

In Rhodesia the African co-operative movement is of much later origin and has not developed to anything like the same extent as in East Africa. It would appear that a policy of imposition applied in the past and the movement suffered also from a badly-administered credit policy, but the danger now is that the official attitude may become too negative. The experience of co-operative development in East Africa applies more readily to the current ideo-

University of Rhodesia

logical commitment of government to the establishment of African local councils in the rural areas. There is little doubt that in this sphere also a policy of imposition will be self-defeating; the creation of weak, incompetent and corrupt local councils will entail greater supervision and control by central government and thus create a barrier to the emergence of real community development.

H. DUNLOP

RANGER, T. O. 1970 *The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1930*. London. Heinemann, 252 pp. 40s.

Professor Ranger's long-awaited survey of African politics in Southern Rhodesia, spanning what he has rightly termed 'these vital middle years' (p. vii), comprises the first volume of what promises to be an indispensable series. This work succeeds in presenting a coherent picture, depicting the essential continuity of the African response to white rule from the 1896-7 risings up to the peak of political activity preceding the 1931 depression, an outline that in the general is hard to fault. Ranger's achievement is estimable in view of the difficulties with which he has had to contend; for example, a dearth of available oral and written documentation, and an enforced separation from his Rhodesian sources over the past seven years.

The book suffers from a number of minor faults, some of which arise perhaps from the latter circumstance. Several of the extended quotations have minor inaccuracies, and one or two are unintentionally misleading. Sometimes, the author edits his documents without ellipsis, and in one case has re-organised the order of sentences (in the transcript of Gula Kumalo's interview with the Superintendent of Natives, Bulawayo, p. 189). Ranger has 'tidied up' much of the punctuation, grammar and spelling in letters and other communications emanating from Africans, to clarify the sense of their statements. But certain other practices are more deserving of criticism, in particular the author's habit of giving multiple references in footnotes, and the occasional inaccuracy arising from an incorrect date. For instance, the 'July 1927' meeting of the Southern Rhodesia Native Welfare Association (p. 179) could not have discussed the Land Apportionment and Native Council Bills as these

were not gazetted for another two years; in fact, this proposed legislation was criticised at the meeting sponsored by the Rhodesia Bantu Voters' Association in July 1929, referred to further on in the text (p. 182).

Ranger's account suffers from a certain lack of perspective, induced by his subject-matter. It unwittingly gives the impression that, to misquote A. J. Hanna, Rhodesian whites comprised an undifferentiated mass of reaction.¹ The intricate network of African response and European counter-response so ably traced in his work on the Rebellions,² finds no counterpart here. The author endeavours to prove by implication (p. 163), that the Government as a whole was hostile to any African association (with the exception of the Rhodesian Native Association), and quotes the views of Sir Charles Coghlan on certain R.B.V.A. representations; but he has overlooked the more favourable attitude of the Chief Superintendent, C.I.D., who commented on this body: 'Its representatives appear earnestly desirous of advancing the interests of their race and aiding in the good government of Southern Rhodesia.'³

Official policy is thus presented as a purely negative function, a stonewall of indifference when it was not actually taking steps to repress African movements. But was the Government as inflexible and unresponsive as this? Apart from one brief reference (p. 182), the author has ignored one important reaction to African pressure; the Native Boards informally established in the Reserves as a channel for the voicing of grievances.⁴ Also, one would like to know more about the relations between the proponents of participation politics and the Government, espe-

cially during the later twenties. The single officially-recognized association, the R.N.A., has received rather cursory treatment, and the groups of 'progressive' African farmers in the Chinamora, Chiota and Soswe Reserves fostered by the Native Department, are not mentioned at all.

Neither has Ranger noted the progressive trend of official policy under Coghlan's successor, H. U. Moffat, grandson of the missionary, one-time member of the Anti-slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society, and one of the most neglected of Rhodesia's political leaders. Essentially reasonable and fair-minded, Moffat was ever ready to investigate grievances; Ranger cites (p. 154) the I.C.U. complaint that Native Commissioners made Africans take off their boots before entering Government offices, but he does not mention that Moffat stopped this 'out of date' practice.⁵ Despite the 'hard line' maintained by the Native Department under H. Jackson and C. L. Carbutt, and Moffat's frequent reluctance to disregard the advice of his permanent officials, the Premier's statements sometimes had a definite 'progressive' tone. In his reply to Kadalie's somewhat provocative letter of December 1927, Moffat appears willing to have countenanced African trade-unionism along orthodox lines; despite other limitations evident in the context, this was a notable concession for the times.⁶

Ranger (p. 186), has served the Premier most unjustly in his summation of Moffat's opinion of what one gathers to be *all* African associations: "I do not think they can do any real good. I do not think they really know what it is they want or how they are going to get it." A glance at this minute,⁷ however, will indicate that Ranger has misrepresented Moffat's judgement, which applied exclusively to the Matabele Home Society, a body that was already earning official disapprobation in 1930 because of its suspected links with the activities of Albert and Rhodes Lobengula.

Turning to the sources available on African movements, it has already been remarked that Ranger has had to contend with a shortage of documentary materials. The position in this respect is not likely to improve much in the future, as most district records do not appear to have been preserved, Native Commissioners' annual reports are not particularly informative, and the Chief Native Commissioner's files contain only material which his subordinates con-

sidered important enough to be referred to headquarters. Only a handful of Police files are extant, though newspaper sources, largely ignored by Ranger, may provide further data.

The author has written at undue length about some of the more colourful outlets for African self-expression, such as the Independent Churches and Watch Tower. It has been argued that the assumption that few Africans entered these churches for spiritual reasons 'is not easy to accept'.⁸ Rather, their syncretist attributes, so well illustrated in the account of the Lomagundi Watch Tower communities quoted by Ranger (pp. 206-9) indicate a desire to find a satisfying synthesis of the old and the new, and an expectation that divine intervention would rectify African grievances without the need for human agency. John Chilembwe's rising is an obvious exception to this generalisation, so far as Central Africa as a whole is concerned: an event that cast a shadow over official policy towards chiliastic movements in that area for the next two decades, and may tempt one to place a greater degree of emphasis on their political aspects than is necessarily warranted.

In contrast, the activities of African associations and other secular bodies were much more directly political and in such a survey deserve the fullest consideration. It is to be regretted that Ranger has not devoted more space to the political, economic and social problems of the burgeoning urban centres, problems which gave rise to the nationalist movement of the 1950s. The breakdown of tribal authority, prostitution, the standard of accommodation and wages, police raiding of locations, pass and tax laws, and the lack of amenities all contributed to the growing ferment in the towns, of which the I.C.U. was but one symptom. The Shamva strike of 1927, an event of central importance in the inter-war history of African urbanisation, and analogous to the 1935 Copperbelt disturbances, is given only one page in Ranger's book, whereas the less historically important Church of the White Bird, restricted to the Zwimba Reserve, is allocated over five. The author attributes the Shamva strike to the agency of the Watch Tower movement, although the file on the subject⁹ discloses little evidence of this; indeed, a nascent trade-unionism at the Shamva Mine stretching back to a store boycott in 1920, and stimulated by ideas several Nyasas had brought back from the Rand, seems to have been directly responsible for the incident. Only one of the 28 strike-leaders (not

22, as Ranger states, p. 147) was a self-declared Watch Tower adherent.¹⁰

In an entire chapter on the African evidence given to the Morris Carter Commission, Ranger disputes 'the established interpretation . . . that the important thing was African acceptance of the principle of segregation' (p. 115) — a view ironically cultivated later by the R.B.V.A. itself. While proving his point, he has detracted from the overall weight of the statements of the majority, who undoubtedly favoured the principle. Their existence is admitted, but the author does not investigate the reasons put forward. Thus in citing the evidence of Rusiki, Ranger omits the witness' opposition to the continuance of the *status quo*: ' . . . it will only lead to friction, because sometimes the cattle which belong to the natives stray, and that will cause trouble with the white farmers.'¹¹ This constant harassment, resulting from European farmers impounding African cattle, was reiterated by witness after witness, and was mentioned in the Morris Carter report.¹² A further argument

in favour of segregation was adduced by another witness Ranger cites, John Ngono, who pointed out that it would facilitate the creation of Native Councils.¹³

Notwithstanding these comparatively minor criticisms, this book presents the authentic voice of the articulate African at a time when, with the exception of the I.C.U., 'the mass of the population in Southern Rhodesia were politically inert, passive, and virtually powerless.'¹⁴ An illiterate peasantry can leave no personal written records of their aspirations and discontent. We learn of these only indirectly in the grievances, many of them economic, put forward at district meetings of chiefs and headmen with their Native Commissioner, or even more indirectly in the protests of the politically-conscious 'intelligentsia'. The limitations of Ranger's work as a history of Rhodesian Africans are apparent in the title chosen; the next stage is thus clearly indicated — a detailed series of regional historical studies, founded upon the compilation of oral documentation.

REFERENCES

All the documentary materials cited are located in the National Archives, Salisbury.

1. HANNA, A. J. 1960 *The Story of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland*. London, Faber, p. 34.
2. RANGER, T. O. 1967 *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 1896-7*. London, Heinemann.
3. OFFICE OF THE CHIEF NATIVE COMMISSIONER, Control of Native Associations, 1924-1931 [hereafter cited as S 138/18], Supt. C.I.D. to C.N.C., 28. viii. 1924.
4. OFFICE OF THE C.N.C., Native Movements, 1923-1933 [hereafter cited as S 138/22], C.N.C. to Sec., Premier, 21.i.1931; and reply, 28.i.1931.
5. S 138/22, Sec., Premier, to C.N.C., 31.x.1929.
6. *The Rhodesia Herald*, 31.i.1928; cf. RANGER, p. 152.
7. S 138/18, Moffat to C.N.C., 24.ii.1930, headed 'Matabele Home Society'.
8. SHEPPERSON, G. 1964 Religion in British Central Africa, in *Religion in Africa. Proceedings of a Seminar held at the Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh . . . 1964*, pp. 47-51.
9. BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA POLICE, Sundry Papers. Shamva Mine Strike, 1927 December [sic] 12 [hereafter cited as S 715/2].
10. S 715/2, sub-file giving particulars of 28 Africans deported from Southern Rhodesia.
11. LAND COMMISSION. 1925, Evidence: Oral, vol. 3 [hereafter cited as ZAH/1/1/3], p. 962.
12. SOUTHERN RHODESIA 1926 *Report of the Land Commission, 1925*, Salisbury, Government Printer, CSR 3, para. 51.
13. ZAH 1/1/3, p. 862.
14. GRAY, J. R. 1960 *The Two Nations. Aspects of the Development of Race Relations in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland*. London, Oxford University Press, p. 167.

University of Rhodesia

M. C. STEELE