

The Making of Zimbabwe: Decolonization in Regional and International Politics By M. Tamarkin. London, Cass, 1990, ix, 326 pp., ISBN 0-7146-3355-0, £30.00.

This is a study of the various attempts to solve the Rhodesian problem by negotiation from the time of the Lisbon coup in 1974 down to the Lancaster House conference in 1979. The main focus is on the activities of outside interested parties — South Africa, the Front-line States, Britain and the United States. The contestants themselves — the Rhodesian Front Government and the Zimbabwean nationalists — thus appear to be reacting to events rather than making them, although the author does give the basic information on the progress of the war and its effects on the White economy and society. This is a useful corrective to the one-sided triumphalism of Martin and Johnson's *Struggle for Zimbabwe*,¹ the more so as Tamarkin's approach is factual and fair.

The drawback of this factual, descriptive account (and descriptive it is in spite of some short-lived theoretical considerations in the Introduction) is that there is no overall analysis of why the contestants, their patrons and the global players did what they did, nor is there any engagement with the interpretations of other writers on the subject. Nothing published since 1985 appears to have been consulted, with the result that Flower's *Serving Secretly*² and Ellert's *Rhodesian Front War*³ have not been taken into account — nor, surprisingly, has the best single survey of the war, Moorcraft and McLaughlin's *Chimurenga*.⁴ Indeed, the sources used for the study are mainly newspapers and radio broadcasts — the 1 500 references to which, incidentally, are savagely abbreviated without any key or listing so that the first task of any serious reader is to painstakingly compile an alphabetical list of the abbreviations employed so that the sources can be identified, a task one would have thought that the editors at Frank Cass should have performed for a book that costs £30.00 (approx. Z\$400.00).

The study ends (in December 1979) as abruptly as it began (in April 1974) with as little assessment of why Lancaster House succeeded, as there was explanation of who was fighting whom for what at the beginning.

In short, this book seems to have been written for the specialist for whom it will be a useful reference source to check what happened when. The 'whys and wherefores' remain to be written.

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¹ D. Martin and P. Johnson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War* (Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House; London, Faber, 1981), 23.

² K. Flower, *Serving Secretly: An Intelligence Chief on Record* (Harare, Quest; London, Murray, 1987).

³ H. Ellert, *Rhodesian Front War: Counter-Insurgency and Guerrilla War in Rhodesia, 1962-1980* (Gweru, Mambo, 1989).

⁴ P. Moorcraft and P. McLaughlin, *Chimurenga: The War in Rhodesia, 1965-1980* (Marshalltown, Sygma, 1982).