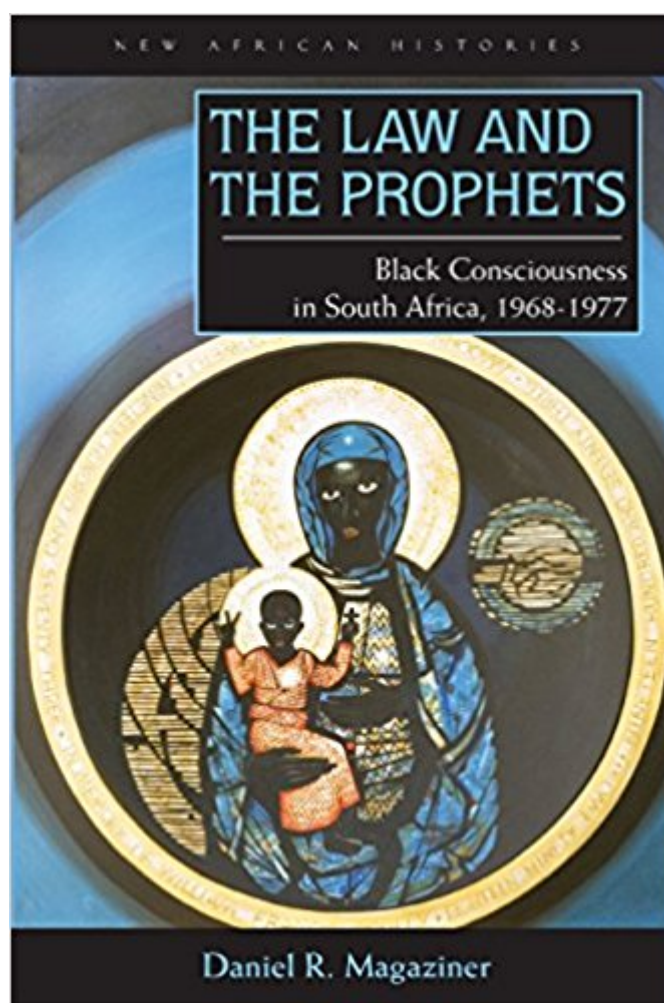


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The Law And The Prophets: Black Consciousness In South Africa, 1968-1977 (New African Histories)



Synopsis

“No nation can win a battle without faith,” Steve Biko wrote, and as Daniel R. Magaziner demonstrates in *The Law and the Prophets*, the combination of ideological and theological exploration proved a potent force. The 1970s are a decade virtually lost to South African historiography. This span of years bridged the banning and exile of the country’s best-known antiapartheid leaders in the early 1960s and the furious protests that erupted after the Soweto uprisings of June 16, 1976. Scholars thus know that something happened; yet they have only recently begun to explore how and why. *The Law and the Prophets* is an intellectual history of the resistance movement between 1968 and 1977; it follows the formation, early trials, and ultimate dissolution of the Black Consciousness movement. It differs from previous antiapartheid historiography, however, in that it focuses more on ideas than on people and organizations. Its singular contribution is an exploration of the theological turn that South African politics took during this time. Magaziner argues that only by understanding how ideas about race, faith, and selfhood developed and were transformed in this period might we begin to understand the dramatic changes that took place.

Book Information

Series: New African Histories

Paperback: 280 pages

Publisher: Ohio University Press; 1 edition (September 7, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0821419188

ISBN-13: 978-0821419182

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.9 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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“A substantial work of scholarship, *The Law and the Prophets* is original both in its subject material and in the interpretation that is brought to bear upon it; logically coherent and supported by impressive evidence.” — Tom Lodge, author of *Mandela, A Critical Life* and

South Africa: From Mandela to Mbeki “This thoughtful, imaginative intellectual history of South Africaâ€™s black consciousness movement does exactly what the author intended it to do—present a full rather than a solely antiapartheid resistance history of a formative era in the rainbow nationâ€™s emergence from white rule. . . . A major addition to the revisionary literature on modern South African politics and thought. Highly recommended.â€• —Â Choice “Magazinerâ€™s history is transnational. . . . a fascinating effort to bring together political and religious intellectual history in an innovative way.â€• —Â International Journal of African Historical Studies “This well researched study provides crucial insights into the more neglected dimensions of BC (Black Consciousness) philosophy and the eventual transition into mass political mobilization through formal organizations. It traces the hardening of political thought in the face of unrestrained state oppression and existential threat, and poses the currently very relevant political question for South Africa of what visions have been lost in the process of concerted struggle.â€• —Â New Political Science Review “Scholars and students of African and South African liberation history, theology, and intellectual history will find The Law and the Prophets provocative and enlightening. The prose is a pleasure to read and the book is skilfully woven together. . . . More importantly, Magaziner challenges us to more seriously consider the implications of Black Consciousness in history.â€• —Â South African Historical Journalâ€œThe Law and the Prophets marks a shift away from definitions of the anti-apartheid struggle that foreground the ANC as a vanguard anticolonial movement. (Magazinerâ€™s) is a study of minor actors and activists who were surprised by their unexpected emergence within national politics. . . .â€• —â€œThe Journal of Interdisciplinary History

Daniel R. Magaziner is an assistant professor of history at Cornell University. He has published articles in Radical History Review, the International Journal of African Historical Studies, History in Africa, and elsewhere.

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