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BOOK REVIEWS


Professor Gelfand's detailed study is the most valuable book on education in traditional Shona society yet to appear. The author has consulted a number of experts with considerable experience of Shona social life. The result is a concentrated study of the aims and functions of education which is both accurate and comprehensive.

The title, Growing up in Shona Society, is a good indication of the book's scope; it deals with birth and development of the child. Gelfand identifies and describes six important stages in the growth of a child as far as socialization is concerned: from birth to four weeks of age (the period of the neonate), from four weeks to two years (the stage before crawling until the child can walk), from the time of walking to the age of eight (during which the child moves away from its mother and seeks the company of others of its own sex), from nine years to puberty, pre-adolescent stage, and adolescence.

At each stage Gelfand describes the methods used by the traditional Shona to teach the growing child the necessary skills, attitudes, values, and social roles. These methods include games, songs, and what he describes as the three 'R's—proverbs, riddles, and avoidance rules. Skills are largely taught quite consciously, while values and attitudes tend to be transmitted less explicitly. The various methods of socialization used by the Shona appear to be very effective.

The book has much to offer to educationalists, sociologists, administrators, historians and other specialists interested in Shona culture.

University of Rhodesia

G. L. CHAYUNDUKA


Archbishop Chichester is the most outstanding personality who has yet served the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe Rhodesia. If we exclude the present Diocese of Bulawayo, he dominated it from 1931 when he was made Vicar Apostolic of Salisbury until 1956, when, now Archbishop and Head of the Rhodesian Hierarchy, he resigned. During those years he, more than anyone else, transformed a mission into a solidly established church.

While developing the previous pastoral work of the rural missions, and of Christian witness through education and nursing, his three personal contributions, into which he threw himself as soon as he became Vicar Apostolic, were the creation of an African sisterhood, the founding of a seminary and of an African clergy, and his inviting other religious orders, besides the English Jesuits, who had hitherto been responsible for the Salisbury Vicariate, to come to his help, thus greatly increasing the number of workers.
The transformation is seen from the fact that the number of Catholics in the area for which he had assumed responsibility in 1931 had grown from 26 000 to 114 000 by 1956, the number of priests from 46 to 142, of Sisters from 179 to 353, of whom about 170 were African, and of Religious Brothers from 2 to 65. Fourteen Africans had been ordained and many more were in training. Finally what had been the Vicariate of Salisbury had become an Archdiocese and two Dioceses.

Fr Barr's Memoir brings out Chichester's characteristics as can only be done by someone who has known him well. It is no panegyric; Chichester's blind spots, his failure to see that his own toughness made it possible for him to make demands on himself which he could not always make on others, are here for all to see. But, with all that, the Memoir brings out clearly his real lovableness. For that was the adjective applied to him by all who knew him. He was interested in everyone, from the V.I.P.s whom he met at Government House to the children of an African kraal, and he genuinely wished to make everyone happy. Most revealing is that after the day in 1955 when the Hierarchy was established, when he had been feted by the Governor General of the Federation, by the Governor of Rhodesia, by the Rhodesian Government and by others, he slipped away to show kindness and give gifts to some who had been unable to enjoy the celebrations, namely the lepers at Mtemwa. A man of drive, but of prayer, of humility and of love of God and all others; such was Archbishop Chichester.

University of Rhodesia

W. F. Rea, S.J.


**Smith of Rhodesia** By M. C. White. [Cape Town], D. Nelson, 1978, 134pp., illustrated, R12,00.

Now that it appears that Peregrine Worsthorne's much heralded biography of I. D. Smith is not going to be written, it is time to review the little that we have on this key figure in the history of the last twenty years. The first thing to be said is that none of these books is worthy of the subject's importance. Joyce's book is an honest if limited attempt to chronicle both the recent history of Zimbabwe Rhodesia and Smith's part in it, but the author has no real insight into either. This is not entirely surprising, as he enjoyed no access to Smith or his papers and therefore had to rely entirely on the public record.

The author of the second work, Berlyn, did enjoy some co-operation, apparently, but it has not produced any better interpretation of its subject. Indeed, because of an uncritical approach, it is even less satisfactory than Joyce's book; and in the absence of any new facts, it is difficult to understand why it was written or published — particularly in the haste that is apparent throughout in its repetitions and lack of organization.
The next book is even less serious a study — being largely a collection of photographs culled from unacknowledged but apparently published sources, accompanied by a chronological outline based on newspaper or other secondary sources. The only claim to interest of the book is that a reference to the embezzlement of defence funds led to a High Court injunction against its distribution in Zimbabwe Rhodesia.

Few politicians have held office for so long and so much the focus of international attention; yet as these three books show, journalistic attention does not produce even rudimentary understanding or insight. Survivors in politics always arouse suspicion — except, perhaps, among other politicians who, knowing their own precarious position, like Nyerere or Kaunda, cannot begrudge admiration. But admiration and suspicion do not really explain very much: they tend to cancel out and leave a void of understanding, a limbo in which Smith, and even the Rhodesian Front, will languish in the textbooks, unless a professional scholar can be given access. A party and a leader that can, apparently, do the opposite of what it intended and still retain the confidence of its electorate needs to be sympathetically explained, not merely explained away.

R.S.R.

The Shona People: An Ethnography of the Contemporary Shona, with Special Reference to Their Religion By M. F. C. Bourdillon. Gwelo Mambo Press, 1976, Shona Heritage Series: Volume 1, 339pp., maps, illus., bibl. ZR$6,80 (hard cover; $4,75 soft cover).

Myths about Africans By M. F. C. Bourdillon. Gwelo, Mambo Press, 1976, 35pp., ZR$0,45.

Bourdillon's The Shona Peoples is the first significant and systematic attempt to present a comprehensive ethnography of the Shona peoples since Bullock's 1928 work (The Mashona, Cape Town, Juta, reprinted and revised as The Mashona and Matabele, Cape Town, Juta, 1950). During the interim period serious scholars have had to rely for this kind of over-view on the slim volume published by the International African Institute (H. Kuper, A. B. J. Hughes and J. van Velsen, The Shona and Ndebele of Southern Rhodesia, London, International African Institute, 1955) or else make their own synthesis through the diffuse literature produced by Holleman, Gelfand and others. Bourdillon's book is a far better one than the Bullock and I. A. I. volumes, and although written primarily for a lay audience its underlying anthropological professionalism renders it without question the current standard ethnography of the Shona. It is therefore an extremely useful addition to our bookshelves, serving a dual purpose. For students and scholars it provides a reliable ethnographic reference base for more specific studies, and for a White lay readership in this country it provides a 'greater understanding of their black compatriots', the stated primary aim of the book (p.9).

Bourdillon utilizes a straightforward ethnographic presentation, covering in various chapters history, kinship, economic institutions, local-level political organization, legal structures and religious organization and practice.
As indicated by the sub-title, considerable attention is given to religion, with separate chapters being devoted to sickness and misfortune, witchcraft, death and the communal aspects of religion in both traditional and contemporary contexts.

This emphasis is not misplaced, for it serves to bring out the epistemological underpinnings of Shona culture, a necessary complement to Bourdillon's treatment of the structural aspects of Shona society. It is this aspect of the book which, more than any other, carries it beyond mere description to an analysis of cultural motivation for action in the best anthropological tradition. Dr Bourdillon succeeds admirably in the difficult task of writing a scholarly and accurate book which is readable; it is analytic without being obscure, detailed without being verbose, and generalizes with appropriate consideration for regional particularities. Well documented and referenced, it provides both a useful synopsis of the available literature and a valuable context in which it can be read.

As a comprehensive contemporary ethnography of the Shona I can fault the volume in only three respects, one of which the author himself raises with disarming candour and for one of which he can hardly be held responsible. A comprehensive Shona ethnography should include more than this one does on the Shona-speaking peoples of Moçambique, in particular the Barwe, the Teve (a sub-division of the Manyika) and the Nsau. But, as I say, Bourdillon can hardly be blamed for this as the extant anthropological literature on these groups in either Portuguese or English is limited, and the exigencies of international politics have made any co-ordinated scholarship difficult if not impossible. A more serious defect of the book is the paucity of material presented on contemporary urban Shona life. The brief chapter, 'Becoming Urban' (pp. 361-74), hardly does justice to this important topic. Bourdillon is at a disadvantage here, since although considerable sociological attention has been given in recent years to this category of the Shona population, in-depth anthropological studies are scarce and do not match the wealth of detail and analysis to be found in, for instance, neighbouring Zambia. Nevertheless the chapter gives the impression of being a postscript hastily written to meet a publisher's deadline, rather than being given the central importance it deserves.

Finally, Bourdillon explicitly attempts to avoid any specific analysis of the national political dimension of his topic on the grounds of complexity and possible subjective influence on both the book and its readership (pp. 10-11). While understanding his reasons, my reaction to this approach by the author was one of considerable disappointment. For one thing, the impact of politicization in a national context is a critical component of contemporary cultural formation for the Shona and therefore pervasively important for the topic of the book. For another thing, Dr Bourdillon is well equipped to handle this topic; he has ample materials in his files and the scholarly integrity and skill to write incisively on the subject. Readers of this book should, in fact, read it in conjunction with his booklet, *Myths About Africans*.

Here Dr Bourdillon shows a keen awareness of the impact of the importance of political context and also of how the conceptualization of a culture by both in-groups and out-groups can be turned and shaped as an instrument of political policy. It is a pity that the insights of this booklet were not utilized by Dr Bourdillon to produce a further chapter for the book, exploring the influence of the environing political climate on the contemporary development of Shona culture.
But I have no wish to join the long list of reviewers who are critical on the grounds that the book the author wrote was not the one they wanted written, and perhaps Dr Bourdillon was right in restricting his goal to a volume which seeks to promote White understanding of Shona culture in a non-polemic way. Aware of past White intransigence Peter Fry, in another review of this book (*Africa* (1978), XLVIII, 92-3) is sceptical of this approach: 'Dr Bourdillon’s desire to enlighten the white population through the writing of an honest and straightforward ethnography is, I fear, unduly optimistic, and his deliberate avoidance of political issues unnecessarily cautious.' This is, however, a statement written from the static perspective of one whose first-hand experience of the power structure of this country is now somewhat dated. Whites here are now faced with the requirement of adjusting to a new status of political subordinancy and the necessity of ‘a greater understanding of their black compatriots’ carries a new urgency and importance. For them, this book is a valuable tool and should be read by all. And, for the benefit of Blacks themselves, this book should be on the shelves of every secondary and tertiary institution of learning in the land, as the standard contemporary ethnography of the Shona.

*University of Rhodesia*  
M. W. Murphree

**Historical Dictionary of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe** By R. K. Rasmussen  

**From Avondale to Zimbabwe** By R. Smith.  
Salisbury, privately, [1978], 314pp., ZR$6.00 (s/c).

These two reference books will be useful to anyone pursuing research in Rhodesia.

Rasmussen’s volume is the more ambitious and follows the established format of the African Historical Dictionaries Series in which this is the eighteenth to be published. It contains some 1,199 entries and the author has made valiant efforts to keep abreast of recent historical research. Inevitably there are numerous points that will not meet general agreement and every reader will find what he regards as serious omissions; for example, Keigwin and N. H. Wilson are not included, although Wilson’s Two Pyramid policy is entered but ascribed to Huggins. Similarly the criteria of selection sometimes seem strange — entries for rhinoceros and elephant, but none for the Cold Storage Commission, the Maize Control Board or the Agricultural Marketing Authority. Generally the book is weak on institutions, somewhat erratic on places (cf Goromanzi [sic]), stronger on the Ndebele than the Shona.

Smith’s volume is a modest gazetteer of some 130 places in Zimbabwe Rhodesia, and on his chosen places is generally stronger than Rasmussen; see for example, Rasmussen’s failure to explain the origin of the Tuli Circle compared with Smith’s neat and historically accurate description.

Whatever their failings, these two books, in conjunction with the bibliographies reviewed above (p.103ff), mark a significant and welcome addition to the reference aids on Zimbabwe Rhodesia.

R.S.R.

This essay by Fr Mavenka, a Catholic secular priest of the Gwelo Diocese, was originally presented as a minor dissertation in partial fulfilment for the licentiate degree in Theology at Maynooth, Ireland in 1975. The work takes as its starting point the Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church of Vatican II, and in particular its direction that the episcopal conferences pursue this programme of adaptation with one mind and with a common self-reliant Churches.

The basis of the essay is in a nineteenth-century Protestant, three-fold definition of self-reliant as self-leading, self-supporting, and self-propagating. Self-reliance has radical social implications for the Church, involving a drastic lowering of standards in its economic life 'because a rich Church cannot witness to poor people'.

Through a careful and scholarly documentary examination of local churches in the New Testament and Patristic periods the writer concludes that the early Church did not organize foreign missions but founded the Church directly in the different places which it evangelized, 'building it up in each place with local elements: Bishops, clergy and laity. It accepted a popular liturgy and used the arts which flourished on the spot.'

The proper aim of evangelism is thus not to found missions but to establish Churches with a mission.

The shortage of priests in Third World countries stands in the way of the implementation of these radical changes, and a much greater emphasis must be placed on the providing for the needs of the Church from local resources rather than on an over-dependence on outside help.

Protestant churches may, without ordination, specially commission laymen to dispense the sacraments in particular circumstances and for limited periods. This solution is presumably unacceptable to Roman Catholics because of their view of priesthood and sacrament. Fr Mavenka sees the solution of the problem in 'the diversification of the priesthood', i.e. in conferring ordination to the priesthood on those lay-leaders who are in many places performing those functions which are traditionally reserved to the ordained minister.

This reviewer suggests that, following the recent report of the Roman Catholic Commission for Priestly Functions (The Daily Telegraph, 15 August 1979), a partial solution to the problem may be found in fuller and permanent use of deacons, who hitherto have been regarded as occupying a step towards the priesthood. The report notes that permanent Roman Catholic deacons have already been ordained, some of them married men. A policy such as this might go a long way towards the realization of the true objectives so ably expounded by Fr Mavenka in his essay.

University of Rhodesia

R. Craig


These two works are part of a well known series of reprints but they both represent new departures for the publisher. The former of the two books is the first translation in the series and the latter is a reprint only in the sense that it is an updated and extended version of a Ph.D. thesis only a few years old.

Specialists in the early history of European rule in Southern Rhodesia have long known, and profited from, Rolin's Les Lois et l'administration de la Rhodésie (Brussels, E. Bruylant, 1913); this translation into English will now make this work available to a wider reading public. The book is largely a factual description of the way in which the British South Africa Company governed its territory south of the Zambezi, but it also has useful material on the organization of land settlement and mining. It is in effect, the nearest we have to a constitutional history of the B.S.A. Company, and it is a pity that an analytical introduction was not provided.

Di Perna's book is essentially an explanation of the reasons why Southern Rhodesia opted to end Company rule and become self-governing rather than a part of the Union of South Africa. The short answer of the author is that a Rhodesian nationalism had developed—and that it is only ignorance of that factor that has made Britain and the world underestimate Rhodesian determination since 1962. While there is some truth in this line of argument, it greatly oversimplifies the complexities of the 1922 Referendum and no account has been taken of considerable research, notably by Mrs Elaine Lee, a doctoral student of this University, much of which has been published.

Whatever criticisms may be made of these two books, however, it is important to welcome these new ventures by the publisher in making such works accessible to the reading public and students of Zimbabwe Rhodesia.

R.S.R.


Ten years ago after ZAPU guerillas had clashed with security forces in the Wankie district several authors used the incident as a basis for novels about an imaginary war in Rhodesia. Wilbur Smith's The Sunbird, David Chapman's The Infiltrators and Lawrence van der Post's two novels A Far-off Place and A Story like the Wind all give a fictional rendering to that early incursion and all managed to invest it with a curious quality of fantasy. That is nothing new. Long after the armed resistance to the occupation of
Rhodesia had faded into history, Rhodesian novelists had continued to titillate their readers with stirrings in the Reserves. What is remarkable was that after the incident in which members of the security forces were killed and the organization and tenacity of the newly militant nationalist groups had become obvious, novelists seemed incapable of throwing off the habit of seventy years: African objections to White rule could still be stylized as the eccentricities of the primitive man or be used to add additional colour to the novelists' depiction of the mystery and romance of Africa.

Ten years later that comfortable distancing of the significance of such events is no longer possible. No one, Black or White, is unaffected by the war. Refugees in their hundreds of thousands have flocked to the towns and cities. The dreary toll of human life has become a part of our consciousness. We live, as the Catholic bishops recently said, in a 'tormented land'.

It is not surprising then that the latest novels show an immediacy in their treatment of the war that was absent in novels published even three or four years ago. The daily tensions of farm life in Chipinga are described with a precision in C. E. Dibb's *Spotted Soldiers* that has not been managed in any previous novel and she does not attempt to make the war a passing albeit rather unpleasant phase in the life of the country. Peter Armstrong's *Operation Zambezi* conveys something of the way in which the war has come to dominate our lives if only by permeating even the sub-plots that clutter his narrative with aspects of the war not dealt with in the reconstruction of the October 1978 raids into Zambia which are the novel's principal concern. Even Lloyd Burton's *The Yellow Mountain*, a celebration of White Rhodesian superiority against all comers, manages to become more sombrely realistic in the chapters actually set in Rhodesia.

But having made that point one still notes with surprise how shallow is the insight of all three novels into what the war is all about. In *Spotted Soldiers* this is perhaps defensible. The novel had its genesis as a serial in the South African magazine *Fair Lady* and is at least as unpretentious as that origin suggests. Felicity MacIntyre, its widowed heroine, who is determined to continue to run her coffee plantation despite the hostility of her neighbours and the scepticism of the army, is characterized with some skill and she manages to achieve an individuality not normally associated with women's magazine serials. Her love of the farm is justified by the occasionally adept description of Gazaland scenery, although these are sometimes damaged by Dibb's adjective-laden prose. The plot is similar to Jeffery Farnol's *The Money Moon*, a popular Edwardian romance and no doubt hundreds of others like it, only here the neighbour who wants both Felicity and her land is a rather simple-minded Afrikaner— he says 'No, my proud beauty ... Don't try to fight me' but the book is not generally written as badly as that—and the stranger coming fortuitously into her life is Rod Napier, an attorney and Captain with the Territorial Army. In short, it is the stuff that women's magazines serials are made of except Gazaland today does enforce a realism of detail on that hackneyed plot. It is hard to be completely fatuous when the machinery of your novel includes F.N.S, Agric-Alerts, ambushes, homestead attacks and the tired faces of men fighting an apparently endless war. Only when Dibbs describes a recruiting incident does she fall back on that curious propaganda cliché that children can be lured from schools only with promises of scholarships. It is inconceivable that a sixteen-year old lad in Gazaland would be unaware of why he was being invited by an armed man to cross the border into Moçambique. But that and a *nganga* smelling out dissidents in a camp at Espungabera can be balanced against a compassionate
account of one of the boys, Luka, returning to see his mother where a fine
tenderness of detail allows some humanity to the boy even while acknow-
ledging that he has been involved in acts of brutality in the border area. In
Luka's sudden doubts about the justness of his cause and Sonny van
Niekerk's dealing with the guerillas in order to drive Felicity into his clutches
Dibbs is attempting to describe a situation worthy of her title. Shakespeare
understood that in war the most spotless cause cannot rely solely on 'unspotted
soldiers'. Bombarded as we have been for so many years by propaganda that
makes one side wholly good, the other wholly evil, one can only be grateful
for the implications of the novel's epigraph.

Altogether a different sort of novel is The Yellow Mountain. Lloyd
Burton came to Rhodesia only in 1972—the year the war started in earnest—
and the love his Rhodesian characters feel for the land is asserted rather
than demonstrated. Whereas one has no doubt why Felicity MacIntyre is
fighting to retain her land, the Cochrane family of Burton's novel are offered
as types—they have already fled Kenya because of Mau Mau and are now
faced with another insurgency threat in their adopted land. They are Whites at
the mercy of a turbulent continent. In their determination, however, that the
flight from Kenya will not be repeated they are given a stature that makes
them at once incredible as characters and at the same time worthy participants
in a more or less incredible series of events.

A German officer, Krans, discovered oil while drilling for water in the
Sahara during the Second World War; he also captured a huge consignment
of gold sent by British Intelligence to win the allegiance of desert nomads.
The British Treasury is after the gold; an American oil company after the oil;
the local corrupt police officer also wants the gold and the situation is further
complicated by the intelligence officers of an Eastern-block country becoming
involved. An even greater complication is that both gold and the maps of the
area where the oil strike was made are hidden in a booby-trapped fort, Jebal
Safraa, the yellow mountain of the title, which is used as a training centre
for a Zimbabwean guerrilla group.

With that sort of opposition any sensible Rhodesian might be expected
to call it a day but the Rhodesians of The Yellow Mountain are not so pusil-
lanimous. Cochrane, his daughter and a young patrol officer from Beit Bridge
helped by Krans manage to obtain and escape with both gold and maps.
What emerges from the plot then is that Rhodesians can take on representa-
tives of most of the world and by sheer force of will and cunning emerge
victorious. It is for some White Rhodesians a comforting fantasy—the
British are shown to be peculiarly incompetent and spiteful—but the triumph-
phant activities at Jebal Safraa necessarily contrast with the beleaguered
homestead of Cochrane's adopted son and the likelihood that his farm will
be abandoned after he has been paralysed during an attack on the house.

The object of getting the gold and selling the oil maps to the Americans
is to provide a laser beam defence system along the Moçambique border—
Cochrane's brain-child. There is a sad inconsistency between this desperate
attempt to keep track of incursions—without the gold from Jebal Safraa
there would not be enough money to pay for these installations—and the
easy heroic role of Rhodesians in the Saharan town. Whereas in earlier novels
the war was a fantasy and White Rhodesia's victory a certainty, in these
later novels ways of ending the war become increasingly far-fetched.

This is confirmed by the latest novel about the war, Peter Armstrong's
Operation Zambezi. Here, a temporary respite to Rhodesia's problems is
provided by the capture of the Soviet Ambassador to Zambia. He is brain-washed into supporting ZANLA and withdrawing support from ZPRA. Quite why the Rhodesian war effort should benefit from Cuban soldiers being shipped to Moçambique and a cargo of arms being sent directly to Robert Mugabe is not made clear except in the rather unconvincing observation: "Any confusion in the unholy alliance which is working against us can only be of benefit, even if it only lasts for a few days". It is indicative of the desperateness with which the novelists are forced to view the situation that hope of winning the war should be made to hang on such slender threads. Another sub-plot charts an attempt to assassinate Joshua Nkomo by a man whose girl-friend had been murdered in the Viscount disaster of September 1978, although there is no suggestion that anything would have been achieved had such an attempt succeeded. In the descriptions of Spark's obsessional hatred of Nkomo and his determination to avenge his girl-friend's murder Armstrong seems to be working out a fantasy with which many White Rhodesians would be able to identify.

The main concern of the book is with the Rhodesian raids into Zambia which are described with competent reportage, although how accurate they are in fact is impossible to know. What is interesting is to speculate why Armstrong felt it necessary to pad out these accounts with his improbable sub-plots.

The raids were, in terms of what they set out to do, successful and must have demanded courage and dedication from those who took part. Despite this even when the book was being written the war continued to escalate. Nothing had changed. Is that not the reason why novelists like Armstrong cannot rest with realistic accounts of the conduct of the war? To the novelists ten years ago the idea that a large-scale war could develop seemed fantastic; to the contemporary novelist the war is only too real. They have to allow their fictions to lapse into fantasy for only in fantasy is there any sort of comfort.

*Prominent Rhodesian Personalities 1978* Edited by L. Newitt. Salisbury, Cover Publicity Services, 1978, 238pp., illustrated, no price indicated. This work is a new version of *Prominent African Personalities of Rhodesia* (reviewed, *ante* (1978), VI, 221), expanded by the inclusion of some 60 more Africans and about 140 Europeans. Although of some use in respect of the personalities included, the coverage is too inconsistent and scrappy to make it a valuable work of reference.

R.S.R.