

in Shona but which are considered inappropriate in English. The author attributes the transfer of rhetorical patterns from Shona to English to the influence of Shona culture and argues that the problem of rhetorical transfer cuts across all education levels in Zimbabwe. To demonstrate this point, she quotes from the O-level English Language examiners' report for the 1990 Examination, which documents awkward and ridiculous expressions used by students which arose out of literal translations of various expressions from Shona to English. Examples include: "the rain was raining hard" an English rendition of Shona's *Mvura yainaya chaizvo*; "he rang a phone" from *Akaridza runhare*, and "the money was eaten by the headmaster" from *Mari yakadyiwa nahedhimasita* (p. xiii). Although the levels of rhetorical transfer differ from level to level, college and university students, like school pupils, are also susceptible to problems of rhetorical transfer. On the basis of this finding and from her own wide experience as a teacher of both Shona and English, Tondhlana has produced a book, which is not only lucid and insightful but which also makes a very welcome and important contribution to the field of Applied Linguistics.

Contrastive Rhetoric in Shona and English Argumentative Essays is a well-written, well-packaged and professionally-edited book, which is highly recommended to English teachers at all levels, student teachers, lecturers, language and education policy makers, and all those involved with rhetoric as persuasive communication.

JAIROS KANGIRA

University of Zimbabwe

Striking Back: The Labour Movement and the Post-Colonial State in Zimbabwe, 1980-2000, By Brian Raftopoulos and Lloyd Sachikonye (eds.), Harare, Weaver press, 2001, 316pp, ISBN 0-7974-2286-2.

Although labour and labour movements have long played an important role in the political and economic history of Zimbabwe, as demonstrated by the Shamva Mine Strike of 1928, the ICU, the 1945 and 1948 strikes and the involvement of labour activists in the birth and development of Zimbabwe's nationalist struggle against colonialism, they have not always been accorded the importance they deserve in Zimbabwean historiography and have, especially in the post-independence retelling of the country's accounts of the struggle for independence, been relegated to the margins of history. In their 1997 publication, *Keep on Knocking: A History of the Labour Movement in Zimbabwe, 1900-97*, Brian Raftopoulos and Ian Phimister demonstrated that, not only does the labour movement have a rich history of organisation, mobilisation, and agitation for better

working conditions in colonial Rhodesia, but it also played a central and important role in the anti-colonial struggle.

The marginalisation of labour's contribution to the struggle for justice in Zimbabwe was the result of a number of factors; not least the fact that the locus of the nationalist struggle from the 1960s onwards shifted from the urban areas, where it had first taken root and grown, to the rural areas of Zimbabwe, where the armed struggle was, mostly, located. Labour's continued marginalisation after independence in 1980 was due to the fact that, for most of the early post-colonial years, labour was, essentially, an arm of the ruling party. Its agenda was, thus, generally set by the government whose overriding concern was to ensure that workers remained loyal to the socialist, nationalist, one-party project that the government then subscribed to. Thus, the Zimbabwe Confederation of Trade Unions (ZCTU) had little room to act independently of the government and the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF).

From the late 1980s onwards, however, the ZANU-PF/labour alliance began to unravel, as labour became increasingly more assertive and critical of the government, particularly in the years of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) and the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST) in the 1990s. The chasm widened with the worsening economic situation as the decade unfolded, resulting in increasing incidents of direct confrontation between the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions and the government, while labour progressively allied itself with several civic groups which were increasingly becoming dissatisfied with the way the country was being run, culminating in the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999. *Striking Back: The Labour Movement and the Post-Colonial State in Zimbabwe 1980-2000* documents and analyses these developments in the labour movement and what role it has played in the economic and political life of post-colonial Zimbabwe. This is a particularly timely and topical issue given the critical roles that labour movements, such as the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), have played in bringing about political change in Zambia and South Africa, respectively.

The book is organised into ten chapters, each dealing with a specific aspect of the history and experience of the labour movement and workers in Zimbabwe. Raftopoulos sets the foundation for subsequent discussion in Chapter 1 by providing a historical analysis of the post-colonial labour movement and the rise of opposition politics in Zimbabwe. He traces how colonial restrictions and the "ruralisation" of the nationalist anti-colonial struggle in the late colonial period resulted in a relatively weak labour movement at independence in 1980; how in the 1980s, labour was relegated

to the status of a supporting act to the ruling party, and how, eventually, it freed itself from the clutches of the state and found its own separate voice. Raftopoulos proceeds to show how labour increasingly established alliances with other groups that were critical of government policies in order to establish the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and how this created new tensions in Zimbabwean society and led government to resort to what Raftopoulos calls a "radical rhetoric for repressive politics". The strength of Chapter 1 lies not only in the comprehensive historical analysis of the labour movement in the Zimbabwean context that it so ably provides, but also in the fact that it is able to situate the discussion in the broader global context in which neo-liberal economic prescriptions both challenge the strategies and rhetoric and limits the operational scope of labour movements in Southern Africa.

Chapters 2 and 3 by Patrick Bond and Paris Yeros, respectively, take the issues raised in Raftopoulos in the first chapter further by analysing the problems facing the ZCTU and MDC as they are compelled by the need to appear respectable in a world of neo-liberalism by adopting both the rhetoric and the economic practices emanating from the West in the post-Cold War era. Thus, Yeros observes critically that the ZCTU has shed some of its earlier radical rhetoric and has adopted "a more 'legitimate' social democratic vision" in line with Western-based international labour movements. In Chapter 4, Sachikonye traces the organisational changes that the labour movement has already undergone and the organisational and developmental challenges that face it in the future. Challenges include "the need for greater self-sufficiency in financial resources, building up the capacity of union affiliates, and gender equity in union structures". The legal framework governing labour activities are expertly documented and analysed by Lovemore Madhuku, while the history of labour's use of the strike weapon since 1980 is the focus of Richard Saunders' contribution in Chapters 5 and 6, respectively.

Following up the issue raised in Sachikonye's chapter relating to the need for trade unions to strive for gender equity, the next chapter by Naira Khan and Niki Jadowska explores the theme of "Women, Workers and Discrimination in Zimbabwe". Pointing out that, although women "constitute a significant proportion of the workforce in the commercial agriculture, agro-processing, textile and service sectors, they are under-represented in union structures and workers committees", the authors attribute this to the persistence of "patriarchal attitudes" in Zimbabwean society in general and in workers' movements in particular. This accounts for the fact that women continue to hold poorly paid low-skill jobs and to be subjected to sexual harassment in the workplace.

Chapters 8 and 9, by Blair Rutherford and Yash Tandon respectively, focus on workers in the agricultural sector, showing that these workers

remained some of the most exploited and under-represented workers in post-colonial Zimbabwe. Meanwhile, the farm invasions that began in 2000 further marginalised and brutalised farm workers, as they were beaten up, driven off the occupied farms, and excluded from the controversial land distribution exercise. Lastly, in Chapter 10, Suzanne Dansereau traces the experiences of mine workers in Zimbabwe since 1980 and demonstrates that, while mine workers recorded some significant gains in the post-colonial period, they continue to earn meagre wages.

Striking Back is, unquestionably, one of the most significant books on labour struggles and labour history in Zimbabwe in recent years, which taps on the expertise of various scholars, who are specialists in their fields who have already made their mark as respected scholars of Zimbabwe's social and economic history. Of particular note are Patrick Bond, Brian Raftopoulos, Blair Rutherford, and Yash Tandon whose works on Zimbabwe's socio-political and economic experience have contributed much to Zimbabwean historiography and socio-political analysis. Not surprisingly, therefore, the individual contributions to the book are well-researched, well-supported, and well-written pieces that are as informative as they are enjoyable to read.

The one chapter that could have been improved is the chapter on women workers whose organisation and coverage could have been handled differently. Because it is, in the words of the authors, a "thumbnail sketch", it does not provide the type of authoritative and insightful detail on the situation of women in Zimbabwe that would have been possible with solid on-the-ground research. In addition, the chapter is weakened by the fact that it attempts to cover too much ground by examining three distinct topics, each of which would sustain an entire paper on its own, in one chapter. The three areas are "the general overview of the current situation facing women workers in Zimbabwe"; "the effect sexual harassment in the work place has on women's development" and the "gender sensitivity of labour laws". Arguably, more original research and greater focus would have improved the chapter considerably.

This weakness notwithstanding, *Striking Back* is an invaluable contribution to Zimbabwean historiography in general and labour history in particular. The contributors, editors, and publishers are to be congratulated for producing such a well-packaged and professionally edited book. The book is highly recommended to local and international workers and labour activists who are interested in understanding the history of the struggle of labour in Zimbabwe, policy makers, students of labour history, scholars of Zimbabwean history, university students, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, NGOs working with labour movements and labour-related issues, and anyone who has an interest in understanding the forces that have helped shape Zimbabwe's

historical experience and current developments in the country. In conclusion, it is highly recommended that, if possible, *Striking Back* should share a deserved position on one's bookshelf with two other books, which, together with it, form a very useful trilogy of studies on labour struggles in Zimbabwe. These are: Brian Raftopoulos and Ian Phimister, *Keep on Knocking: A History of the Labour Movement in Zimbabwe* (Harare, Weaver Press, 1997), and Brian Raftopoulos and Tsuneo Yoshikuni, *Sites of Struggles: Essays in Zimbabwe's Urban History* (Harare, Weaver Press, 1999).

PROFESSOR ALOIS S. MLAMBO

University of Zimbabwe