

angels out there!”

Priest gives up on pigs and goes straight to sheep, buying her first flock of hardy Scottish blackfaces from a transplanted English sheep breeder who once worked for James Herriot. She gets a Border collie to help control her herd, and learns the immensely sophisticated, demanding, and rewarding pleasures offered by one of the world's great dog breeds.

Priest also learns that you don't just drop sheep on an island and leave them. Shearing, vaccinating, breeding, and culling all require trips in small craft and uncertain weather to deal with stubborn and uncooperative creatures. The tasks also require help from the community: the fishermen, carpenters, contractors, and others who own the boats, block and tackle, trucks, telephones, and everything else she finds that she needs. Despite some initial doubts, most everyone lends a hand.

In the years that follow, Priest buys another sheep farm in upstate New York, where she and the lambs spend winters. She increases her flock and watches it prosper—a favorite sheep, Mischa, races about the pasture, making beautiful balletic leaps. She buys a guard donkey to protect the sheep in New York from dogs, puts goats on the island in Nova Scotia, branches out into another sheep breed, and attends a sheep-herders' peace mission in Israel.

A foreign correspondent before becoming an actress, Priest has a voice that's energetic and opinionated, funny and beguiling. “Despite my being an oddity, I had the silent support of the men at the wharf,” she writes at one point. “They were always ready to help whenever I needed a hand, . . . but no one ever made me feel that I didn't belong there. I also know that I gave considerable pleasure all around when I fell into the water, which I did about once a year.” She is firmly connected to the natural world and takes a great deal of joy in inhabiting it. And she makes us wonder why we're eccentrically here, instead of running sheep on an island—which is clearly so much fun.

—Roxana Robinson

## CONTEMPORARY AFFAIRS

# Morocco's Moderation

MIDDLE EAST ANALYSTS often cite Morocco as a country with at least reasonable potential to become a democracy. A nation with a history of relatively moderate politics, Morocco has 33 million

people, nearly all of them Muslim, who value education and independence in equal measure. Though Morocco remains a monarchy, its citizens now elect local officials as well as representatives to a parliament, and its recent kings, whatever their failings, haven't been tyrants.

A *New York Times* and BBC correspondent since the 1950s, Marvine Howe observed firsthand the end of the French protectorate in 1956 and the evolution of Moroccan independence in the decades thereafter. She offers a broad-stroke summary of Morocco's past, coupled with the captivating and clearheaded reportorial detail necessary for assessing its future. And she has spoken firsthand to many of the figures who have shaped the past and will have a hand in the future: Mehdi Ben Barka, the opposition leader who was murdered in 1965, seemingly for political reasons; the young prince Moulay Hassan, who went on to reign from 1962 to 1999 as Hassan II; and leading human rights activists.

Howe characterizes the rule of Hassan II as a “prolonged despotic regime,” which seems an overstatement. To be sure, Hassan was a master of playing parties against one another, and he jailed political opponents, though rarely for long. After his death, his son and successor, Mohammad VI, appointed a truth and reconciliation commission, which has granted amnesty to thousands of former prisoners, though without any direct criticism of the monarchy. Yet despite his occasional severity, Hassan generally allowed quite open political discussion at the local level, a tradition that

**MOROCCO:**  
The Islamist  
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Other Challenges.

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continues under his son. Political parties are free to vie for an electoral role so long as they don't oppose the monarchy—which makes for authoritarianism of a comparatively mild sort. Howe is especially acute in her assessment of the multiple groups contending for political legitimacy in the name of Islam.

Though she has only limited knowledge of the daily lives of ordinary Moroccans, Howe recognizes the difficulties they face. A fifth of the population lives below the poverty line; half the population is illiterate (schools are cherished but sparse); four million people live in slums; the unemployment rate is 10 percent nationwide and closer to 20 percent in some cities; and the gap between rich and poor continues to widen. At the same time, the policies of the Bush administration give Moroccans repeated opportunities to mount anti-American protests that are often, in actuality, vehicles for critiques of their own system. The king may find his ability to maintain order tested by events such as the Casablanca bombing of 2003, which killed 45 people.

Yet Morocco has significant strengths as well, including a diverse economic base, substantial remittances from Moroccans working abroad, and the harrowing example of Algeria next door, as well as a close-knit society and generally responsive institutions. All of this gives many Moroccans a sense of optimism that can mystify outsiders—but not Howe, who cautiously shares their hope.

As she notes, King Hassan used to say that “Moroccans are not a people of excess.” But he also spoke of Morocco as a lion tethered to him: Sometimes it pulled him, and sometimes he had to jerk the chain and try to lead it. With many Arab states backing away from their modest promises of liberalization, and with many of their citizens more concerned about peace and order than individual liberties, the Moroccan lion and its keeper will continue to lurch onward. But who will be doing the pulling remains uncertain.

—Lawrence Rosen

## Beyond Humanitarianism

WITH A FEW NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS—Chester Crocker in the Reagan administration, Herman Cohen under the first President Bush, and Princeton Lyman in the Clinton administration—Africa specialists in the U.S. government take an

almost perverse pride in the idiosyncratic nature of their portfolios. Although poverty, disease, and conflict are hardly strangers to many areas of the globe, only with respect to Africa do these scourges frame American policy. Africa is needy—and nothing else. In his contribution to *Africa-U.S. Relations*, Lyman blames this myopia partly on the news media, which call our attention to Africa only when catastrophe strikes: “drought and famine in Ethiopia, brutal amputations in Sierra Leone, land mines claiming the lives of children in Angola and Mozambique, and racial and ethnic cleansing in Darfur.”

After a natural or human disaster, the United States may pump hundreds of millions of dollars into relief efforts. Many advocates for Africa no doubt derive satisfaction from the fact that their work is driven by humanitarian and moral concerns untainted by geopolitical or economic interests. However, the continent-in-need approach essentially pushes Africa to the bottom of the U.S. foreign-policy agenda, a fact underscored by the scant time and resources that both Democratic and Republican administrations devote to it in comparison with other regions of the world.

Noble as it is, the humanitarian impulse simply doesn't have the sustainability of national interest and other traditional elements of state-

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