

Samuel Chimsoro is more concerned with the betrayal of the popular objectives of socialism that were enunciated at Independence. *Dama Rekutanga* (The First Promise) is a metaphor for the undertaking made at Independence to fulfil the wishes and aspirations of the majority of the people of Zimbabwe. The poet sees this promise as having been broken and the resultant bitterness and disillusionment lends the poems a critical tone. The poems clearly show that the post-Independence struggle is a class rather than a racial struggle. The poet indicts the privileged few for reneging on their promises and duties, and he encourages people to take positive action to change their life-style for the better rather than be passive observers of the growing social malaise.

Chimsoro is in a stylistic quandary, vacillating between populist and academic poetry. Most of the poems begin with the easy-flowing rhythm adopted from popular songs and rhymes in the style of Kumbirai. But unlike Kumbirai's poetry the borrowed song-beat does not always fuse into the poet's own composition. The abandonment of the beat results in structural dislocation. The poet also tends to indulge in private images coined either from very rustic or very quaint idioms from folklore. These esoteric idioms tend to be expressed in very long extended metaphors which make the poetry rather obscure and pedantic. The result is an obscurantism that reminds one of the pioneer Shona poems of the 1950s and 1960s by Wilson Chivaura. Such academic poetry is suitable for the privileged intelligentsia with whom Chimsoro does not seem to identify himself. Esoteric metaphors might have been employed to evade literary censorship, but, whether it is employed for that reason or for its own sake, the result is a loss of mellifluousness and hence a loss of popular appeal because of its limited accessibility. Such contemplative poetry is not easy to understand unless it is heavily footnoted. The style appears to undermine rather than facilitate its subversive role. To that extent Chimsoro's anthology stands in contradistinction to Chirikure's.

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**Mothers of the Revolution** Edited by I. Staunton. Harare, Baobab, 1990, xiv, 306 pp., ISBN 0-908311-25-7, Z\$30.80.

This book comprises thirty testimonies from a variety of women from all over Zimbabwe relating their experiences of the war of liberation in Zimbabwe. Their accounts help the reader to appreciate the different ways in which the war was fought and experienced in different parts of the country.

These testimonies are largely from women who lived in the rural areas of Zimbabwe. This perspective helps readers, particularly non-nationals, to understand the liberation war from the point of view of non-military participants in the liberation movements. The fact that peasant women, who are at the bottom of the class hierarchy in Zimbabwe, are well represented in the collection gives the book a strong sense of the view from below. The relationships between the peasants and the soldiers on

class and gender lines are well articulated in the testimonies and the vulnerability of women and children in situations of conflict emerges very clearly.

The only jarring note is the title, which is misleading to some extent. The narrow interpretation of *amai/madzimai* as 'mothers' does not reflect the different roles women played during the liberation war, that is, as wives, sisters, daughters, *chimbwidos* (errand girls), party activists and organizers, teachers, family and religious elders, farmers and so on. The women's testimonies definitely do not describe their participation in and experience of the war from the perspectives of mothers only.

In spite of this flaw, the book is a valuable addition to resources on issues relating to women and their struggles during Zimbabwe's liberation war.

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**Third World Seminar Series.** Oslo, Univ. of Oslo, Division for North/South Co-operation, Centre for Development and the Environment. Various prices.

The series began in 1977 and now has over 50 publications to its credit; most of the earlier ones were in Norwegian but from 1983 they are mostly in English. Three recent papers are directly relevant to Zimbabwe: H. Rønning, *The Structure of the Media in Zimbabwe* (No. 47, 1989, Kr. 40,00); J. T. Chipika, *Race against Hunger or What?: A Pause for Thought on Agriculture and Rural Development in Zimbabwe since 1980* (No. 50, 1990, Kr. 20,00); and W. Ncube, *State Security, The Rule of Law and Politics of Repression in Zimbabwe* (No. 15, 1990, Kr. 20,00). As seminar papers they should not be taken as the authors' final words on their subjects and the first mentioned — by a Norwegian author — is clearly directed more to a Norwegian than a specialist audience.

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