

Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle, Thomas Sankara, Pathfinder Press, London, 1990 (36pp, £1.60 hbk, ISBN 0 87348 585 8 pbk).

This publication contains two of Thomas Sankara's speeches on women: *The Revolution cannot Triumph without the Emancipation of Women* (March 8, 1987), and *Women's Role in the Democratic and Popular Revolution* (October 2, 1983).

Sankara basically explains the history of women's oppression in terms of the class struggle. He shows how a woman's duties evolved from the division of labour, and relegated her to an inferior position. Because of her love for the family, a woman suffers double oppression, both in the home and outside it.

The speeches are easy to comprehend, full of respect for women, and for their status, what they go through, why they go through it, and most of all, what they stand for. They lead the reader to appreciate the endeavours of governments in different countries who form ministries or departments focusing on the affairs of women.

Reviewed by Stabile Nkomo, Student, School of Social Work, Harare, Zimbabwe.

The Politics of Reconciliation, Zimbabwe's First Decade, Victor De Waal, David Philip, Cape Town, 1990 (146pp, R39.95, ISBN 1 85065 097 7 cased, 1 85065 100 0 pbk).

This highly readable account of Zimbabwe's past combines a broad historical overview with rich personal anecdote to make a sensitive perceptive whole. As a historical document it is selective and patchy but the theme of reconciliation is the broad thread that holds the book together.

The book goes back to the early exploitation of Africa to provide the historical framework for understanding the issue of reconciliation in the first decade of Zimbabwe's independence. The aims and attitudes of the white settlers, the missionaries, the politicians, and of the different sectors of the black population and the liberation movements are brought to life by pertinent anecdote and illustration.

The book is divided into twelve chapters examining issues concerning the colonial period, Zimbabwe-Rhodesia under Bishop Muzorewa, the election period, the churches' role at different stages, moral and cultural issues, and different facets of the post-independence period. The latter provides some critique of the move towards socialism, indicating some of the pitfalls and limitations in achievements so far. There is also a three page chronology highlighting key events from 1888 and the Rudd Concession to the 1990 elections and the lapse of the remaining Lancaster House provisions. References are given, including firsthand interviews, and there is a useful index of names. The author spent six months, in 1988, interviewing a wide cross section of Zimbabwean society for the book, recording a wealth of personal impressions and views.

A particular focus is on the role of the church, and on the moral justifications given for colonialism, the liberation struggle and reconciliation. Calls for the churches to remain neutral in the face of oppression, or to plead for peace in opposition to Smith's aggression, are seen as totally inadequate, if understandable in context. The fundamental linkage between Christianity and the socialist politics of liberation and reconciliation is well argued and illustrated, contrasting with the hollow rhetoric of Christianity used by the colonial regime to justify capitalism and the domination of the people. Indeed, it is argued that such

profound Christian charity and forgiveness as exhibited by the new leaders constitute "a demonstration of human maturity so far rarely equalled in our world" (p133). The pragmatism of reconciliation is also recognised, but this does not detract from how impressive it is that there have been no purges, no war trials, no violent recriminations against the former regime or the whites in general - even the opposing armies were successfully integrated within a year, with few serious hitches.

A telling quotation is given from Maurice Nyagumbo speaking in relation to Van der Byl, previous Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs: "If I had not forgiven that man he would still be my gaoler". De Waal writes "The moral insight of that reply is due to the solid ground on which Zimbabwe's policy of National Reconciliation is based" (p1). Ironically, the hand of friendship was extended so readily at Independence, in complete contrast to what many whites feared would come, that some have failed even to recognise the magnitude of forgiveness and acceptance, and have continued to feel justified and secure in maintaining racist and separatist attitudes. The economic base has remained intact, and many, it is argued, have seen little need for fundamental attitude change.

The problem of reconciliation between different sectors of the black population, notably the two main political parties, is also touched on. The unrest and repression in Matabeleland in 1982-3, the rise of the Zimbabwe Unity Movement under Tekere, and the uniting of ZANU PF and ZAPU are all briefly explored, although a more critical appraisal of the problems would have been useful.

As noted earlier, this is a very readable book, giving valuable insights into some of the thinking and attitudes behind the known historical facts. Apart from the prominent focus on moral imperatives, it also examines some of the cultural dimensions of conflict and reconciliation. For example, hyperbolic speeches by African leaders are seen as culturally expected by the masses, and are interpreted appropriately as a display of strength or commitment. They are not intended to be taken literally, whereas the white population and white politicians often misread them as insincere or false because they do interpret them in a literal way.

Overall this is a valuable publication, not for the depth nor breadth of its historical coverage, but for its attempt to portray personal attitudes, cultural understanding and the moral base of its subjects. However, the political and economic realities that block a fundamental social transformation are only partially alluded to and this weakens the book, but it remains a refreshing and worthwhile addition to the literature.

Reviewed by Helen Jackson, Lecturer, School of Social Work, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Modernising Hunger: Famine, Food Surplus and Farm Policy in the EEC and Africa, Philip Raikes, Catholic Institute for International Relations/James Currey/Heinemann, 1988 (280pp, price not stated, ISBN 0 85255 111 8 hbk, 0 85255 112 6 pbk).

This thought provoking book, which evolved from a narrower research study on how policies have affected agriculture in Africa, is an attempt to grapple with a series of concomitant aspects of what the author calls the 'food crisis' in Africa. It is not an easy book to review or read. In part this is because the author is determined to look at policies and