

ESSAY REVIEW

PATRIOTISM OR PROFIT: NOSTALGIC MEMENTO OR NEGOTIABLE ASSET?

*in the land that some will always call Rhodesia . . .
They fought a war that did not officially exist, in a
land that some said should not be.¹*

*In time to come, they may change the name — but
the essence, never . . . the essential Rhodesia, no
matter what changes befall her, will live on — and
especially in the myriad hearts and minds of those
who have loved her.²*

*Emotional ceremony: A salute to the Pioneers. White
Rhodesians yesterday remember the pioneers of their
country, on a sunny morning in Salisbury under a
canopy of jacarandas . . .³*

A NOTABLE FEATURE of publishing during the war years in this country was the appearance of numerous, large, illustrated 'coffee table' books and of portfolios of prints, often in expensive *de luxe* editions, which all, whether explicitly or not, sought to capture the essence of the history and landscape of Rhodesia *qua* Rhodesia, often with the accompaniment of poems composed for the occasion or taken from 'patriotic' journals like *Two Tone*. The forerunner of this genre is probably to be found in the National Archives of Rhodesia's well produced *Rhodesian Epic* published in 1968; but this was a serious, albeit popular and White-oriented, attempt to portray the development of the country — and was relatively inexpensive.⁴ Similarly the reprinting of books on Rhodesian history by Kingston's Pioneer Head series and by Books of Rhodesia, both beginning in 1968, no doubt reflected and encouraged White Rhodesian patriotism. Here again the tone was fairly serious, within its limitations, particularly in the case of Books of Rhodesia which often provided quite critical introductions to its reprints; however, there was soon a noticeable tendency to produce expensive collector's versions bound in leather and often of little reading appeal, like the *Chronicle* of the ceremonies at Rhodes's funeral.⁵

Those which have followed in the genre have been much more popular and opportunistic. The first of these 'popular' illustrated books was *All Our Yesterdays*, a collection of fifty features originally appearing in *Illustrated Life Rhodesia* in the period 1968–70.⁶ This success was soon followed by the

¹P. Badcock, *Faces of War*, Preface (see below, fn. 16 for details).

²P. Hartdegen, *Rhodesia*, [1] (see below, fn. 11 for details).

³From photograph of front page of *The Herald*, 13 Sept. 1978, used as dust cover for *The Valiant Years* (see below, fn. 13 for details).

⁴T.W. Baxter and R.W.S. Turner, *Rhodesian Epic* (Cape Town, Howard Timmins [for National Archives of Rhodesia], 1966; 2nd edn, 1968; 3rd edn, 1973). This finally went out of print in 1978 and its successor, *Zimbabwe Epic* has already been three years in the making and not likely to appear until later this year.

⁵F. Masey (comp.), *Cecil John Rhodes: A Chronicle of the Funeral Ceremonies . . . 1902 [1905]* (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, 1972), 176 pp., Z\$60.00.

⁶*All Our Yesterdays 1890–1970* (Salisbury, Graham Publishing, 1970), 201 pp., Rh\$7.00 (also *de luxe* edn of 200 copies).

same publisher with *Beneath a Rhodesian Sky*, a collection of twenty-eight colour photographs accompanied by a heroic text by Beverley White and extracts by D.E. Finn from poems mainly by local European poets such as Philippa Berlyn, Noel Brettell and Olive Robertson.⁷ The photographs, of varying quality, are almost entirely of scenery and without a single portrayal of Great Zimbabwe (although its African origin is referred to in the text (pp. 5–10) but still ‘mysterious’ and ‘a riddle’). No doubt encouraged by the success of this book which had to be reprinted (and by 1980 was in the seventh impression) the same publisher and author brought out the first popular survey of the war, then reaching a crucial stage: *A Pride of Men*, originally issued as a supplement to *Illustrated Life Rhodesia*.⁸ A year later the same publisher brought out an inexpensive collection of photographs called *Rhodesia Is...*⁹ Two years later another publisher followed up this success with J. Lovett’s *Contact*, a more lavish, largely pictorial survey of the war and Rhodesian armed forces (with a detailed list of all honours and awards since U.D.I.), which quickly became a bestseller and went into a second edition.¹⁰ The popularity was due not only to the fact that the war now impinged on the life of White Rhodesia as never before but also to the rapid political changes after the Kissinger meeting and the Geneva Conference, which culminated in the Internal Settlement in March 1978. The war, of course, continued but, in a sense, the point of it had gone as far as most Whites were concerned; eighty-seven years of White rule, Rhodesia as it had been, had passed. Thus there developed a surge of nostalgia to which the continuance of the fighting gave a poignant edge. And this mood was caught exactly by the publishers of *Contact* who quickly followed it up with a succession of books. The first was a compilation by Paddy Hartdegen, a *Herald* photographer, of some 150 colour photographs of various aspects of Rhodesia (including one small one of Great Zimbabwe), again largely scenic but with the text reduced to a short flowery introduction and captions.¹¹ Very similar and published in the same year was *Rhodesian Legacy* of some 180 colour photographs by Ian Murphy and a somewhat fanciful text by Alf Wannenburgh which, however, does give due coverage to Great Zimbabwe with some excellent photographs.¹²

Of somewhat different nature but the same basic appeal was *The Valiant Years*, a compilation with brief historical surveys by Beryl Salt, of photographic reductions of pages of Rhodesian newspapers from 1891 to the day in August 1978 when ‘Rhodesia’ was dropped from the title of *The Rhodesia Herald*.¹³ An even more topical variant of this sort of nostalgic Rhodesiana was Peter Badcock’s *Shadows of War*, a collection of some 40 to

⁷B. Whyte, *Beneath a Rhodesian Sky* (Salisbury, Graham Publishing, 1972), 64pp., Rhs5.00; later impressions were priced at Z\$13.35. For a discussion of the genre of poetry involved, see R. Graham, ‘Poetry in Rhodesia’, *ante* (1978), VI, 187–215; however, as will be seen below (fn. 14), Graham himself was involved in one of these essays in commercial nostalgia and his choice of poems there hardly squares with his earlier criticism.

⁸B. Whyte, *A Pride of Men* (Salisbury, Graham Publishing, 1975), 144 pp., free supplement to *Illustrated Life Rhodesia* (4 Aug. 1975).

⁹D. and S. Bartel, *Rhodesia Is...* (Salisbury, Graham Publishing, 1976), 112 pp., Z\$5.00.

¹⁰J. Lovett, *Contact* (Salisbury, Galaxie, 1977; 2nd edn, 1978), 240pp., Z\$12.50 (also de luxe edn). The South African forerunner for this sort of pictorial treatment of the war was, of course, A.J. Venter, *The Terror Fighters* (Cape Town, Purnell, 1969).

¹¹P. Hartdegen, *Rhodesia* (Salisbury, Galaxie Press, 1978), [126]pp., Z\$14.50.

¹²I. Murphy and A. Wannenburgh, *Rhodesian Legacy* (Cape Town, C. Struik, 1978), [166]pp., R16.95; it appears that this book was originally planned to be published in Rhodesia, and was in fact printed here.

¹³B. Salt, *The Valiant Years* (Salisbury, Galaxie, 1978), 143pp., Z\$9.95.

50 monochrome drawings of security-force personnel accompanied by poems.¹⁴ The drawings were technically competent but the poems, some written for the occasion, and selected by Robin Graham, were jejeune, to say the least, but obviously touched a nerve of war-weary Whites fighting a war that would not end although their cause had now been lost. Although overpriced, the work rapidly sold out — as did portfolios of drawings from the book — and copies were soon to change hands for up to Z\$300; and, in order to protect the investment of the 'collectors' who had bought, no new impression was made. Similarly Laird and Darke's very expensive collectors' piece, *Uniforms of the Security Forces of Rhodesia*, sold out almost immediately and copies soon changed hands for more than Z\$400.¹⁵ Badcock then attempted to repeat his success with a companion volume, *Faces of War*.¹⁶ This followed the format of the first but included more detail both in the drawings and in accompanying captions of the arms and uniforms of war; but by the time this book appeared in 1980, the war was over and the mood of 1978–9 had passed — and the market for nostalgia was moving south with the result that Badcock's third volume, *Images of War*, was about the South African war in Namibia; similarly the publishers of *Contact II*, a successor to *Contact*, on the Rhodesian war, decided to publish and market it in South Africa rather than Zimbabwe.¹⁷

Thus did the market for 'coffee table' Rhodesiana decline almost as quickly as it had appeared — and those that have come out since 1979 are more serious, more factual, albeit still rather expensive works that have been long in gestation, such as *The Regiment*, a beautifully illustrated history of the uniforms of the British South Africa Police, a subject that the author has long worked on.¹⁸ Into this category also came various publications of Books of Zimbabwe, which publisher has been steadily turning away from reprints to the production of new works such as Glen Byrom's *Rhodesian Sports Profiles 1907–1979*, J.P. MacLaren's two books on Rhodesian schools, and the Ellerton Fry photographs of the Pioneer Column and its route.¹⁹ Two books of architectural history of Bulawayo and Salisbury by the same publisher also

¹⁴P. Badcock, *Shadows of War* (Salisbury, Galaxie, 1978), 47 drawings, Z\$15.00 (also de luxe edn); and portfolio, 12 prints (1980), Z\$200.00.

¹⁵D.J. Laird and S.T. Darke, *Uniforms of the Security Forces of Rhodesia* (Salisbury, Musketeer Press, 1979), 31 sections, Z\$250.00. This was a limited edition of 515 copies, bound in elephant skin and brass; sheets were sold separately.

¹⁶P. Badcock, *Faces of War* (Salisbury, Galaxie, 1980), 40 sections, Z\$16.95 (also de luxe edn).

¹⁷P. Badcock, *Images of War* (Durban, Graham Publishing, 1980); P.L. Moorcraft, *Contact II: Struggle for Peace* (Johannesburg, Sygma Books, 1981), 228pp., illus., R24.95; like its predecessor this contains listings of all Rhodesian awards, from 1 April 1977 to 31 August 1979 — described on the dust cover as a poignant symbol of Rhodesia's 'brave and noble heritage... [a] book [that will] proudly recall Rhodesia's struggle for peace'. It also appears that much of the remaining stock of such books was exported to South Africa for retailing there.

¹⁸R. Hamley, *The Regiment: An Illustrated History of the Uniforms of the British South Africa Police* (Salisbury, Quest Publishing, 1980), 33 sections, Z\$165.00; this collector's item bound in leather is essentially the same (except that uniforms are now in colour) as his earlier low-cost production in black and white, *The Regiment* (Cape Town, Bulpin, 1971).

¹⁹G. Byrom, *Rhodesia Sports Profiles, 1907–1979* (Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe, 1980), 256pp., illus., Z\$15.90 (de luxe Z\$48.00) (reviewed *ante* (1981), IX, 77); I.P. MacLaren (ed.), *Some Renowned Rhodesian Senior Schools and More Rhodesian Senior Schools* (Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe, Down Memory Lane [3] and [4], 1981 and 1982), 345 pp., illus., Z\$27.30, and xviii, 322 pp., illus., Z\$51.30, respectively. Views by W. Ellerton Fry: *Occupation of Mashonaland* (Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe, 1982), xvi, 175 pp., 159 photographs, Z\$102.70; *J. Winch Cricket's Rich Heritage* (Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe, 1983), [x], 232, illus., Z\$24.75.

came into this category as they are essentially picture books (some 130 of Bulawayo and about 100 of Salisbury, 12 of each of which have been republished in a portfolio), concentrating on old buildings (but with surprising omissions, such as Jameson House which the Reserve Bank wants to pull down) rather than what is architecturally or technically important (such as some of the houses in the Second Street Extension – East Road area).²⁰

This rise and fall of nostalgic 'coffee table' books has been paralleled in many ways by the publication of prints — a field, which, as has been seen, the book publishers have expanded into. Here again the precursor in a way was the National Archives with its prints of Thomas Baines in 1956.²¹ Then in 1969 the recently established Books of Rhodesia published a reprint of his books of paintings of the Falls, originally published in 1865, and from this also produced a portfolio of the most popular scenes.²² Meanwhile a portfolio of Jeff Huntly's paintings of trek-wagons was published and two of Cornwallis Harris's animal studies from his *Portraits of the Game... of Southern Africa* of 1840.²³ All of these prints were part of a general historically oriented publishing programme (which also included a series of old maps of Africa and which, as has been seen, came to include work of old buildings in Salisbury and Bulawayo²⁴) as were the more recent prints of the National Archives in 1980–1²⁵ and those of the Rhodesiana Society in 1978.²⁶

But again it was the escalation of the war, the inevitability of Black majority rule — and the emigration of Whites wishing to take mementoes (or something saleable?) with them — that led to a surge of publications of prints — many of them published by their authors, often in limited editions at high prices. Most successful were the folios from Badcock's *Shadows of War* and *Faces of War*, which have already been mentioned, but the military trend continued until quite recently, with Andrew du T. Crous's poster of army badges, Colin Eyre's seventeen drawings entitled *Wheels*, showing the various vehicles (including helicopters) used in the war, and Craig Bone's ten drawings entitled *Weapons*

²⁰A.D. Jack and L.W. Bolze, *Bulawayo's Changing Skyline 1893–1980* (Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe Rhodesia, 1979), vi, 159pp., illus., Z\$60.00 (de luxe Z\$97.50); and portfolio, 12 prints ([1981]), Z\$27.00. A.D. Jack, D.G. Cobban and S.H. Williams, *Salisbury's Changing Skyline 1890–1980* (Bulawayo Books of Zimbabwe, 1981), viii, 113pp., illus., Z\$70.50 (de luxe Z\$163.50); and portfolio, 12 prints ([1982]), Z\$27.00.

²¹Central African Archives, *Thomas Baines: His Art in Rhodesia* (Salisbury, The Archives, 1956), portfolio, 6 prints.

²²T. Baines, *The Victoria Falls, Zambesi River... [1865]* (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, 1969), 11 prints, Z\$40.50; *The Victoria Falls, Zambesi River...* (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, 1976), portfolio of 6 prints, Z\$20.00.

²³J. Huntly, *The World of the Wagon* (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, 1974), portfolio, of 6 prints, Rh\$27.25; W. Cornwallis Harris, *Folios 1 and 2* (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, 1976), 6 prints each, Rh\$12.00. These and those of Baines and Huntly were also produced as a very successful series of Christmas cards.

²⁴*Rhodesian Map Series*, 9 maps (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, 1970–3), various prices. For the prints of buildings, see fn. 20.

²⁵National Archives, *The Southern African Watercolours of Alice Balfour* (Salisbury, National Archives Publication Trust, 1980), portfolio, 8ff., 10 prints, by subscription, Z\$45.00; National Archives, [10 prints, sold separately], Baines, *Victoria Falls from the West; Victoria Falls from the East; Devil's Cataract; Victoria Falls; Zanjuela, Boatman of the Rapids; Henry Hartley Finds Gold; and Gold Fields Expedition Leaving Pietermaritzburg for Matabeleland*; Edmund Caldwell, *Visit of Lord Selborne*, 1–3; Charles Croonenberghs, *The Inxwala or First Fruits Ceremony* (Salisbury, National Archives Publication Trust, 1981), Z\$3.00 each.

²⁶T. Burmann and A. Roupell, *Botanical Prints* (Salisbury, The Rhodesiana Society, 1978), portfolio, 6 prints, Z\$15.00.

detailing the arms used on both sides during the war.²⁷ More strikingly nostalgic, however, were the numerous series of prints published from 1978 to 1982 which depicted Rhodesian flowers or scenic views accompanied by rather sentimental poems²⁸ and, more generally, Rhodesian landscapes, Pioneer views, early farm scenes and old buildings — all with certain charm, but of no great artistic originality (many being copied in fact from photographs in the National Archives collection) but evocative of 'The Golden Days' that for those departing had suddenly come to an end.²⁹

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²⁷A. du T. Crous, [Badges of the Rhodesian Army] ([Salisbury, privately, limited edn, 1979]), no price indicated; C. Eyre, *Wheels* ([Salisbury, privately, 1980]), 2 portfolios, 10 prints (randomly from 17 prints), Z\$50.00; C. Bone, *Weapons* ([Salisbury, privately, 1981]), portfolio, 10 prints, no price indicated.

²⁸J. Sinclair and H. Finn, *A Rhodesian Twelve Months of Flowers* (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, 1978), 12 paintings with verse, Z\$1.40 each; [Illustrated Poems and Quotations] (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, 1978), 5 posters, Z\$1.00 each.

²⁹S. J. Redman, *Rhodesian Portfolio*: I ([Salisbury, National Marketing and Publishing], 1979), portfolio, 7 prints Z\$9.95; J. Pinnell, *The Golden Days: Recollections of Early Rhodesia* [I] ([Salisbury, privately, 1980]), 4 prints, Z\$27.00; III: *Pioneer Column* ([Salisbury, privately, 1981]), 2 prints Z\$15.00; IV: C.H. Zeederberg's ([Salisbury, privately, 1981]), 2 prints, Z\$15.00; J. Huntly, *African Bush Scenes* ([Salisbury, privately, 1981]), portfolio, 5 prints, Z\$24.00; *Full Span Crossing a Drift* ([Salisbury], Cape Galleries, [1981]), 1 print Z\$50.00; C. Wynn, *Farming in Early Rhodesia* ([Salisbury, privately, 1980]), portfolio, 6 prints, Z\$21.00; *Scenic Zimbabwe* ([Salisbury, privately, 1981]), 6 prints, Z\$21.00; and *Harvest* ([Salisbury, privately, 1982]), portfolio, 4 prints, Z\$15.00; L. Johnson, *Architectural Reflections of Old Rhodesia* ([Salisbury], Gallery Prints, [1981]), portfolio, 6 prints, Z\$55.00; C. Barlow, 6 prints of *Plumtree School* ([Salisbury, privately] 1981), Z\$15.00; R. Muir, *Memorable Seasons* ([Harare, privately, 1982]), portfolio, 4 prints, \$30.00.

Not included in this list are the numerous recent prints of animals and birds by Bob Finch, Peter Fogarty and Lilian Cottrill which derive from a more longstanding and viable tradition. Also not included, but deserving of detailed review, for its technical merit rather than its socio-political context, is the printing of David Reid-Henry, which I hope to deal with later.