

The Invention of Tribalism in Zimbabwe By *T.O. Ranger*. Gweru, Mambo Press, Mambo Occasional Papers, Socio-Economic Series 19, 1985, 20pp., Z\$1.15.

This is a useful pamphlet which gives the lie to assumptions about long-standing 'tribal' or ethnic consciousness in Zimbabwe. Professor Ranger points out that none of the major ethnic groups currently recognized in Zimbabwe existed as such in pre-colonial times; even the Ndebele comprised a multi-ethnic state rather than a single ethnic group. Contemporary ethnic divisions arose from a combination of factors, including administrative pressure, the emergence of dialects in written Shona under the influence of different missionary bodies, the manipulation by workers of ethnic stereotypes to secure better jobs and pay, and other factors. Because such ethnic identities are new, Professor Ranger argues that we should not too readily use them to explain political allegiance and political action.

True, and worth pointing out. But even new ethnic identities can be deep-seated and real. In competition for scarce resources, people readily classify others as 'insiders', from whom co-operation is expected and to whom it should be offered, and 'outsiders'. Ethnic identity, however new, is a convenient and easy system of such classification, and consequently becomes a significant factor in political behaviour. Sad and wrong, perhaps, but not easily avoidable.

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Studying in Zimbabwe: A Practical Guide for Zimbabwean Students By *Joan Addison*. Gweru, Mambo Press, 1984, 118 pp., Z\$2.50.

This book is intended to help 'mature, adult learner[s]...understand some of the many factors' which influence them as they study. It covers the usual topics found in this type of manual: organizing study time; reading skills; note-making techniques; using resources; writing assignments and examinations, etc.

It is a matter of debate whether this type of book has any real value for students who need to 'learn how to learn'. It has been suggested that 'any student with the diligence to plough through the exercises [in such books] has both the aptitude and motivation to become a good student even without them' (A. Irving, *Study and Information Skills across the Curriculum* (London, Heinemann Educational, 1985), 15-16).

In the case of this particular book, one wonders if the student who has (presumably) successfully completed his secondary education will gain much from it. Will the mature student really make himself a study timetable on which he will plan, at 10.00 p.m. on weekdays, to 'talk to wife' (p. 13)? Can he really improve his reading skills from the advice given in the six pages here — which do not even mention the vital skill of scanning?

The section on using the library is actually misleading. Addison has confused the National Free Library's inter-library loan service with its postal loans service to individuals; one would not look up 'Geography' to locate an atlas; libraries do not index the subject content of novels in their subject indexes.

The index of the book itself verges on the ridiculous: will readers really be likely to look up the terms 'date' and 'afternoon' for example? If so, I wonder what sort of information they would be expecting to find.

This lack of attention to the index is perhaps indicative of what I find most disappointing about this book. The use of an index is, in fact, one of the many keys to becoming an efficient 'learner'. It is evident, however, that Addison does not view study skills as being a key to life-long independent learning; rather, she seems to see them as an aid only to the successful completion of formal courses and examinations. It may be that her book will help students pass examinations; it is less likely that it will help them become independent learners.

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