twice what it gets in aid from the developed world. He tells a funny story about an 18 hour drive with a Guinness brewery beer truck to supply bars in Cameroon. Or rather it should have taken 18 hours, but actually took five days because of horrible roads, corrupt police and third world bureaucracy. (NOTE - despite this, it's still worth it for Guinness to do business in Africa. One thing I learned when I lived in Jamaica is that breweries always manage to turn a profit!) How does Africa leap into the 21st century? Guest offers some standard answers - eliminate the corruption, improve the infrastructure, don't give foreign aid to corrupt regimes. He points out that Africa, by borrowing contemporary technology, can leapfrog over some problems. For example, why build land phone lines when you can go straight into the cellphone era. So, a fine book and I learned quite a bit. One example: the mid nineties genocide in Rwanda as Hutus slaughtered 800,000 Tutsi's (and any Hutus who protested). I always assumed there was enmity between the two tribes going back for centuries. Not so. They got along just fine until the Belgians arrived and took over from Germany after World War I. The Belgians literally stirred up rancor between the two tribes. Another fine book on third world problems and how they have developed and what not to do to solve them (and a few things that work) is "The Elusive Quest for Growth." Also highly recommended. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Customer Excellent 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great price for the book By rellard Great price for the book! Thank you so much! I needed it for an econ class, and it did the trick for cheap.

Africa is the only continent to have grown poorer over the past three decades. Why? Robert Guest's fascinating book seeks to diagnose the sickness that continues to hobble Africa's development. Using reportage, first-hand experience and economic insight, Robert Guest takes us to the roots of the problems. Two fifths of African nations are at war, AIDS has lowered life expectancy to as young as forty and investment is almost impossible as houses that could be used as collateral do not formally belong to their owners. Most shocking of all is the evidence that the billions of dollars of aid, given to Africa has had little perceptible effect on the poor. The Shackled Continent offers insightful, and occasionally controversial, explanations for this state of affairs. In this magnificent and engaging book, Robert Guest provides an invigorating history and an inspired commentary on the enigma of modern Africa and this paperback edition includes a new chapter. 'I doubt whether there is a better brief introduction to the travails of modern Africa and their causes' Anthony Daniels, Sunday Telegraph 'He is a lively and observant reporter who can describe, in a breezy no-nonsense style, the horrors and miseries of Africans in the interior. . . The reader can learn much from this lively and outspoken book' Anthony Sampson, Guardian

"'I doubt whether there is a better brief introduction to the travails of modern Africa and their causes' Anthony Daniels, Sunday Telegraph 'He is a lively and observant reporter who can describe, in a breezy no-nonsense style, the horrors and miseries of Africans in the interior... The reader can learn much from this lively and outspoken book' Anthony Sampson, Guardian 'A provocative read' The Glasgow Herald" About the Author Robert Guest is currently the Africa Editor for the Economist and regularly appears on CNN and the BBC. A graduate of Oxford University, he lived in Africa for three years reporting on wars, famines, crazy monetary policies and bizarre drinking games. He lives in London.