

Southern Africa By *A. J. Christopher* Folkestone, Dawson, 1976, 292pp., £8.00.

Historical geography within Southern Africa, the author points out, has been a neglected subject in the twentieth century, and this book is an attempt to correct this deficiency. He has concentrated his attention almost exclusively on European settlers and their interaction with the land. Within the limitations he has set for himself, Christopher has done a highly competent job. He has traced the changing patterns of land use from the first settlement in the 1650s to the urban industrial era of the twentieth century, and the information he provides should be of considerable value to students of Southern African history. He explains the relative lack of appeal of Southern Africa for European immigration as compared to the United States and to British settlement colonies elsewhere in terms of the poverty of the physical environment, much of which was suitable only for highly dispersed pastoral activity, and to the presence of a large indigenous population. The latter had a dual discouraging effect — Europeans did not desire to come in larger numbers, and South African Whites did not want poor labourers from Europe when they had available a large cheap African labour force.

Concentration on white settlement, however, produces a one-sided view of South African history. The reader will find in this work little of the *sturm und drang* of inter-racial contact during the last three hundred years. The one chapter that he devotes to African and European contact is the least satisfactory part of the book. There are many dubious statements. He says that the Hottentots were 'content' to work for European farmers — a curious choice of words. And to maintain that Europeans avoided the dense African population zones up to the 1860s (p.139) seems to ignore the collisions on the eastern frontier during that period. The author expresses the hope that some other writer will take up the theme of African imprint on the landscape. This reviewer heartily concurs that such a study is very much needed.

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African Nationalist Leaders in Rhodesia: Who's Who By *R. Cary and D. Mitchell*. Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, 1977, illustrated, 310pp., Rh\$9.00 (pbk Rh\$3.00).

Prominent African Personalities of Rhodesia *Salisbury, Cover Publicity Services*, 1977, illustrated, xi, 196 pp., Rh\$6.00.

To those seeking answers to a whole host of questions facing Rhodesia and who are concerned about the future of our country, these books are well worth purchasing, if only to study the history and experience of a number of the people included. I also offer a word of appreciation to the authors for their efforts; it must have been a time consuming operation requiring a great deal of cross-checking and not always in the easiest circumstances.

For me the volume by Cary and Mitchell does answer some of the questions that are repeatedly asked in Rhodesia today. One of the first that comes to mind is, 'Are there African leaders capable of running a government in this country?' Secondly, 'Is there the material to provide Officers of State as well as Civil Servants at the levels capable of running a moderately successful government?' In answer to the first question I would have no hesitation in