

ESSAY REVIEW

REPRINTS AND REMINISCENCES OF WHITE RHODESIA

THE LEADING REPRINT publisher in this country has undoubtedly been Books of Rhodesia, now Books of Zimbabwe, which began its highly successful series, largely of Pioneer vintage, in 1968; in all it has published more than 70 reprints but some time before the last of the main series appeared in 1979 it was clear that the demand for reprints of this sort was not infinite, particularly in view of the inevitable political changes that would almost certainly diminish both the general interest in such history and the main (that is, White) book-buying public.¹ Therefore some new, original texts were published,² but more importantly, in 1978-9 two new series entitled 'Men of Our Time' and 'Down Memory Lane' began. 'Men of Our Time' was to consist of the autobiographies or biographies of leading public figures and so far six volumes have appeared. The first three, by Julian Greenfield, Clifford Dupont and Rubidge Stumbles,³ are the recollections (autobiography would be too grand a term) of three politicians; the following three are somewhat different in that one is the story, by a friend of the family, of the Goldberg brothers and their ranch, one the memoirs of John Thompson, a leading forensic scientist in the British South Africa Police, and one an essay in autobiography with poems by Noel Brettell.⁴ With such a range of subjects it is not to be expected that the series would have much of a unity. The first three by lawyers-turned-politicians probably represented the original focus of the series but, if so, political changes have given the Men of Our Time a decidedly *passé* appearance,

¹ A similar falling off, however, appears to have taken place in South Africa where Books of Rhodesia's African Reprint Library came to an end in 1977 after twelve volumes. The three of these that relate particularly to Zimbabwe have been reviewed *ante* (1977), V, 219; most of the volumes however, have points of interest for Zimbabwe. Jeppe's map showing Mauch's route to Zimbabwe in E.F. Sandeman, *Eight Months in an Ox-waggon* [1880] (Johannesburg, Africana Reprints I, 1975), xix, xii, 402 pp., Z\$7.95; the brief survey of the Ndebele in C.L. Morris-Newman, *With the Boers in the Transvaal, 1880-1* [1882] (idem, 6, 1976), xvii, 387, viii pp., Z\$13.45; sidelights on Rhodes in L.W. Cohen, *Reminiscences of Johannesburg and London* [1944] (idem, 7, 1976), xvii, 316 pp., Z\$10.05; Jameson at his most reckless and dishonest in J.W. Matthews, *Incwadi Yami* [1887] (idem, 9, 1976), xxiii, 542, xv pp., Z\$17.50; and the remarkably early plea for the lowveld of Mashonaland to be made a game reserve in O. Schreiner, *Thoughts on South Africa* [1923] (idem, 10, 1976, xxii, 398 pp., Z\$12.50.

² Such as G. Gibbon, *Paget of Rhodesia* (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, 1973) reviewed *ante* (1973-4), III, ii, 132-4; and P. McLaughlin, *Ragtime Soldiers* (Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe, 1980) reviewed *ante* (1981), IX, 77-8. Also three of the later reprint series were not really reprints at all; A.P. Di Perna, *A Right to be Proud* (No. 22, 1978), a recent American doctoral thesis, and H. Rolin, *Rolin's Rhodesia* (No. 21, 1978), a translation by D. Kirkwood, both reviewed *ante* (1979), VII, 121; and H. Depelchin and C. Croonenberghs, *Journey to Gubuluwayo* (No. 24, 1979), a translation and edition by M. Lloyd and R.S. Roberts, reviewed *ante* (1980), VIII, 195ff.

³ J.M. Greenfield, *Testimony of a Rhodesian Federal* (1, 1978), xix, 259 pp., Z\$6.60; C. Dupont, *The Reluctant President* (2, 1978), 237 pp., Z\$6.60; A.R.W. Stumbles, *Some Recollections of a Rhodesian Speaker* (3, 1980), 203 pp., Z\$6.60.

⁴ W.E. Arnold, *The Goldbergs of Leigh Ranch* (4, 1980), xv, 140 pp., Z\$12.00; J. Thompson, *Crime Scientist* (5, 1980), xi, 184 pp., Z\$10.20; N.H. Brettell, *Side-Gate and Stile* (6, 1981), xxii, 238 pp., Z\$18.00.

and the series has notably failed to recruit to its list those other politicians of our time who are now being published, such as Muzorewa, Nyagumbo and Mugabe⁵ or less political figures, such as Stan Made, the University Librarian, who has published his reminiscences, or Langton 'Schoolboy', the boxer, who is the subject of the first of Mambo Press's Zimbabwean Profiles.⁶

Nevertheless one must be grateful for the publication of the series, however dated and thin, if only for the titbits—Greenfield's comments on Tredgold's resignation as Chief Justice in 1960, Dupont's personal courage and raciness, Stumbles's description of Jacob Smit and the Liberal Party, the Goldbergs' devotion to farming unusual in immigrant Jewish families, Thompson's reference to the extreme bunching of murder cases in Rhodesia, and Brettell's memories of Arthur Shearly Cripps. Admittedly the reader has to plough through a lot of rather trivial anecdotalage but even this has some value in underlining both White Rhodesia's smallness and remoteness (the same characters keep popping up in different books, and everybody knows everybody), and its ambivalent relationship with Britain that gradually turns into contempt. In the history of this small society, ultimately tied to Britain, the Federation, which is of little interest today, looms very large indeed—for Bennie Goldberg, the outsider, it brought the opportunity to make his mark on a wider stage and develop his deep British patriotism, for Greenfield, Dupont and Stumbles, all British by descent, the ordeal of dealing with a Britain which had lost the British will to rule that still flourished in White Rhodesia. Whilst Greenfield, the most intellectual of the participants, is more cautious, Dupont and Stumbles still maintain, despite R.A. Butler's denials, that Winston Field was deliberately deceived and tricked by Butler into accepting dissolution of Federation without prior written guarantee of independence. Common to all three books by the politicians is the failure of their authors to reveal more of what they presumably must have known—notably, the real reasons for the ejection of Todd, the details of the formation of the Rhodesian Front, and the planning and implementation of U.D.I. But will other men of our time, like Todd and Smith, Nkomo and Mugabe, ever tell us more?

The 'Down Memory Lane' series also is rather mixed in character. The first two are rather lightweight. Heald's book is a compilation of some sixty reminiscences of White women; there is little of real historical significance among the anecdotes except the numerous examples of hardships endured in developing the country which are all too often forgotten today by both Whites and Blacks.⁷ Hardy's collection of trials is of the sensational sort of crime and none of the political or constitutional ones that have influenced, or at least illustrate, Rhodesian historical or legal development is included.⁸ The third and fourth in the

⁵ A.T. Muzorewa, *Rise up and Walk: An Autobiography*, ed. N.E. Thomas (London, Evans Brothers, 1978); M. Nyagumbo, *With the People: An Autobiography from the Rhodesian Struggle* (Salisbury, Graham Publishers, 1980); D. Smith with I. Davis, *Mugabe* (Salisbury, Pioneer Head, 1981 [originally published in London, Sphere Books, 1981])—all to be reviewed later.

⁶ S.M. Made, *Made in Rhodesia* (Gwelo, Mambo Press, English Writers Series, 6, 1980), reviewed *ante* (1981), IX, 187–8; L.M. Hatugari, *Langton 'Schoolboy' Tinago: Boxing's Dancing Master* (Gwelo, Mambo Press, Zimbabwean Profiles 1, 1979).

⁷ M. Heald (comp.), *Down Memory Lane with Some Early Rhodesian Women, 1897–1923* (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, 1979), xix, 323 pp., Z\$8.80.

⁸ A. Hardy, *Some Famous Rhodesian Trials* (Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe, Down Memory Lane [2], 1981), 151 pp., Z\$11.70.

series, however, are rather different in that they are large-format, fact-filled, historical surveys of leading (non-African) schools.⁹

Despite Books of Rhodesia's swing away from reliance on reprints, mentioned above, and the virtual cessation in 1975 of Kingston's Pioneer Head series of reprints, publishers still show surprising ingenuity in finding items to reprint. Thus Books of Rhodesia (now Books of Zimbabwe) has produced four individual and very different reprints since the cessation of its series: Wallis's biography of Thomas Baines of 1941; a brief guidebook of 1896, *From the Cape to Bulawayo*; a listing of stands, occupants and trades in 1896, Davis's *The Bulawayo Directory and Handbook to Matabeleland*, 1895-96; and a combination of two books on the postal history of Rhodesia and Central Africa, Dann's *The Romance of Posts of Rhodesia* of 1940 and *The Cancellations of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland* of 1950.¹⁰ The last, no doubt, has something of a specialist market, but the second and third seem rather desperate attempts to find reprintable material and are hardly the sort of book that the general reader would read (although they could well have a certain value for teaching, displays, etc.).

At the same time, this enterprising publisher has also begun a new series of reprints on African hunting,¹¹ which also looks rather desperate (the volumes of Finaughty and Selous having already been published in the earlier reprint series¹²), but no doubt there is a sport market, particularly in North America, not reached by the earlier historical series that was narrowly Rhodesian in focus. Apart from such specialist markets, however, surely the day of reprints and reminiscences of White Rhodesia must be nearing its end. The question is, what will, if anything, take their place? Will there develop a new, wider and book-buying public that will sustain a local publishing industry, or will we increasingly be served by multinational companies seeking an officially approved mass market?

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⁹I.P. MacLaren (ed.), *Some Renowned Rhodesian Senior Schools* (Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe, Down Memory Lane [3], 1982), 345 pp., illus., Z\$27.30, and *More Rhodesian Senior Schools* (Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe, Down Memory Lane [4], 1982), xviii, 322 pp., Z\$51.30.

¹⁰J.P.R. Wallis, *Thomas Baines: Explorer and Artist 1820-1875* (Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe, 1980), [viii], 351 pp., Z\$27.00; *From the Cape to Bulawayo, By One Who Has Done It* (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, 1979), [viii], 48 pp., with publisher's introduction and new illustrations, Z\$5.75; A. Davis, *The Directory of Bulawayo and Handbook to Matabeleland, 1895-96* (Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe, 1981), xx, 220 pp., with publisher's introduction and new illustrations, Z\$15.35; and H.C. Dann, *The Romance of the Posts of Rhodesia, British Central Africa and Nyasaland and the Cancellations of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland* (Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe, 1981), 311 pp., Z\$34.80.

¹¹R.G. Cumming, *A Hunter's Life in South Africa* [1850] (Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe, 2 vols, African Hunting 1 and 2, 1980), xvii, xv, 388 pp.; x, 381 pp., Z\$14.00 each; W. Finaughty, *The Recollections of an Elephant Hunter 1864-1875* [1916] (African Hunting 3, 1980), [v], 244 pp., Z\$11.55; W.C. Baldwin, *African Hunting* [1863] (African Hunting 4, 1981), xii, x, 451 pp., Z\$23.10; F.C. Selous, *A Hunter's Wanderings in Africa* [1881] (African Hunting 5, 1981), [xii], 455 pp., Z\$24.00; A.H. Neumann, *Elephant Hunting in East Equatorial Africa* [1898] (African Hunting 6, 1982), [xxxvii], 455 pp., Z\$24.00.

¹²Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, Rhodesiana Reprints Library 14 and 29, 1970 and 1973, respectively.