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BOOK REVIEWS

The Story of Maize and the Farmers' Co-op Ltd. By R. Cherer Smith (comp.) (Salisbury, Farmers' Co-op Ltd, 1979), viii, 190 pp., illus., Z$10.00.

Those wanting to acquaint themselves with the history of maize in colonial Zimbabwe have to content themselves with a rather thin gruel. The story of that commodity takes up only fifteen per cent of the book, the bulk of which is devoted to a straightforward account of the growth of the Farmers' Co-op, laced here and there with brief anecdotes of the personalities involved.

Mention of such 'characters' as former Co-op chairman John Pascoe (who sat on the roof of a wagonette during the 1896 Rebellion, firing at the enemy as they attacked the party of women that he was riding to safety from Alice Mine to Salisbury), and of Murdo MacCauley (largest maize producer in the Banket area who, when a button fell off his trousers, would replace it with a mimosa thorn) sets the tone of the Co-op story, which is presented more as a popular narrative than as a serious piece of historical analysis.

Indeed, the historian will find only 22 references, mostly citing issues of the Rhodesia Agricultural Journal and Sports and Sportsmen in South Africa and Rhodesia, with only one reference to an original archival document.

Because of this reliance on published sources, the book manages to repeat most of the misconceptions about maize control in the 1930s, in which the Co-op was so closely involved. As the author notes, the establishment of the Maize Control Board was 'a very important landmark in the history of the Co-op' with the latter not only playing the main part in introducing the maize control arrangements, but also in managing the scheme for the Government.

All the more pity, therefore, that the author failed to delve a little deeper into the mechanics of control. Had he done so, he might have been less eager to accept the allegation by White maize growers at the time that African-produced maize rendered the 1931 Maize Control Act unworkable. Historians now know better than to accept the assertion that African maize ousted European maize from the local market to the extent that 'by far the greater part of all maize produced in the maize belt' by the big European growers had to be exported at a loss. The simple fact is that Africans were being made the scapegoat for the large unmarketable surpluses which were not of their making.

More pertinently: to blame Africans for capturing the local market in 'exempted' areas at the Control Board's expense is to ignore the basic truth that less than ten per cent of African sales of maize was delivered at places on rail for transport to the main urban markets where it could compete with European-grown maize (see my Maize Control in Southern Rhodesia 1931-41 (Salisbury, The Central Africa Historical Association, Local Series 34, 1978), 2). Such African-grown maize as did reach central markets certainly did not benefit African growers, but European speculators who bought African maize at depressed prices to sell at a profit at the Control Board's standard prices (ibid., 8).

Neither did African peasants benefit from the privilege granted them under the 1934 Maize Control Act of selling through more than one outlet. For whether Africans sold their maize to traders, or to European farmers and prospectors, or directly to the Control Board, there was no way they could escape receiving less...
than already depressed export prices. This was ensured by an elaborate 'rake off' system whereby traders, miners, ranchers and farmers purchasing maize from Africans were obliged to pay levies to the Board which thereby derived the income for subsidizing the export losses of the large European maize growers (ibid., 18–20).

In effect, what the Co-op participated in was an elaborate exercise designed to ensure the survival of the European farming sector at the expense of the African.

It is to the Co-op's credit that its members 'vigorously opposed' the two-pool quota system operated by the Maize Control Board, albeit for the wrong reasons. For not only was the system 'the very antithesis of co-operation'. It was, in the final analysis, also a piece of blatant exploitation.

Ministry of Education and Culture
Salisbury

C. F. Keyter


This story of Zimbabwe's senior club is basically a collection of lively biographies of chairmen and members over the years. As such it is interesting reading and almost constitutes a non-political Who's Who of Southern Rhodesia. It is a pity, however, that someone with Black's knowledge and skill did not attempt a more analytical history of an institution that, one may guess, played not a small part in defining Establishment consensus in White Rhodesia. Civil servants of a certain rank were expected to join; Ministers were extended membership if not already members. Thus when Special Juries were created there was considerable White opposition to being judged as well as ruled by the Salisbury Club.

R.S.R.


The inertia of a complex system is great. Although in a revolutionary era men's minds easily leap ahead, rapid change 'on the ground' in an educational system is virtually impossible. Thus, although published in 1980, this book is still of interest and importance, and must have provided a useful contribution to the ferment of ideas that has surrounded education in Zimbabwe since Independence.

In the first two thirds of the book the author provides an excellent survey of how matters stood in education in this country on the eve of Independence, and how we had reached that situation along a road paved with racialism. But with great perception he remarks:

The removal of racial discrimination, in practice as well as theory, and policies of positive discrimination will not solve the country's education and development problems on their own. Indeed, in future years, it may
well be that racialism will be viewed as a relatively minor problem. A major thesis of this booklet is that an expansion of the present schooling system will not solve the country's fundamental social, economic or educational problems.

The last third of the book is devoted to a discussion of the practical implications of his view that one central purpose of expanding education is to increase production, so that education is for employment; and he outlines a number of concrete policy proposals under the headings of 'universal basic education', 'adult functional literacy', and 'further training'. He points out that these three sets of proposals all require substantial financial resources, and that as funds will be limited, at least in the short term, difficult choices will have to be made.

As it is now almost two years since the book was published, the reader needs only to look out of his window to see what choices have in fact been made. He will notice, for example, that large numbers of rural secondary schools have been established and issued with (among other things) bunsen burners; but that, in general, primary schools have not been issued with pickaxes and spades. This is evidence of a choice having been made: the reader is left to put a cross or a tick against the following selection, adapted from the proposals:

**Universal Basic Education**

* The establishment of Basic Education schools throughout the country, offering a complete (possibly nine-year) course, with agriculture as an integral element in rural areas, is recommended.

* The course would provide basic head and hand skills, and also teach skills needed for productive employment in society.

* The school year would be closely related to the agricultural year, flexibility being given to schools in different areas to adapt to the variability of the rains and the harvest time, to enable the critical interrelationship between production and learning to be developed.

* Selection for education beyond the basic course would be based on an assessment profile compiled for all students both during and on completion of their basic education. This would be based partly on examinations, partly on classroom performance and partly on the impact that students have made upon their peer group and the local community.

**Universal Adult Literacy**

* A massive campaign for adult literacy in all parts of the country would provide the opportunity to learn basic literacy skills as a means of improving the occupational knowledge and skills already possessed by learners.

**Further Training**

* A comprehensive manpower-planning study would pinpoint the skills needed in the short, medium and long term, enabling further training to be closely related to requirements, so preventing shortages and surfeits.

* Integration of further training and employment was recommended so that those
benefiting could use their new skills in the service of the wider community, and hand on their skills to others.

* In general, all work places should be linked directly to centres for further training, there being a range of such centres around the country. Places of work would thus share the national task of providing skills for the economy.

* A substantial amount of further training directed specifically at rural development requirements should take place in the rural areas.

* Existing secondary and further-education schools and technical colleges should be retained and expanded, but linked directly with the needs of the economy, less emphasis being placed on what is traditionally known as ‘academic’ secondary schooling.

* Further Training Centres should be established, planned to operate in close cooperation with the needs of the other Ministries, notably Commerce, Agriculture, and Industry. Each F.T.C. should develop close links with a particular sector or sub-sector of the economy.

The main message of Riddell’s valuable little book is that, apart from the establishment of basic literacy and numeracy, ‘education for development’ is not something which happens in a school; it is something which happens at work. Hence to expand education we must provide not more schools but more workplaces.

* University of Zimbabwe

M. J. Robson


These two books comprise reprints of articles originally published in The Chamber of Mines Journal or Mining and Engineering. All the chapters (apart from ones on pre-colonial production, and the early role of the British South Africa Company, which are printed in both books, and West Australian gold, printed only in the latter) are detailed summaries of the history, geology and production of individual mines.

The first book covers twenty-one mines in Mashonaland and the second book repeats eight of these in addition to covering twelve other mines, mainly in the Midlands and Matabeleland. Written by a geologist for a mining readership rather than for historians, these brief surveys are nevertheless useful sources of reference.

R.S.R.

This autobiography begins with what the author appropriately describes as ‘in the beginning’, where he gives a vivid description of his home village, Befa, and a very succinct physical description of the area and its environs. The description of Dowa Purchase Area and life at Farm No. 4 typifies life in many African small-scale commercial farms. Of interest, of course, are the chores that Made himself did on the farm: it was a hard and persevering life which adequately prepared Made for his hard road to the top. The games that Made played during his childhood were equally hard and testing—boxing with bare fists was one of them. His children will only know about them from reading their father’s autobiography.

Made’s early education is a credit to his father, who though not educated himself, found it necessary to educate his son. Although he aimed at his son’s becoming a teacher, the taste of education soon made young Made aspire after more and more education. But despite his thirst for better education, Made was very well aware of his responsibilities, at home, to educate his younger brothers and give financial assistance to his mother. To an African who went to school during Made’s days, the difficulties and uncertainties of securing the next term’s fees, long and foodless school days were the order of the day. The assistance given by missionaries to Africans cannot and should not be underestimated, however; without them Made, and many other Africans now in senior jobs, would not be where they are today.

Throughout the book the author is modest about his achievements—in his very good school results, his sportsmanship, in music and choir conducting, in his private studies. The author emphasizes the hard work that he put into everything he did. He put all his effort and concentration into whatever it was. It is obvious that he was a gifted all-round sort of person; but despite that, he worked hard to achieve what he wanted. Dedication to his work also cost him a degree at Roma University. This is a very good lesson particularly to younger readers of his autobiography that nothing comes one’s way without sweat. Even now Made still puts all his effort into everything that he does.

That Stan Made is a man of principle is adequately portrayed by the way he stuck to the decision that had collectively been agreed to by him and all the other teachers at Kutama Mission to resign if their requests were not met by the authorities. Although all but one of his colleagues reneged on their decision Made felt it imperative to honour his word regardless of the consequences.

On his way to the hill-top Made met many disappointments: his failure at Roma University; the death of his father; his failure to get a job at the university of his own country while younger, less qualified and less experienced Whites were given the jobs; his troubles in Malawi. Yet he never let himself lose his sense of direction. His humility in coming back home to take up a very junior post at the United College of Education and Mkoba Teachers’ College again reveals the author’s desire to serve his own people. He could easily have got a top job outside Zimbabwe but he had made up his mind to serve his own people, so he came back. His wise decision paid dividends and his long-cherished wish to work at the University was fulfilled, and at an even higher level than he had hoped for.

Made’s autobiography is not only a history of his life: it includes valuable information about African education in Zimbabwe, life on the Tea Estates, the
beginnings of African Purchase Area farms, and, in brief, the social and economic life of the African during the period covered. We find that no man is too low or too high for his class. He is a man 'of the people', liked by compound workers, juniors, equals and senior people. He still has not changed at all: he is even more at home with those considered by the class-conscious snobs as 'low class' and 'middle class', and still has all his 1950s Kambuzuma and farm friends, even though he holds one of the most coveted positions in the country. The autobiography is well written, and stands among the first autobiographies by Zimbabwean Africans who have 'made it' in life.

National Archives, Salisbury

B.L.B. Mushonga

A Town Called Victoria: Or, The Rise and Fall of the Thatched House Hotel

This modest book does not go beyond 1914-15 and the history of the town often becomes merged into that of the region and indeed Southern Rhodesia. Therefore it is hardly serious urban history but the author has done some groundwork in the archives and secondary sources.

R.S.R.