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BOOK REVIEWS


Since the publication of M.F.D. Young's influential article, 'Knowledge and Control', more than a decade ago, an increasing volume of research into the history and sociology of education has been directed to the apparent relationships between educational policy and the interests of dominant socio-economic groups in many countries. Against this background, Kumbula's study—which is based on a successful submission for a higher degree—represents a significant attempt to analyse the socio-political factors which determined the provision of secondary and higher education for Blacks in the former Colony of Southern Rhodesia, from the onset of the colonial period to the mid-1970s. Similarly the collection of essays by Mugomba and Nyaggah is timely, in two important respects. It represents a significant addition to the still far too slender body of literature on African response to colonial education policy in Southern Africa. And it provides useful data concerning several countries which have as yet received remarkably little attention from students of education, writing in the English language.

Kumbula's book makes stimulating and, in large part, convincing reading. Using an extensive body of documentary material, from both official and non-official sources, the author has built up a valuable picture of racial discrimination in a setting where—as he puts it—'Blacks...perceived education as one sure way of speeding their emergence from their deprived status' and 'whites used education to keep blacks subordinate to them and to ensure continued white domination' (p. 155). There is painstaking and, in places, incisive discussion of official White attitudes and of factors underlying Rhodesian educational policy, set against the wider background of British imperial educational policy in Africa. The author is particularly skilful in his treatment of developments during the post-Federation period, where he provides a convincing demonstration of the dichotomy between official protestations of 'meritocracy' and 'non-racialism' and the reality of racial discrimination in virtually every aspect of the public life of the Colony. As he points out, there was indeed little prospect of meritocracy in a situation where government spent on average more than eleven times as much money on the education of a White child than on that of a Black child, and where the expansion of secondary school facilities for Blacks was far from sufficient to keep pace with increases in the primary school population.

A rather striking weakness, nevertheless, is the absence of an attempt to analyse the various elements of White Rhodesian opinion, and to estimate the extent to which they influenced educational policy. Missionaries, farmers, businessmen, administrators and political leaders all had distinctive interests and attitudes, and these sometimes clashed in the determination of policy. Important conflicts in White opinion, which Kumbula does not consider, were the disagreement between missionaries and government, concerning the first government schools for Africans at Domboshawa and Tjolotjo, and the resignation of Harold Jowitt from his post as Director of Native Education because of disagreement with
his colleagues concerning his policy of community development. Indeed, the main principles of Jowitt's immensely influential work, and the motives which might have determined them, are not discussed at all in the study, although there is one brief mention of Jowitt's helper, Henry Alvord, whose teaching of agriculture to Blacks met with opposition from White farmers.

Like Young, and other writers of the New Sociology group, Kumbula sees socio-economic and political factors as the only significant determinants of educational policy. Some will dispute, accordingly, his assertion that among African educational systems, that of South Africa came closest to matching Southern Rhodesia 'in form, substance, philosophy, curricula content, and objectives' (p. 21). Although there were, undoubtedly, close relationships between South African and Southern Rhodesian education (perhaps notably in the importing of policies of community development by Jowitt from his mentor, L.G. Loram, in Natal) it is also pertinent to consider a movement away from South African and towards English educational practice by Southern Rhodesian administrators from the 1920s on. This movement was apparently due in part at least to a belief among White Rhodesians that the South African curriculum was insufficiently challenging, and did not provide the degree of moral and intellectual training needed by young people in a rapidly developing society. Again, some will regret that no qualification is added to Kumbula's conclusion that 'The whites and blacks viewed each other as antagonists where the victory of one side would lead to the subjugation of the other' (p. 155). A small series of achievements—perhaps most notably Manfred Hodson's struggle for a multiracial University College, Basil Fletcher's blueprint for Ranche House College, and the independent schools' bursary scheme for Black pupils—might have served to indicate the existence of traditions of non-racial idealism, contrasting vividly with the dominant racialism of colonial society.

The study is well structured, carefully documented and written in an attractive discursive style. It makes a very useful addition to the significantly growing body of publications on the history of education in Zimbabwe.

Most of the papers in Mugomba and Nyaggah's collection were originally presented at an International Conference on Colonial Education and Contemporary Conflict in Southern Africa, held at the Santa Barbara campus of the University of California in 1977. As the editors explain in their Introduction, the intention has been to follow an uncompromisingly Reconstructionist theme. Europeans, they write, brought to Africa

a new system of education which, like the colonial model of the political system, both subordinated and relegated to a peripheral role the African educational systems and the existing political, economic and social orders. The newcomers introduced alternative theories of education and imposed a new set of educational institutions which in some cases supplemented and in most others replaced previous forms of learning. The colonial schools required students of a specific age range to attend on a full-time basis rather than allowing them to be taught in the intervals between productive work, and on a lifelong basis (pp. 1-2).

In consequence, African countries, on the assumption of independence, found themselves 'saddled with an educational system unsuited to their requirements.
They needed people trained for responsibilities previously reserved for the colonial administrators. They also needed to foster a whole new spirit of self-reliance and experimentation' (p. 2). The various ‘problems and contradictions’ of the colonial educational legacy could be removed only by ‘new philosophies and teaching methods’ which must emerge from the distinctive circumstances of African life: ‘just as the widening economic gap [between developed and developing countries] cannot be narrowed by importing solutions, the problem of basic education for the majority of Third World people cannot be solved by importing Western models (or even Eastern ones for that matter)’ (pp. 3–4).

The theme of educational Reconstructionism runs insistently through the four sections into which the papers have been grouped. In Part I, entitled ‘Regional Perspectives’, there are two contributions by Zimbabwean scholars teaching in the U.S. David Chanaïwa’s study, ‘African humanism in Southern Africa’, represents an important re-assessment of the influence of early mission-educated elites, who, he suggests, ‘created a utopian, universalist, and moralist world of their own to which they attempted to lead both the African and settler worlds’ (p. 34). His conclusions are largely complemented by those of Agrippah Mugomba, whose contribution, ‘African mind processing: Colonial miseducation and elite psychological decolonization’, delivers a rejection of evolutionary educational change in post-colonial Africa. He considers that there is a ‘desperate need to dismantle colonial institutions and structures in order to foster genuine political, economic, and social changes’ (p. 53).

Part II contains three papers under the title of ‘Philosophical Foundations’, among which the most significant appears to be Mougo Nyaggah’s study, ‘Apartheid and second-class education in South Africa’. In Part III, concerned with ‘Comparative Perspectives’, there are five contributions, including two studies of educational development in Mozambique, by Mario Azevedo and Agrippah Mugomba. These contributions are supported by a small but well-chosen selection of documentary material as Appendices to the volume. Chanaïwa’s ‘Conclusion’, presented as Part IV of the volume, impresses one as an able and well-structured synthesis of historical argument in the papers which have gone before. Without doubt he and his fellow-contributors have provided valuable new insight into many aspects of Southern Africa’s educational history.

A concluding caveat on both works, however, is that historical evidence, though valuable in other ways, is never per se a reliable foundation for the determination of policy. One must necessarily look elsewhere to find support for the viability of any particular educational programme in current circumstances. The real case for Reconstructionism must ultimately stand or fall, less on consideration of the ‘problems and contradictions’ of the colonial past, than on the realistic appraisal of needs and possibilities in the Zimbabwe of today.

University of Zimbabwe

N.D. Atkinson

This brief study, based upon the author's Fordham University doctorate of 1976, is primarily concerned with religious beliefs and structure, but is limited by its reliance on a single grouping for its evidence in a movement that is both geographically widespread through southern and eastern African and rent by internal divisions. However, like Jules-Rosette's study of the Vapostori (African Apostles, 1975) it usefully helps fill some of the gaps left by Daneel's concentration on the more southern parts of Shona country. The book is particularly welcome in its use of archival material for the early years of Johane Masowe but the history of the sect's return to Southern Rhodesia in 1962 is patchy; it can, however, be supplemented by reference to D. Munjeri's article (in NADA (1978), XI, (v), 497–509).

R.S.R.


This autobiography of 'Jack' Grant was edited by Cecil Northcott, and has a foreword by Alan Paton and an epilogue by Garfield Todd—a distinguished trio of witnesses to Grant's lifelong involvement in missionary work and thereby, because he lived in South Africa and Rhodesia, political activity. As the descendant of a wealthy West Indian family and as a great cricketer he was an unlikely candidate for prohibited-immigrant status in Rhodesia—as indeed was his wife, the daughter of Sir Fraser Russell, a Chief Justice of Southern Rhodesia.

In Zimbabwe today Jack Grant is remembered for his fund-raising activities for Christian Care, which supported detainees and their families, and his help to Cold Comfort Farm and numerous university students.

R.S.R.


This book has a busy editor who contributes to four of the ten chapters. The aim of the book is to describe key aspects of Zimbabwe's inheritance, these being organized into two areas, socio-political and economic, each taking broadly equal shares. The authors, however, attempt to provide more than a presentation of the state of the State for Independence in 1980; there is also a helpful and detailed analysis of historical development and, although it is the professed aim of the editor to avoid prescriptions or recommendations for the future, few of the authors can resist their own radical solutions to inherent problems. All this is, I think, quite interesting for the reader and places this book as a collection of Independence essays by authors concerned for the future of Zimbabwe.

There is throughout the book a thematic approach which blends together the chapters which might otherwise have been quite disparate. The theme is one of Black poverty and growing inequality as measured against the wealth, income and status of the White settlers. The theme is essentially political and more
convincingly portrayed as such in the socio-political chapters than by the economic portrayals. However, the theme is an effective blending device to provide a consistent and persuasive background for both the student and the policy maker. As the Minister of Education writes in the Preface dated March 1981:

It is the sad truth that African countries are often worse off after independence because of the cruel and ruthless exploitation of neocolonialism. Corruption and self-enrichment replace the search for freedom and truth; the masses continue to suffer as before.

It is the professed wish of our government to avoid the temptations and pitfalls that await us. One of the most important ways in which we can avoid these changes is through 'conscientisation', through politicisation, and also through accurate knowledge of our inheritance in agriculture, industry, education, health and infrastructure (p.xiii).

It seems correct to suggest that Zimbabwe is a sound, mature and diversified modern economy in the industrial, commercial and financial sectors despite (a) the costs of economic sanctions following U.D.I. and (b) the nationalist war. But Zimbabwe’s inheritance is also the community of its peoples, the overwhelming majority of whom have suffered the ravages of war, particularly in the rural sector, and the overwhelming majority of whom are Black and have suffered discrimination by wealth, income and status through measures enacted by successive White governments.

Zimbabwe’s problem on independence was how to maintain the modern sector at a growth rate sufficient to finance both the rehabilitation of its peoples and the more radical measures required to correct the ‘lop-sided’ nature of past policies. Stoneman and most of his authors emphasize the ‘lop-sided’ inheritance to a degree where the book as a whole fails to grasp the complex nature of the difficulties which will surely arise. There is no foundation for the view that capitalism (of either domestic or foreign origin) is identified mostly by corruption and self-enrichment and socialism with freedom and truth. Popularizing such an approach is in itself engineering a major temptation and pitfall. The Government’s own economic statements (Growth with Equity; An Economic Policy Statement [Cmd. R.Z. 4, 1981] and the Annual Economic Review of Zimbabwe [Cmd. R.Z. 11, 1981]) appear to recognize the significance of the dual nature of the nation’s background and the need for a bi-partisan approach to ideology.

Nevertheless, in spite of the almost rhythmic pounding of the theme throughout the book, there are many interesting and informative essays with valuable insights provided by the individual authors. In Lionel Cliffe’s essay on Zimbabwe’s Political Inheritance we see the often assumed homogeneous White colonial population broken down into the colonialists supported by foreign capital living alongside settler farmers and White workers divided across a range of classes. These distinctions may be fine but can be significant when analysing the White liberal movements and attitudes towards U.D.I. Cliffe’s perception of tribal rivalry stretches credibility in its claim that the antagonism between the Shona and Ndebele has been introduced by leaders who were opportunistic and divorced from the struggle.

The social and economic aspects of the African community are painted in by Coenraad Brand who considers racial, religious, ethnic and regional perspectives in
an absorbing ‘Anatomy of an Unequal Society’. The interdependence of the rural and urban sectors is carefully described and Brand notes the paradox of a continuing legacy of inequality yet a close organic interdependence between the two sectors. The message might be that dualism should be seen as a more complex phenomenon than some commentators and policy-makers allow.

In the ‘Reproduction of Inequality: Taxation and the Social order’, Laurence Harris shows the tax system in Rhodesia as similar in structure to those in the more advanced Western nations and goes on the conclude that as the new Zimbabwe has completely different economic aims and its government has a different understanding of what the underlying economic and social structure is, the tax system constructed by the old regime has to be radically altered (p. 94). Harris uses the ‘principle of self-financing’ to explain ‘apartheid in public finance’ (p. 77) and argues that there was a lack of distributional equity in Rhodesia. However valid this conclusion might be, the analysis would be more complete if accompanied by a more complete picture of public finance which might show the enormous difficulty of providing ‘satisfactory’ benefits out of a low and limited tax base.

The chapters written specifically on the economy are really less than convincing to anyone seeking direction as well as information. This section, which is heavily ‘Stonemanned’ is obsessed by the pre-eminence of capital through its foreign ownership, its profitability and its exploitation of labour. The tone is arrogantly socialist and totally polemical. Without private capital, foreign and domestic, there would now be no diversified modern sector and without private capital G.D.P. per head would not be half its existing level, the tax-take would be minimal and the problems of poverty would be so much more acute that only the multilateral-aid institutions would be able to afford publications and economic planning.

The essay on Foreign Trade by Rob Davies, however, deserves salvage, if only because the overseas sector is more distanced from central government. The analysis here is objectively related to the inherited structure of external relations. During U.D.I. the direction of trade diversified away from dependence upon the United Kingdom but at the same time dependence upon South Africa was intensified for both trade and transport. The pattern of trade had been distorted by import substitution, by the reduction of tobacco exports and by the import controls imposed by the government to ration and direct scarce foreign exchange. Davies, although recognizing the linkages between trade and domestic production and employment and noting that there might be some effective protection for manufacturing, argues that the fundamental causes of inequality and the focus for redistributional policies must lie elsewhere. Davies does not regard the foreign trade sector as central to the economy and asserts this view quite controversially when suggesting that the importance which is attached to the balance of payments in developed as well as underdeveloped countries is misplaced.

All in all the book is of considerable value as a broad background to Zimbabwe’s political economy and society. In addition there is an extensive bibliography and index provided at the end. Some readers may find that too many of the contributions suffer from quite simple, explicit and identical assumptions about the causes and cures of poverty and inequality in Zimbabwe. For example, the editor writing in the introduction (p. 6) says that Zimbabwe’s problems ‘can be tackled more directly, attacking exploitation at source by beginning to build a
society based on co-operative rather than competitive principles’. However, to paraphrase George Bernard Shaw, ‘if you have a dirty face better to wash it clean than cut off its head!’


Clarke’s book deals with the effects of colonial economics on the social structures of the Shona and Ndebele peoples and the breakdown of much of the functional ‘social security’ measures for the old which were built into a society based on the extended family. He outlines measures which were considered or implemented during the colonial era for social security and rightly points to their inadequacy. He indicates various measures for the improvement in the quality of life for the aged and identifies specially vulnerable groups as being women, foreign workers who have made their homes in Zimbabwe, and the landless unemployed. These last two groups, of course, overlap to a large extent. It is useful to read Clarke’s book together with Fr Hampson’s and with Muchena’s work. These two are vivid impressionist studies using case histories as illustrations of the problems encountered by the old in the city, and also by their relatives, as often the aged must share a home which provides inadequate space, with two succeeding generations. This obviously gives rise to tensions within the household as the elders are conscious of their loss of independence and all members of the household are painfully aware that the resources which must be shared are extremely limited.

The plight of the rural aged poor has not as yet been ascertained but one suspects that it has deteriorated and is a problem which needs attention particularly in the resettlement areas. One suspects, too, that Hampson’s quotation (p. 15) of the idyllic picture of an honoured old age holding ‘promise of a generous supply of food, drink and clothing; of a warm house to sleep in; of time to sun oneself, with the strain of decision and labour left to others; of the company of visitors; of the satisfaction of watching one’s herd and offspring multiply’ if kinship and other obligations had been well fulfilled, is—and was always—a Garden of Eden myth; and that the reality usually fell very short of the dream.

The universality and timelessness of the problems of old age do not make them any less urgent at any particular time and place, and Fr Hampson’s timely and excellent small book is a reminder to us that we must not lose sight of the problem of the aged poor in the social and economic demands of a rapidly growing population where resources for social security measures are limited.

This book is one of a series, of the same title, for other countries in Africa such as Angola and Mocambique. The title, however, is a poor guide to the contents, which are almost entirely historical. Approximately half of the book is a general survey of Zimbabwean history, and the other half a survey of the role of the Catholic Church, mainly over the last 22 years. The latter part of the book is largely based on I. Linden’s recent Church and State in Rhodesia, 1959–1979 (reviewed ante (1980), VIII, 195–212) and consequently presents a similarly distorted view of a Catholic Church allegedly weakened in its resolve to combat racism by establishment Jesuits (pp. 90, 92–4, 123). Underlying this conspiracy theory of history is the bland assumption that the Catholic Church somehow has a natural leadership role in nationalism (p. 91), whereas in fact the activism permitted to Protestant ministers, like Sithole, Dodge, Muzorewa, or Banana, is surely much more significant than Bishop Lamont’s pastoral letters. For a more balanced view of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe and its recent attempts to meet the needs of the people, readers would be better advised to read the later chapters of The Catholic Church in Zimbabwe by A.J. Dachs and W.F. Rea (also reviewed ante, ibid.).

R.S.R.


Professor Gelfand has written many books and articles on various aspects of Shona culture. The present book deals mainly with human relationships, particularly family spiritual relationships. There has been a need for a book on this aspect of Shona culture, and he must, therefore, be congratulated for trying to fill this gap. In discussing relationships and behaviour he examines marriage and family, religion and community, and political organization with particular reference to traditional society. Wherever possible these aspects of Shona culture are compared with those of Europeans.

Although the book was written primarily for a lay audience, it will be a useful addition to our bookshelves, serving a dual purpose. For students and scholars it provides a reference base for more specific studies, and for a lay readership it provides a greater understanding of the Shona people. Gelfand has worked with Shona people for over thirty years as a medical doctor and a student of Shona culture. It is this experience which has made him succeed in the difficult task of writing a scholarly and accurate book which is readable; it is analytic without being obscure, and generalizes with appropriate consideration for regional particularities. Many will be impressed by his sympathy towards and deep understanding of the men, women and children who are the subject of this book.

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G.L. Chavunduka