

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

saying the answer is in the affirmative. This book discloses three if not four men who would, in my opinion, be capable of heading a Government and quite a few more who would be capable of handling a Ministry, but the first question is, of course, tied up with the second one and here I am on much more uncertain ground. Without discrediting any former holders of office in Rhodesian Governments, we have had two experiences in the last twenty-five years where men of no experience whatever of government, have moved up from the ranks of Members of Parliament and become Prime Minister, viz. Garfield Todd and Winston Field. There have been many examples of men with little parliamentary experience finding themselves as Cabinet Ministers, and indeed, the whole of Winston Field's government was without ministerial experience. An even more forceful example than that was the case of the late Captain Frankie Harris who was not even a Member of the House when Huggins made him the Minister of Agriculture.

I go into detail for the obvious reason: this question arises, 'If men are capable of becoming Prime Minister as well as Minister, why can they not also be top Civil Servants, etc. etc?'; and here is the reason for my doubt in answering the second question. Any experienced Cabinet Minister will know that even with long parliamentary experience becoming a Minister is not the easiest of jobs; but if one has had no experience whatsoever of Parliament and then suddenly becomes a Minister, the position would be quite impossible if it were not for the backing and support of an experienced and loyal Civil Service. It is their task to see their Minister is fully informed; and within the confines of the Ministry concerned they should be in a position to speak frankly and honestly to their Minister. Whether or not he takes that advice is up to him but the role of the civil servant is to advise his ministerial master of the facts of life. Here is the crux of the matter and reflects my concern as to whether or not a high standard of government could be maintained in view of the fact that so few black Rhodesians have risen to any senior position in the Public Service. I have no doubt in my own mind that those who are negotiating the possibility of a Settlement to the Anglo-Rhodesian dispute are as fully alive to this problem as I am. The question remains, 'What steps have been taken to prepare Africans for these higher responsibilities?'

Reading the record of some of the more important figures in this book, one conclusion is almost inescapable, and that is how difficult it is for a black Rhodesian and a Nationalist to emerge as a leader of his people. I do not refer only to the problem of tribal loyalties and traditions, because whilst I believe that these do exist, they need not be insurmountable. What I have in mind is the almost impossible position that faces any aspiring African leader by virtue of the fact that since 1965 when the State of Emergency was declared prior to U.D.I., no African could really put forward a programme for the progress of his people without running the real risk of conflict with the authorities. A dispassionate examination of the situation discloses that from the introduction of the 1969 Constitution onwards the African leader had nothing to offer. The ultimate goal of the 1969 Constitution was that the Africans, in the dim and distant future, would be entitled to fifty per cent of the representation in Parliament; and bearing in mind that representation in Parliament was based on the amount of income tax paid, it is no exaggeration to ask whether any worthwhile promises could be made? If this is examined in the light of what was happening to the rest of the African continent, was it not inevitable that any African leader who stood for moderation or preached it, was going to be very easily outbid by those who, on the basis of numbers, demanded the whole loaf not to be shared with anyone?

In spite of help given by this book, the reader will still experience difficulty in assessing from where the next generation of leaders will emerge. I am

inclined to the view that if there is a successful negotiation in the near future, it is almost certain that the gentlemen whom I would describe as the 'Old Guard' of the Nationalist movement are likely to be in charge of any new regime in Rhodesia. However, I do believe that others are available. It is an interesting reflection on the changing times to see an African of the status of Bishop Muzorewa say that having to go to gaol first is really no longer a prerequisite to leading your country!

I would conclude by saying that I hope it will not be too long before the authors produce a revised volume to expand somewhat on the qualities of the generation to follow. I could not resist a wry smile when I read Mr Musarurwa's remarks (p.14) on African Nationalism and I quote: 'At a time when Africans in that country [Uganda] had started the war for self rule and independence against British Colonialism . . .' Is it not strange that the vast majority of Europeans were quite convinced and, I believe, still are to this day, that British Governments, either Labour or Conservative, have had only one ambition and that was to shed their colonial responsibilities in Africa as soon as possible. I think this view is endorsed by the fact that the doctrine of paramountcy of African interests did apply to most British colonial territories that I knew of.

Salisbury

SIR ROY WELENSKY

The Guide to Rhodesia Edited by G. H. Tanser. Johannesburg, Winchester Press, 1975, 337pp., illustrated, no price indicated.

Mosi-oa-Tunya : A Handbook to the Victoria Falls Region Edited by D. W. Phillipson. Salisbury, Longman Rhodesia, 1975, 222pp., illustrated, Rh\$7.50.

Area Handbook for Southern Rhodesia By H. D. Nelson et al. Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1975, xiv, 394pp., US\$7.05.

These three books are of very different character. Tanser's is a conventional guide book which deals with the practical problems confronting tourists (such as passport formalities, hunting licences and car hire) as well as with the historical and geographical background. It is, of course, none the worse for that; and it does neatly comprehend within two covers all that the literate and intelligent tourist would normally require.

Phillipson's book is very much more learned work — but nonetheless of great value to anyone who wants to know more of this very interesting and very well-researched area around Victoria Falls. Phillipson provides several background chapters and more specialized topics are covered by such experts as, amongst others, G. Bond, J. Desmond Clarke, J. O. Vogel, R. H. N. Smithers. This is a model of what a detailed study of a region can be and it could well be copied for other regions in Central Africa.

The third book is one of the series of handbooks prepared by the Foreign Area Studies of the American University, Washington, which is designed as background reading for diplomatic, military and other government personnel. It provides a well-balanced, objective survey of the history, politics and economy, a fairly up-to-date bibliography and a useful index. At the price, it is a bargain for the general reader who wishes to be well informed.

R.S.R.