

threats to a country's borders. For too long, nations have sought arms to protect their security. However, for most people today, a feeling of insecurity arises more from worries about daily life than from the dread of a cataclysmic world event. Job security, income security, health security, environmental security, security from crime — these are the emerging concerns of human security all over the world, including Southern Africa (1994, 3).

The book should do well as essential text for postgraduate courses in Strategic Studies in Southern African politics. It is also recommended for policy makers, diplomatic, and non-governmental organisations interested in Southern African affairs.

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**On The Frontline: Catholic Missions in Zimbabwe's Liberation War** By Janice McLaughlin, Harare, Baobab Books, 1996, xvi, 352 pp., ISBN 0-908311-79-6.

*On the Frontline* is a welcome addition to an already growing corpus of literature and knowledge on the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. The author, Sr Janice McLaughlin of the Maryknoll order, worked in Zimbabwe for a little more than half a year in 1977 before being deported to the USA by the Rhodesian regime because of her activities in the Justice and Peace Commission. McLaughlin returned to her ministry of working with the poor and oppressed by way of working in solidarity with the exiled Zimbabwean refugees in Mozambique. While in Mozambique McLaughlin made direct contacts, and even interviewed top leadership of the Zimbabwe National Liberation Army (ZANLA).

The book examines the interaction between the ZANLA guerrillas and the Church, ie, the whole people of God entailing the laity, religious and the clergy associated with a particular Mission. McLaughlin analyses this interaction at rural missions which were on the frontline at different stages of the war of liberation, located in four different dioceses of the Church, different guerrilla operational zones and under missionaries of four different nationalities.

Sr McLaughlin examines the Church where the grassroots communities were some of the most vulnerable sectors of society. One of her aims was to prevent the histories of these communities from being 'lost', altered or distorted (xii).

The first part of the book focuses on the history preceding the war of liberation, particularly the sowing of the seeds of racism by successive colonial administrations.

McLaughlin's main thesis is that in spite of the national identities of mission authorities and their differing views regarding the colonial governments, there were no notable ideological differences affecting the relations between the missions and the guerrillas. Rather the synergy that existed between the missions and the neighbouring rural communities became the variable that ultimately determined and qualified the direction of relations between the missions and guerrillas.

The overall assessment that McLaughlin makes is that the missionaries' concern for the suffering rural folk at the hands of government forces led the guerrilla fighters to revise their pre-conceived ideas about religion and the missionaries. They finally accepted missionaries and other mission personnel as collaborators rather than enemies.

The final part of the book considers some ethical implications of the violence associated with the armed struggle. The discussion leads towards the question of whether or not the armed struggle in Zimbabwe was a just war or terrorism. McLaughlin's arguments on this subject are refreshing and interesting. McLaughlin makes two related points on violence and just war. The first point is that the missions played a positive role of humanizing the armed struggle by fraternizing with, and assisting the guerrillas, treating the injured, providing medical supplies, food, clothing and rest. The second point is that the violence by guerrillas was selective and moderate; it never measured up to that of the Rhodesian Government security forces. Consequently, the author relates the victory of the guerrilla forces to ZANLA guerrillas' noble goals and tactics.

Another issue that emerges in Part III is the relationship between missions and mediums, or Christianity and African traditional religion. McLaughlin argues that spirit mediums offered spiritual and psychological support that proved to be good for the morale of guerrilla forces and the grassroots communities. For the guerrillas there was no contradiction between Christianity and African traditional religion; both had a place in the struggle.

Chapter ten looks at the development in the mentality of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe from 1972, when the Justice and Peace Commission was formed, up to the Declaration of Intent in 1977, reflecting a new vision of the Church. From then on, McLaughlin argues, the Catholic Church became a Church of the People, through sharing in the persecution, arrests, detention and torture of the rural people. Through the war of liberation, the commitment of religious sisters to the grassroots communities was deepened. Equally, the sisters' status was raised. Lay leaders and sisters kept the Church going.

McLaughlin, however, regrets that 'in spite of the radical voices in the Church and involvement of many of the Church's personnel at the grassroots with the liberation forces, the church in Zimbabwe never

developed a full-fledged theology of liberation' (p. 271). As the crisis of war abated, people reverted to the familiar structures. In the epilogue McLaughlin highlights the tensions that existed between the Church hierarchy and the progressive Justice and Peace Commission after the war. The latter wanted to build on the foundation made during the struggle in terms of developing a fully-fledged popular Church. The hierarchy, however, was not comfortable with a new ecclesiology that would allow for a theology of liberation. Instead, they were keen to go back to the situation of the Church before the crisis of the war: if there was any theology to go by, then it was the theology of reconstruction.

In McLaughlin's perception the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe will live to regret the lost opportunity. Possibly, this is another level at which the revolution in Zimbabwe lost its way; not just at the political and economic levels.

*On the Frontline* is clearly an important milestone in the study of the interface between religion and revolution or Church and state. It is based on first-hand experience of the author, on over a hundred interviews carried out with top leadership, and a variety of archival sources, including those of ZANU and ZANLA, which she later catalogued for future use by other researchers.

There are few inaccuracies, however, which need to be brought to the attention of readers. It is true that the Catholic church is the single largest church in Zimbabwe. However, by the time of the publication of the book, it did not have only 'just under half a million members' (p. 5): membership was just under a million, which statistically translates to 9.5% of the national population (Catholic Directory, 1996). Figure 17 should have been part of Chapter 7, next to Figure 18 on p. 174. Zvavhera on p. 191 should read Zvavahera; Sheshe on p. 196 should read Chisheche; Tiresi on p. 202 should read Tirizi; and Regina Coeli convent on pp. 262 and 263 should read Regina Mundi convent (Highfield).

More significant than the inaccuracies above is the information related to the 'Gutu Massacre' (pp. 196-7) which, unfortunately, is based on evidence from 'interviews with other former ZANLA combatants who were not present when the incident took place' (p. 218). It is not clear why the author did not seek first-hand evidence from some of the many civilians from Kamungoma who were present at the event.<sup>1</sup>

Her evidence conflicts with surviving eye-witness accounts of the event and puts in doubt the author's claim that she is concerned with

<sup>1</sup> The reviewer has a detailed account of this incident based on interviews from survivors. Paul Mugarirwa, a technical assistant at the Department of Animal Science, University of Zimbabwe was one of the survivors who became my key informant (Interview with Paul Mugarirwa, 12 Nov., 1996 — He confirmed the account that I had got from Elias Chagonda and Silence Dizha in Chingombe in May, 1988).

histories of communities whose record she wants to save from loss, unaltered and undistorted.

In spite of these few lapses, *On the Frontline* is an important contribution to the study of the Church and its involvement in the war of liberation in Zimbabwe. This book is a most useful resource for all who are interested in studying the role of the Church in the armed struggle in Zimbabwe.

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**The Painted Hills: Rock Art of the Matopos** By Nick Walker. Gweru, Mambo Press, 1996, 102pp., ISBN 0-86922-638-X.

The prehistoric rock art of Zimbabwe, particularly that found in the Matopos Hills in Matabeleland, has been the focus of both academic and public interest since the early part of this century. Much has been written on it with writers covering such aspects of the art as its authorship, dating, meaning and significance. However, many of the published works on the Matopos art were published over 30 years ago (eg Cooke, 1959) at a time when rock art studies were at a very elementary stage in Zimbabwe and not as many sites had been documented. Interpretation, dating and general understanding of this heritage from the past were very simplistic and in some cases much influenced by the colonial background of the writers. Some of the art was for example attributed to exotic populations (eg Breuil, 1955). Those who saw it as indigenous interpreted it as 'art for art's sake' and therefore of no major significance to the painters (Cooke, 1959). Others, who saw a deeper meaning to it, associated it with hunting magic (Burkitt, 1928).

Drawing from his long experience working on the Stone Age archaeology of Matabeleland, as well as from the developments in rock art studies in southern Africa pioneered in South Africa by such leading scholars as Lewis Williams, Nick Walker, in *The Painted Hills*, provides the most comprehensive and most up to date coverage of the Matopos rock art. The book is divided into nine sections (which are not numbered) in which Walker brings together discussion of most of the questions both members of the public and academic researchers have always asked about this art — By whom, when, why, and how were the paintings executed? Using archaeological evidence from his own, and other researchers' excavations and cross-referencing with work from other parts of Zimbabwe and southern Africa, Walker convincingly demonstrates that most of the Matopos art dates from 9 000 years ago and continues up to after 1 500 years ago. Several thousands of years before and during this period, 9 000 to 1 500 years ago, the Matopos Hills, in common with the