

One of the outcomes of the violent disturbances was the decision of the two brothers — Stanlake and Sketchley — to pull out of political leadership.

One thing that students and other researchers will find irritating about the book is its omission of a section on sources and bibliography. Frankly the otherwise excellent discussion in the introduction of the main archives used is not a substitute for the traditional bibliography.

The omission, however, is minor compared to the importance of the book. Written by one of the few accomplished and devoted scholars of modern Zimbabwean history, who has the further advantage of having been an active participant in some of the events that are dealt with in *Are We Not Also Men?*, this book will for a long time remain important reading for both the general reader and history students in the study of the rise of the African middle class and of mass nationalism in Zimbabwe.

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**Labour Export Policy in the Development of Southern Africa** By Bill Paton. Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications; London, Macmillan Press Ltd., 1995, xii, 397 pp., ISBN 0-908-307-41-1, Z\$100.

In this book, Paton seeks to contribute to an understanding of the origins and functions of cross-border migration, and of states in the labour exporting countries of Southern Africa. The study is motivated by the need to explicate two major propositions. The first one is that 'the evolution of the power to control labour flows among the jurisdictions of different territorial administrations in Southern Africa was of major importance in the formation of a regional system of states' (p. 3). The second one is that 'the overall importance of the policies of labour-exporting administrations has been seriously downplayed' (p. 15) in past studies of the phenomenon of labour migration in Southern Africa, hence the need for an elaboration of the various policies undertaken by the different states in managing and controlling labour flows in the sub-region.

That the countries of Southern Africa have historically been intertwined in a web of cheap labour circulation centred around the sub-centre of the South African economy (which itself is a periphery in the global economy) is a well-known fact to lay-persons and academics alike. On the political plane the emergence of groups such as the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the Frontline States, and the Southern Africa Labour Commission (SALC) is either directly or indirectly motivated by the need to reduce the dependency of labour exporting countries on South Africa.

The belief that Southern Africa represents a unique configuration of states is one of the reasons there is the current paralysis in the attempt to

harmonise the two regional organisations of SADC (the former SADCC — Southern African Development Coordinating Conference), and COMESA (the former Preferential Trade Area — encompassing countries in Southern, Central and Eastern Africa).

Paton is well aware of the obviousness of the issue he has decided to tackle, but insists that he has something new and unique to say by way of a contribution to an understanding of the political economy of Southern Africa. Paton's point of departure is the bold assertion that the major factor in the formation and evolution of the concept of the state among the labour exporting countries of Southern Africa, and of the notion that these states together comprise a unique constellation, was the preoccupation with controlling and managing labour flows between their countries and South Africa. In this regard, he criticises approaches of neo-classical economics to labour migration for over-emphasising individualistic welfare maximisation theories that more-or-less take the migrant as a free individual; and anthropological approaches that emphasise 'push' and 'pull' factors in microscopic detail while losing sight of the larger structural environment that conditions the whole migratory process.

Paton locates himself within what he refers to as the historical/structural school which relates migration theory to historical explications of unequal development, dependency, centre-periphery relations and world systems approaches. Paton, however, contends that this school has also failed to account adequately for the manner in which the labour-exporting states have evolved as a consequence of the migrant labour phenomenon, even if the interaction between capital and the state has been thoroughly discussed by this school. Paton's main reservation with regard to the historical/structural school, especially as reflected in the writings of analysts on Southern Africa, is that they have tended to see the state as an instrument of, or as the referee between, dominant factions of capital, thereby failing to appreciate that the state may actually develop a relative degree of autonomy in economic and labour policies quite independent of the needs of individual capitals *per se*.

In reviewing the role and functions of the labour-exporting states in Southern Africa, Paton identifies as the most interesting aspect, 'the radical gain in state autonomy with regard to labour export, over time' (p. 19), and it is the explication of this phenomenon that preoccupies him throughout the book, covering a century or so of the history of eight labour-exporting countries in Southern Africa. Paton notes that while the eight countries are different, 'they are complementary, for all are part of a single regional economy and state system'. He proceeds to observe that the evolution of these states is paralleled by an apparently linear progression in labour export policy from that preoccupied by the need to

satisfy the interests of metropolitan capital, to that of meeting the needs of internal capital, and eventually, to that of addressing the particular needs of the states themselves. The bulk of the book consists of an account of the see-saw type oscillations in the labour export policies of the individual eight countries of Southern Africa covered, namely, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Tanzania, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Botswana, in that order.

Paton argues that the major consideration in the management of labour flows by each of the states was the need to maximise the economic returns accruing to the state in the context of the cyclical oscillations of internal labour supplies induced by labour surpluses and shortages. In this respect, he notes that the individual labour exporting countries were not altogether powerless with respect to influencing the nature of the resulting labour flows, but increasingly became autonomous in asserting their independent interests as well. Accordingly, the rest of the book reviews the labour management policies of the individual eight countries over a century or so of their colonial and post-colonial experiences.

Paton's book is welcome and valuable for at least three reasons. First, it has brought together in one place the various historical experiences of the Southern African labour exporting countries for easy reference and comparison. Second, the book has been bold enough to make explicit a very fundamental aspect of the economic intertwinement of the countries of the sub-region as rooted in labour flows which, to a large degree, are seen to be at the heart of the unequal development among the different countries in the sub-region. It may be noted here that there is a tendency by governments officially and publicly to underplay the importance of illegal and legal labour migration as the *de facto* all-preponderant and pervasive mode of economic interaction among the countries of the sub-region in preference to emphasising cross-border trade and investment as the more economically and politically correct concerns, even if this labour migration is not only increasing but also becoming increasingly differentiated as well to include the intelligentsia of some countries. An interesting aspect of this bold assertion of the importance of labour migration in the political economy of the countries of Southern Africa is the demonstration of the manner in which it has been linked to unequal development among the different countries, an aspect that should be food for thought for those attempting to promote regional economic cooperation rather uncritically.

The third contribution the book makes is that it provides a good background to the re-emergence of the labour issue in Southern Africa following the advent of majority rule in South Africa. The issue has now become more complex in that it relates to cross-border flows of both low-skilled and high-skilled or educated labour. For the former type of labour

flows, the deduction from the book's analysis is that there might be a need for states to counter-balance the maximisation of revenue from such labour exports with measures to ameliorate the negative repercussions resulting from such exports as reflected in the inadvertent rural underdevelopment that has accompanied such labour out-flows within labour exporting countries, quite apart from attempting to ensure ample supplies of cheap labour for domestic entrepreneurs. For the latter type of labour flows which have not been addressed in the book, the emerging issue concerns the need to recoup foregone human resource investments represented by the brain drain afflicting many of the countries. Thus the book is quite timely in that it usefully informs on the manner in which the harmonisation of labour flows might be approached and pursued in Southern Africa as part of the quest for mutually beneficial regional economic cooperation in both the short and long runs.

The book, however, has some major shortcomings. The first one relates to the attempt to validate his first thesis, namely, the assertion that the development of the countries as states and as a constellation of states is primarily related to their preoccupation with the management of labour flows within and between countries of the sub-region. In attempting to demonstrate this thesis, Paton has seized on a very simplistic and functional definition of the state and its role, quite irrespective of the substantial literature pertaining to this debate both in its generality and as related to the African context and in its specificity with respect to particular countries in Southern Africa.

In over-emphasising the importance of labour migration in the emergence of the countries of the sub-region from colonies to states, and from states to nations, he has of necessity ignored the complex internal and external factors, and their dynamics, that have been at the heart of this evolution. More importantly, in this respect, is the fact that Paton has completely neglected to discuss the reactions of the Africans themselves to the emerging domestic and sub-regional economic developments for which labour migration was a key facilitating factor.

The evolution from colonial status to state-hood, and on to nation-hood, was characterised by the complex interplay of struggles and adaptations by the African masses, with associated reactions by the respective representatives of the state which continuously redefined both state-hood and nation-hood quite irrespective of the phenomenon of labour migration, even if this may have acted as one of the major backdrops. This complex interplay of factors and forces at the social, political and economic levels is completely ignored by the book, such that Africans are seen to be mere passive objects of the manipulations of capital and the various states, both colonial and post-colonial. In this respect, the book does little justice to the nature and content of the emergence of African nationalism

and its consequent contradictions related to the unending, and seemingly unachievable, quest for the consolidation of both state-hood and nation-hood.

A second shortcoming relates to the fact that the book neglects to give the background to the issue being discussed particularly in form of the structure of the economies both within the context of the sub-regional and the international division of labour. This background is taken for granted, even if it is constantly referred to as the backdrop to the labour flows. An exposition of the economic background to the individual countries and how they fitted into the sub-regional and international division of labour or pattern of specialisation would have helped the reader to assess the relative importance of the labour issue in the development of the state in each of the individual countries. This would have been important since in some of the countries such as Zimbabwe, internal economic developments were significant enough to redefine the role of the state somewhat independently of a preoccupation with the management of labour exports and imports *per se*, even if the management of internal labour supplies was nonetheless always a crucial consideration in the apartheid-type economies of Zimbabwe and South Africa and their immediate peripheries. In this respect also, it might be pointed out that labour flows were only one aspect of an emerging sub-regional economic system dominated by South Africa that increasingly included regional flows of goods and services and investments primarily from the latter country to the other countries.

In conclusion, this book is highly recommended for those wishing to have a clearer picture of the intertwinement of the labour needs of the various countries of the sub-region and of their possible implications for regional cooperation and the formulation of equitable development strategies within and between countries, even if the major thesis of the book is inadequately validated and appears rather unconvincing.