

History Access Reading Group

Meet with PROFESSOR LYNN THOMAS
to discuss

Histories of the Hanged:
The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire,
by David Anderson

Wednesday, March 5, 2008
2:00–3:30, Smith 306

The book explores the history of the Mau Mau rebellion in 1950s colonial Kenya, examining how this conflict dominated the final bloody decade of British imperialism in East Africa. In a compelling and well-researched narrative, Anderson portrays the deep social and economic tensions that motivated that Mau Mau rebels and how the British empire employed whatever military and propaganda methods it could to preserve an order that could no longer hold.

Study Questions on Reverse

Please sign up for this group by contacting History Undergraduate Advising:

Phone: 543-5691 or Email: histadv@u.washington.edu

Or visit our website and click on the RSVP button at:

<http://depts.washington.edu/history/studying/access/reading.html>

Study Questions

Here are some discussion questions for Anderson's Histories of the Hanged:

1. How does Anderson's account of the Mau Mau rebellion compare to what you might recall hearing about it in the 1950s and 1960s?
2. Why does Anderson write at the start of the book that Mau Mau "has always been easier to describe than to explain"? Does he succeed in explaining rather than just describing it?
3. How exactly, according to Anderson, did the Mau Mau rebellion contribute to the end of the British empire in Africa?
4. What do we learn from this book about the politics of memory and history in postcolonial Kenya?