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BOOK REVIEWS

Wangí Kolia: Coal, Capital and Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe 1894-1954
By Ian Phimister. Harare, Baobab Books; Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1994, xiv, 194 pp., ISBN 0-908311-69-9; 1-86814-279-5, Z\$65.

This book traces the history of capital accumulation and class struggle on the Wankie Colliery of Zimbabwe between 1894-1954. It also analyses the relationship between settler colonialism and imperialism in Zimbabwe. The author adopts a gendered approach to the study by capturing the experiences of women on the colliery in general and their role during the 1954 strike in particular.

The book begins by introducing the political circumstances surrounding the establishment of the colliery and the prospecting and speculation that took place in the 1890s. With the floatation of the Wankie (Rhodesia) Coal, Railway and Exploration Company Ltd in 1899, the development of coal mining was on the road to success.

From the outset, the problem faced by the colliery was that of shortage of labour. In order to solve its labour crisis, the colliery relied on indentured *chibaro* labour supplied by the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (RNLB). In an effort to lower production costs and expand output, the colliery's working day was extended and violence was used on the local Black population since 'The only thing that will appeal to the raw native is the sjambok' (p. 9). However, the workers, especially those who worked underground, suffered from various diseases (eg ulcers and tuberculosis) as a consequence of the nature of their work. The labour intensive nature of the mining methods meant that production could only be expanded, at least in the short term, at the cost and lives of the Black labourers. Thus with state support, the colliery was saved from periodic crises of accumulation through the supply of cheap Black labour.

The author argues that for a long time the despotic management at Wankie had relied on a constant supply of 'skilled' White workers. The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 meant that most White workers went to the war front and the few who remained behind turned the shortage of skills to their advantage. In this regard, in 1919 the Rhodesia Mine and General Workers' Association (RMGWA) was formed and it was open to all categories and grades of White miners (p.48). However, whatever demands were brought forward by White workers, the state, in conjunction with capital, always divided the labour movement along racial lines by warning the White workers against 'the possibility of the native superceding the white man in his work' (p. 52).

Phimister gives us a clear picture of the squalid living conditions of Black workers in the compounds which had been established to stabilize the increased labour force. In an effort to seek release from stress, workers sought refuge in such organizations and associations as the Watch Tower and *muchape* movements and resorted to oppressing their wives. Thus for refusing to cook for her husband when he came off night-shift, Famy, wife

of Jerenje, was knocked unconscious with a steel bar (p. 69-70). These inward responses were oblivious to the position of women and would at times become a hindrance to organization. However, the history of the colliery is also a history of strikes — a reflection of the super exploitation of Black workers for purposes of capital accumulation.

The book is well illustrated with maps and photographs which help to give a very vivid picture of the history of the Colliery in all its ramifications *viz.* — the geographical location of the company in the country, key people who were closely associated with the development of the company, labour issues, and other important production activities on the colliery. By using secondary and archival sources, in addition to oral testimony, the author comprehensively documents the history of an aspect of mining whose centrality to the development of the country, if not the subregion, is not in doubt. The book is a welcome addition to the history of mining in colonial Zimbabwe which should find its way into the shelf of every historian, economic historian, political scientist and other scholars who have an interest in the history of the colliery.

University of Zimbabwe

MAURICE K. MUTOWO

The Transport and Communications Sector in Southern Africa Edited by S. Ngwenya. Harare, SAPES Books, 1993, 135 pp., ISBN 0-7974-1224-7, Z\$38.

The book is a sectoral study conducted under the auspices of SAPES and is primarily based on Integration papers on regional cooperation presented at a Southern African Development Community (SADC) conference held in Gaborone in 1991. The study attempts to evaluate the strategy of SADC in the light of the main objectives of the 1980 Lusaka Declaration, involving co-operative development within the group and a reduction of dependence on countries outside it.

In the first three sections of the book, the reader is given a succinct account on the formation of SADC and an overview of the regional transport and communications programme. Of importance is the role played by the Southern African Transport Co-ordination Conference (SATCC) in coordinating the use of existing systems of transport and communications as well as planning and financing new ones.

The body of the book covers specific areas related to ports and transport systems, intra-regional surface transport projects, civil aviation, telecommunications, posts and meteorology. Seven transport corridor systems are covered in detail. The book undertakes an appraisal of each transport corridor in terms of its development, capacity, constraints and performance. An important area covered by the authors is that of freight modal choice which does not solely depend on the least cost route but in most cases the choice of the freight forwarder. The freight forwarder's choice is in turn influenced by considerations related to freight forwarding companies in the transit country, which in most cases are branches of the

same company. Consequently, much freight has been sent through the South African ports, negating the objective of reducing dependence on that country.

Throughout, the authors have argued that the regional transport and communications programme is heavily dependent on foreign funding and technical assistance and clearly not sustainable in the long term.

The last three sections make important observations on new directions and issues to be addressed. These include; the need to establish a common policy in the transport and communications sector, removal of non physical barriers and maximum mobilization of financial resources from within the region rather than relying on external assistance. The authors also conclude that the strategy to remove links with South Africa was not to use the South African routes and ports.

The book is undoubtedly an important contribution to the understanding of transport and communications in the region, being the first to bring together so many issues. The book is well supported by statistical appendices. It is free of jargon and easily read by a wide cross-section of people in different professions.

Although the book is analytical, it would have been more useful in some instances to discuss issues in the context of what is taking place in the region rather than generalising. For instance, the harmonization of road user charges should have included specific examples on country disparities.

The authors rightly conclude that the strategy to break links with South Africa failed. However, the book was written and published at a time when the political environment in South Africa was changing rapidly. There is little discussion of changes that are likely to take place after the dissolution of apartheid.

On a minor point, a map showing the major corridors and ports would have been useful. The book remains an important text for those involved in transport, in its administration, in its planning and for various students of transport systems.

University of Zimbabwe

T. C. MBARA

The Wesleyan Methodist Missions in Zimbabwe, 1891-1945 By C. J. M. Zvobgo. Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1991, ix, 169 pp., ISBN 0-908307-18-7, Z\$22,50.

Chengetai Zvobgo has produced a stimulating study of the planting and growth of Wesleyan Methodism in Zimbabwe from 1891 up to 1945. The publication arises from a Ph.D thesis in 1974, which has to some extent been updated in line with current scholarship.

The book was published as a contribution to the celebration of the centenary of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe which took place in September 1991. The author describes how Methodism came to

Zimbabwe, the alliances that Methodist missionaries sought with colonial settlers, the ministerial, educational and the medical and social programmes and institutions they put in place.

In Zvobgo's view the history of Methodism in Zimbabwe is not complete without the significant contributions by Black South African, and local evangelists and teachers, the lay organizations of men, women and youth, as well as the independence movements that came about as a response to the gospel.

Zvobgo also tackles the change brought about by events like the colonization of Mashonaland by the Pioneer Column in 1890, the Ndebele war of 1893, the 1896-7 Ndebele and Shona risings, the setting up of the Responsible Government in 1923, the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and the Second World War (1939-45).

This reviewer is impressed by Zvobgo's argument that the traditional Shona and Ndebele religious world views played a key role not only in providing a bulwark against the Christian gospel between 1891 and 1897 but also in shaping the ways the Christian gospel was received in later periods. These world views provided the hermeneutic loci upon which African Methodists resisted the missionary teachings against bridewealth, polygamy, 'heathen' dancing, beer-drinking, etc. This resistance disproved the missionaries' belief that the defeat of the Ndebele in 1893 and in 1896 and of the Shona in 1897 resulted in loss of confidence in their traditional religion and gods. Moreover, the founding of the Original Church of the White Bird (Shiri Chena), a church which made martyrs and saints out of all those who had been killed in the Zvimba Reserve in 1896-7, was further evidence of the pride and confidence in the traditional past.

The author views the educational and medical programmes of the Church as having tremendously changed the lives of the African people in Zimbabwe. Through these programmes the Methodist Church not only achieved its evangelist goals but also paved the way for the Shona and Ndebele to cope with the fast changing conditions on the African continent and on the globe. The author, however, feels that the church failed in its bid to champion the African cause on the land and the franchise questions. 'When the outcome proved disastrous to African interests, missionaries could not face up to the consequences of their own actions' (p. 148).

A major historiographical problem, however, arises from this work. While the author highlights the African contribution to the evangelistic, ministerial, educational and medical work of the church, he completely ignores the African input in the debates focussing on the land and franchise questions. Although the African discourse would have been given little leeway by either the colonial settlers or the paternalistic missionaries, to pretend that the African Wesleyan Methodists remained a-political throughout the period from 1897 to 1945 is at best misleading. Were Cripps and White really accurate in their perception of the Africans as the 'dumb multitude' or 'dumb proletariat'? Did the African Methodists remain dumb when the colonial governments removed them from their ancestral homes to Reserves? These are pertinent questions that a serious history of African Wesleyan Methodism should have grappled with.

The book is silent on the contributions of people like Aaron Rusike Jacha (a former Methodist teacher, and later smallhold farmer in Marirangwe), Jan Nemapare and Thompson Samkange, to early nationalism in Zimbabwe. That Nemapare and Jacha founded the old Southern Rhodesia African National Council in 1934,¹ which Samkange later chaired, should be significant. Moreover, a Bantu Voters Association came into existence in 1923, and provided a forum for African ministers to air their political thinking to the Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference. Samkange and other Methodist ministers had played roles in the association's existence. It would have been interesting to hear also their thinking regarding land segregation.²

The author's account of the position of Arthur Cripps regarding land allocation to the Africans (p. 145) conflicts with that presented by J. Weller and J. Linden.³ The author might have said more on whether Cripps was content with the allocation of only 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ % of the unutilized land to the Africans. Some discussion on 'Molimile Molele' as the 'most celebrated martyr of the Shona rising among the Methodists' could have been improved by reference to B. Graaff's work.⁴

On presentation, although chronology and numbers are an important part of history, the author could have avoided the unnecessary tedium and pedantry that goes with the numbers that litter the book. Statistical tables should have been made use of. Furthermore, a subject and name index would have been very useful in such a book.

In spite of these criticisms, this volume is the best available study of Wesleyan Methodism on this period. It is a book that students who study both secular and Church History will find useful.

¹ D. B. C. M'gabe, 'The nationalist movement in Zimbabwe', in G. M. Daniels (ed.), *Drums of War* (New York, The Third Press, Joseph Okpaki Publishing Co. Inc., 1974), 24.

² J. Weller and J. Linden, (eds.), *Mainstream Christianity to 1980 in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe* (Gwelo, Mambo Press, 1984), 206.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ B. Graaf, *Modumedi Molele. Teacher Evangelist and Martyr to Charity, Mashonaland, 1892-96* (Gweru, Mambo Press, 1988).

Symbols of Death: An Analysis of the Consciousness of the Karanga By Herbert Aschwanden, transl. by U. Cooper. Shona Heritage Series 4. Gweru, Mambo Press, 1987, 389 pp., ISBN 0-86922 390-9, Z\$20.25.

Karanga Mythology: An Analysis of the Consciousness of the Karanga in Zimbabwe By Herbert Aschwanden, transl. by U. Cooper. Shona Heritage Series 5. Gweru, Mambo Press, 1989, 287 pp., ISBN 0-86922 450-6, Z\$18.

These two volumes complete a trilogy about symbolism based on investigations into oral traditions of the Karanga people of Ndanga and Bikita districts in Masvingo. In the previous volume, *Symbols of Life*, the author examined issues like birth, childhood, sex, marriage. In *Symbols of Death*, he discusses the causes and onset of death and subsequent rituals. In the last volume, *Karanga Mythology*, he analyses myths. In all cases he was helped by nursing sisters to collect information from patients at a mission hospital where he worked as a doctor.

The author pursues a style of description and analysis, whereby he first presents the narratives of rituals in the second volume and myths in the third volume. The narratives are followed by an interpretation which unearths a cosmological dimension. The author is able to articulate the significance of his research findings from the Karanga point of view: 'an analysis of consciousness . . . of the Karanga . . . is presented to the reader strictly in the light of the Karanga's own statements and analysis' (*Symbols of Death*, 11). Also, by putting into writing the social and cultural beliefs of the Karanga, the author has systematised often fragmentary oral tradition.

However, there are some weaknesses in the work. One problem area lies with the use of translation of the Karanga issues through his assistants. Translation deprives the material of its original meaning and does not penetrate the linguistic and cultural codes of the people under study. Also, the translation into Christian terms and concepts like 'sin' reflects the author's, or his helpers', prejudice.

The second problem is the level of analysis, limited by the methods of collecting data from patients, outside the context in which the symbols are used. Aschwanden admits, 'I am also conscious of the fact that the interpretation of some symbols and rituals is inadequate and that the Karanga's far deeper understanding of them has remained undiscovered by us' (*Symbols of Death*, 11).

On the whole, Aschwanden's books try to provide basic information on the Karanga oral tradition which is valuable for social and cultural anthropologists, sociologists, historians, and researchers in indigenous religions and culture.

The People of the Great River: The Tonga Hoped the Water Would Follow Them *By Fr Michael Tremmel and The River Tonga People.* Silveira House Social Series No. 9. Gweru, Mambo Press in association with Silveira House, 1994, 76 pp., ISBN 0-86922-600-2.

Michael Tremmel worked as a priest among the Tonga in the Binga District of Zimbabwe for eight years, from 1986–1994. This book is his farewell gift to the people. The book gathers memories and reflections, and a few songs, from 17 elderly Tonga men and women. The author provides background information and some commentary, together with some concluding reflections about the plight of the Tonga people.

One would expect memories of life before the Kariba dam was built to be somewhat romanticised. There are no surprises on this score. Nevertheless, the memories point to good things that were taken away from the people. The pain of the move is well depicted. The people talk about their losses, and also about some gains in their life today. They talk about their problems, from wildlife (which they are no longer allowed to hunt but which destroy their crops) to government officials who look down on them and do not listen. They talk also about their beliefs and culture.

The book is attractively presented, well illustrated by Loes Roos. It has both charm and information.

University of Zimbabwe

M. F. C. BOURDILLON

Small Town Africa: Studies in Rural-urban Interaction *Edited by Jonathan Baker.* Uppsala, The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1990, 268 pp., ISBN 91-7106-305-6.

The book consists of 14 papers organized thematically into four sections: planning for small urban centres in the national context; economic networks, small enterprises and entrepreneurship; urban-rural linkages, opportunities and survival strategies; and the constraints and distortions imposed by state policies. The purposes of the volume are, firstly, to stimulate debate and further research interests on the topic 'urban development in rural context in Africa' and, secondly, to illustrate some of the complexity, range and intensity of the small towns and their relationships with the rural hinterland.

The first section on planning includes papers on Botswana (Silitshena), Kenya (Obudho and Aduwo) and Nigeria (Egunjobi). These illustrate the need for planners to look at the particular local circumstances, which can involve different kinds of rural-urban linkages.

On economic networks, Pedersen argues from the historical development of small towns in Denmark that it is important to tap the entrepreneurial spirit of small enterprises. In contrast, Rasmussen fails to understand the rationale of entrepreneurs in Gutu, Zimbabwe. Wekwete, writing on Zimbabwe, locates the growth of towns in the context of post-colonial policies of rural development.

The five case studies on rural-urban linkages comprise the most interesting part of the book. These graphically show how in different circumstances people adopt different but buoyant survival strategies. Ornas discusses how ethnicity functions as an important factor for pastoralists turned townsmen in East Africa, not only in terms of settlement patterns but also for resource access. Andreasen with reference to Kenya shows how splitting a household into rural and urban sections functions to reduce costs of living in an urban environment. The strategy also ensures benefits from ethnic networks. Vaa describes female migration to urban areas in Bamako, Mali, as a consciously adopted survival strategy. Schlyter focusses on survival strategies of female-headed households. Where primary access to land is vested in men, women have weaker ties with the rural areas. Consequently, they invest more in urban networks, where they hope to stay permanently. Finally in this section, Aina examines the fragmentation of land holdings in Lagos, and the leasing of small plots to the urban poor, giving them some access to land.

In the final section, Bake (Ethiopia), Gould and Michels (Zambia) and Ahmed and Sln (Sudan) examine the limitations created by the state policies on small urban centres. Such policies can reflect a high degree of centralization as in the case of Ethiopia; a progressive marginalization resulting in highly exploitative centre-periphery relationships as shown by the Zambian case study; or a process of political manipulation of settlement policies as in the Sudan.

The twin objectives of the volume have been achieved. The establishment of the programme on urban development in rural contexts in Africa at the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies is an attempt to stimulate empirical studies, rather than to provide a new theoretical approach. Some authors, like Wekwete, Gould and Macaws, find problematic the concept of urban development in rural contexts. None of the papers questions the notion of rural development. Although the introductory chapter attempts to show the shortcomings of strategies for development based on centres for growth, most of the papers simply accept such strategies. They stress the importance of local actors, mediators and local institutions, to the neglect of macro processes. There is no mention of how structural adjustment and stabilization programmes have affected the development and urban-rural linkages in particular.

A major shortcoming of most of the papers, with the exception of Vaa and Schlyter, is insensitivity to issues of gender in questions of development. The authors do not address the nature of gender relations in either the rural or urban contexts. The urban is masculine and the rural is feminine, to be exploited! More women's voices are needed.

This book nevertheless presents some interesting data on issues of practical concern to people involved in development planning and research. The papers fill a void by providing a data-base grounded on empirical research. The book will certainly be useful to both practitioners and academics interested in small urban centres and rural-urban interaction. The presentations are readable and at times stimulating.

The Rural-Urban Interface in Africa: Expansion and Adaptation Edited by J. Baker and P. O. Redersen. Uppsala, The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1992, 320 pp., ISBN 91-7106-329-3.

This book presents sixteen chapters based on empirical and African experiences of the relationships between small urban centres, their rural hinterland and the larger towns in the urban hierarchy. The book presents a refreshing, critical and thought-provoking account by authors who all emphasize the interdependence of the rural and urban sectors. The authors depict small urban centres as playing a positive role in the development process, without glossing over the negative sides of small urban centres. Simon points to the need to adopt a holistic approach in our understanding of the relationship between small urban centres and their rural hinterlands. Namibia offers an opportunity to apply new perspectives that emphasize the bottom-up mechanisms, but at the same time he recognizes some of the merits in top-down approaches. Aeroe uses the example of Makambako to illustrate a decisive role of small urban centres in regional development. The next four chapters focus on rural-urban linkages.

Abdel-Ati points out that although Sinkat, a small town in Sudan, is now mostly operating as a refugee centre and plays a minimal role in terms of fostering development in its hinterland, it holds potential in the range of services it can make available to the hinterland. Little examines the importance of climatic factors in shaping economic and social linkages between rural areas and small towns in Southern Somalia. Pedersen points out that although agricultural marketing and processing activities are controlled from the centre, the role of locally based branch managers could enhance productivity in local or rural economies. At the same time the role of branch managers in local development based in small towns could lead to closer and beneficial ties between the rural hinterland and the small town. Baker examines how historically local entrepreneurial spirit among the Garage of Ethiopia survived in spite of the vagaries of administrators.

Three chapters focus on the role of entrepreneurship in small town development. Jones-Dube shows how colonialism invariably thwarted local entrepreneurial activity in Botswana, largely explaining the absence of Tswanas in the manufacturing industry to this day. Rasmussen shows how in Masvingo, in Zimbabwe, entrepreneurial spirit flourishes at the local level: surprisingly, he finds that for successful entrepreneurship, 'long term, non-family, territorially based trust relations are more conducive for enterprise efficiency than heavy reliance on the family network' (184-185). Burrows discusses the role NGOs are playing in Ghana in stimulating and sustaining local-level entrepreneurial spirit, useful in the integration of small towns and the rural hinterlands. Burrows's study shows the need for more research into the role of NGOs in urbanization in the rural context.

Three studies examine the relationship between living conditions and labour markets. Andrea's study of urban workers in Nigeria shows that, faced with adverse socio-economic conditions, most of them maintained rural links which could be activated to ensure sustenance in the city. Troil and Holm describe urban migrants in Tanzania adopting strategies that

maximize economic benefits and hence survival chances. Migration is a survival strategy that strengthens rather than undermines rural-urban links, which are beneficial to both urban and rural inhabitants.

The volume ends with an interesting section on urban agriculture as a survival strategy for different groups of people. It is a part of the strategy for meeting basic food needs as shown by Drakakis-Smith in Harare. The same themes are repeated in Gutu (Nigeria), Mlozi, Luponga and Mvena (Tanzania). In spite of the many problems the poor face in urban contexts they are quite innovative and resourceful when it comes to meeting their food requirements. On the other hand, Binbangambah (Uganda) argues that the ruralization of urban centres through agriculture is a reflection of the extent of rural poverty and urban decay.

This book is a useful addition to the literature on the rural-urban interface in Africa.

University of Zimbabwe

V. N. MUZVIDZIWA

The Legal Situation of Women in Southern Africa Edited by Julie Stewart and Alice Armstrong. Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1990, xiv, 241 pp., ISBN 0-908307-15-2, Z\$11.

This book comprises contributions by scholars from Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe on the legal situation of women in their respective countries. These six countries are included in a Research Project on Women and Law in Southern Africa.

The book opens with an introduction by Maboreke on the concept of women's law. She points to the need to understand how the law has perceived women and responded to their lives and to uncover the extent to which the law itself is biased towards a particular view of life. She explains that the distinguishing feature of women's law is its insistence upon the factual knowledge of the effect of the reality of women's lives upon their access to formal rights.

In Botswana, Molokomme touches on laws relating to women's legal capacity, marriage, inheritance, maintenance, divorce, health and abortion. She argues that the legal situation of women should be studied within the context of socio-economic realities and recommends a multi-dimensional approach in which lawyers work with sociologists, economists and other social scientists in the study of women's law.

In Lesotho, Seeiso *et al.* state that although women are *de facto* heads of households due to labour migration, they nonetheless continue to be subject to legal disabilities. One such disability is the absolute authority given to the husband to act on behalf of his wife in marriages in community of property. In such marriages the legal capabilities of wives of migrants are severely restricted until the husband's return. The writers also present an overview of other laws affecting women in the area of health, employment, commerce, and education.

The Mozambican section by Casimiro *et al.* focuses in particular on the role of women within the judicial system. With regard to the overall

legal situation of women, they warn against the limitations of colonial research. They point out that this research failed to analyse forms of exploitation, class relations and their transformation. They also highlight the need for a thorough investigation of the forms of family organization and the cultural reality.

Nhlapo analyses the legal situation of women in Swaziland in the context of a duality of cultural institutions, political and civil arrangements, economic spheres and legal institutions. He discusses the importance of the family in the perpetuation and well-being of society. He further notes that women's role in the family makes the issue of women a value-laden topic and tends to circumscribe the parameters of discussion.

In the *Zambian case*, Himonga *et al.* also cast the legal situation of women in the context of legal dualism, particularly with regard to marriage, land, and succession. The writers see a need for further research on the evolving customary law in the areas of marriage maintenance and customary property rights. They also emphasize the need to study the effectiveness of rights conferred by general law on *Zambian women*.

On *Zimbabwe*, Stewart *et al.* give a comprehensive picture of the legal position of women as regards citizenship, legal capacity, marriage, divorce, inheritance, delict, health, education and employment. They note that the legal situation of women is often understood in terms of the law as it is in the books. They emphasize the need for research on the application of the law, its relevance, the extent to which women know about their rights and the issues which the women themselves consider important.

The concluding chapter by Gay discusses the range of people who need to know about women and the law such as top-level development planners, middle-level development workers, legal aid workers, counsellors, health workers and ordinary citizens both rich and poor. She also examines research needs and emphasizes the necessity to place these within a sociological context. An example is given of the recurring need in the previous chapters to research into the sociology of the legal profession in each country. Methods of data collection such as case studies, ethnographic studies, workshops, and documentary research are discussed.

The book provides a useful overview of the laws in each of the six countries and will be of use to students, scholars and researchers interested in gaining an overall perspective of the legal situation of women in Southern Africa.

The book is, however, essentially rooted in the law. It mentions though neglects the analysis of other dimensions that have a bearing on women's lives.