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Guidelines for *New Contree* Book Reviewers

The *New Contree* Journal publishes reviews of significant books that are relevant to historians. Book reviews are written on invitation from the office of the review editor, but unsolicited reviews may also be considered. *New Contree* has an interdisciplinary outlook and welcomes suggestions of historically significant works written by scholars in other disciplines. The review should be submitted to the review editor within two months of receipt of the book. If this deadline cannot be met, a mutually agreeable alternative date can be negotiated. If it becomes impossible to review the book, it should be returned to the review editor. All reviews will be submitted to the members of the editorial board before acceptance for publication.

Contents and additional (or book) references

The review should summarize what is important in the book, and critique its substance. The reviewer should assess the extent to which the author achieves the stated aim of the book. It is important that the reviewer should engage the material instead of simply reporting the book's contents. For this reason, the reviewer should try to avoid summations of book chapters or the separate contributions in an edited collection. Instead, the reviewer should assess the ways in which chapters and contributions are relevant to the overall context of the book. Reviews should be written in a style that is accessible to a wide and international audience.

Any use of references or additional references from other sources must be informed on in footnote style.

Format

The review should generally be between 800 and 1 200 words, and should include as little bibliographic data as possible. When necessary, use page references for quotations in the text of the review and provide complete bibliographic details of the source. The review should begin with a heading that includes all the bibliographic data. The elements of the heading should be arranged in the order presented in the following example:

The early mission in South Africa/Die vroeë sending in Suid-Afrika, 1799-1819. By Karel Schoeman. Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2005, 272 pp., map, chronology, bibl., index. ISBN: 1-9198525-42-8.

Do not indent the first line of the first paragraph, but indent the first line of all successive paragraphs. Use double spacing for the entire review. Add your name and institutional affiliation at the end of the review. Accuracy of content, grammar, spelling, and citations rests with the reviewer, and we encourage you to check these before submission. Reviews may be transmitted electronically as a Word file attachment to an email to the review editor. If you have additional questions, please contact the Book Review Editors.

Book Reviews

The Golden Republic

(Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis, 2016, 302 pp., ISBN: 978-1-4853-0568-2)

TV Bulpin

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Thomas Bulpin's works are classics in the genre, and it's great that Protea Boekhuis has decided to reprint these books, as the originals are getting difficult to locate and is getting very expensive. For the researcher it's a boon, as the current format is more user friendly, and one doesn't have to worry or fret about mishandling an expensive book! The problem with reprints is that publishers feel the need to reimagine them, and sadly some of the spirit of

the original gets lost, but not here. The book is lovingly reproduced with all its illustrations. Bulpin's writing style is one that's been admired by many, as it is very accessible to the public, and is a great introduction on the subject. Bulpin's books are still highly prized by tour operators as it condenses the facts into easily understood and relatable narratives.

The first edition was published in 1953, in an altogether different era for history writing, still basking in the afterglow of rising Afrikaner nationalism. This era did however deliver some credible and objective historical works not tainted by emotions or political motives. This book is in this category. It is written mostly objectively, and gives voice to all players on the historical stage. In his narrative and writing style, Bulpin does however get sentimental in describing people and events. To add to the romantic air of the book he spices it up with little tales of humorous incidents and gives way to some hyperbole in describing great events and battles. His description of the early diggings in the Transvaal reads like a tourist brochure for some Wild West theme park, and dwells on the characters of the area. These colourful and fanciful stories can be forgiven, as it adds to the flow of the book and to the spirit in which it was written. This book was written as an introduction to history for John Q. Public, and not as an academic work, a primer if you will for those that wish to inform themselves of the bare facts.

In the old struggle to keep readers interested in history and to keep history relevant, it's a fine work to hand to the amateur historian, or the curious reader that wishes to know a bit more. It does give an accurate outline of a most difficult period of South African history. It serves as a good framework and foundation even for the academic and scholar.

The period of the book's narrative has a wide span, from an introduction of the pre-history to 1883, and such a wide span can be difficult to convey and discuss in terms that are accessible and reader-friendly. Bulpin does however succeed in a logical and linear way to create a timeline of the events that unfolded in the Transvaal up to 1883. He does however over simplify some facts and events to keep up the racing pace of the book, but this is in keeping with the spirit of this publication.

The early history of the Transvaal is a difficult subject to write about, as many documents and sources are either lost, incomplete, reworked as secondary sources or coloured by emotions or agendas. The history of the first inhabitants have only in recent years been properly and objectively studied

and written about. Bulpin does grant the reader a short introduction on the subject matter. He does mention the lot of the African inhabitants after the formation of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, but does not go into details. His chief focus after Chapter 5 is the Voortrekkers, and the Africans are mentioned sometimes only in passing.

Bulpin's treatment in Chapter 9 of MW Pretorius is fairly objective, but is still coloured by some long-held prejudices like his inability to govern and the old claim that he was to blame for all the troubles of in the Transvaal in 1863. His treatment from Chapter 14 of TF Burgers is more objective, but he does grow a bit too sentimentally attached to Burgers by the end of Chapter 15. His objective and positive treatment of Burgers is unique for the time, as Burgers' reputation had not been properly rehabilitated for his actions during the Annexation of 1877. He and SP Engelbrecht broke new ground in objectively putting Burgers' actions into context. Bulpin also broke some new ground in writing on MW Pretorius, a person largely forgotten or ignored up to this time, and it appears still ignored. TF Burgers and SJP Kruger and their political actions and personal lives have been written about in many books, but Bulpin was the first to give voice to MW Pretorius.

This book is also one of a very few written of the period before SJP Kruger and his actions overshadowed the Transvaal's history. This publication fills a void partially for the student of history on the early Transvaal, a subject that still remains only partially written about or studied.

All in all, the book is well written as an introduction and as a romantic imagining of the subject, but cannot be called a strictly objective or academic source. On the subject, it is sadly one of the few publications, but hopefully it accomplishes what is hinted at: To serve as a framework for further academic study and publication.

*Swanesang: Die einde van die kompanjietyd aan die Kaap,
1771-1795*

(Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis , 2016, 599 pp., ISBN 978-1-4853-0098-4)

Karel Schoeman

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Swanesang: Die einde van die kompanjietyd aan die Kaap is die agste en laaste deel van die reeks *Kolonie aan die Kaap*. In hierdie reeks word die agteruitgang en verval van die VOC, en die gevolge wat dit vir die Kaap gehad het gedurende die laaste kwarteeu van sy bewind, beskryf. Karel Schoeman, een van Suid-Afrika se mees produktiewe skrywers in terme van talle romanse, novelles, dramatekste en historiese werke, slaag daarin om in hierdie verskillende historiese terugblikke omvattende beskrywings te gee van hierdie belangrike geskiedenis van die Kaap.

Kolonie aan die Kaap bestaan in total uit agt dele naamlik; *Die Europese samelewing en die stigting van 'n kolonie aan die Kaap, 1619-1715*, *Handelsryk in die Ooste: Die wêreld van die VOC, 1619-1688*, *Kolonie aan die Kaap: Jan van Riebeeck en die vestiging van die eerste Blankes, 1652-1662*, *Burgers & amptenare: Die vroeë ontwikkeling van die kolonie aan die Kaap, 1662-1679*, *Here & boere: Die kolonie aan die Kaap onder die Van der Stels, 1679-1712*, *Twee Kaapse lewens: Henricus & Aletta Beck en die samelewing van hul tyd, 1702-1755* en *Hoogty: Die opbloei van 'n koloniale kultuur aan die Kaap, 1751-1779*. Hierdie boeke kan afsonderlik van mekaar gelees word, maar die volle samehang van die geskiedenis wat daarin beskryf word kan slegs ten volle verstaan word as almal saam gelees word.

Swanesang, as die laaste deel van hierdie reeks, 'n titel wat as't ware die einde van die reeks aankondig, vorm een van die gesaghebbendste kultuurhistoriese werke oor die samelewing en omstandighede gedurende die einde van die agtiende eeu aan die Kaap. Schoeman ontleed verskillende aspekte van hierdie tydperk aan die Kaap. Hy fokus byvoorbeeld noukeurig op die bewindstydperke van spesifiek twee VOC goewerneurs naamlik J.A. van Plettenberg (1771-1785) en CJ van de Graaff (1785-1791). Gelyktydig daarmee skenk hy aandag aan wat hy noem "verkenning" in die tweede hoofstuk waar hy op 'n boeiende wyse die reise van verskeie natuurkundiges soos die Swede Thunberg en Sparrman, die Skotte Masson en Paterson, die Nederlander Robert Jacob Gordon en die Franse Sonnerat en La Vaillant bespreek. Hy skenk veral aandag aan die flambojante Le Vaillant wie se boeke oor die fauna en flora van die Kaap baie populêr was en ook baie bygedra het om die Kaap meer bekend te maak.

Schoeman spandeer ook baie aandag aan 'n bespreking oor die nuwe idees wat in hierdie tydperk in die wêreld hul beslag gekry het en ook hoe hierdie idees die samelewing in die Kaap beïnvloed het. Hy gaan verder deur te kyk

na die tydperke van die regimente en die eerste bedreigings vir die Kaap a.g.v. die veranderinge in die wêreld, politiek en ekonomie, tussen 1783 en 1795 wat dan ook die einde van 'n era in die Kaap in gelei het.

In 'n poging om die rol van die gewone mense in die Kaap in hierdie tydperk te ontleed, kyk Schoeman spesifiek na die wêreld en lewens van drie amptenarefamilies naamlik die Westpalm's, Möller's en die Heijning's. Deur die ontleding van hierdie families slaag Schoeman daarin om die leser kennis te laat maak met die wel en weë van die gewone burgers in hierdie tydperk aan die Kaap. Hierdeur word die leser bewus van hoe die gewone burger die Kaap in hierdie tydperk ervaar het.

In Schoeman se geskiedskrywende tradisie dek *Swanesang* die tydperk vanaf die dood van goewerneur Rijk Tulbagh tot en met die eerste Britse besetting van die Kaap in 1875. Sy opvolgers, JA van Pletterberg, JC de Graaff, die waarnemende goewerneur Rhenius en die laaste goewerneur, JA Slysken, en die onsekerheid wat die laaste deel van die VOC-tydperk gekenmerk het, word in hierdie boek deeglik belig. In die laaste hoofstukke gee Schoeman ook aandag aan die Franse Rewolusie en ander politieke veranderinge in Europa wat gevolglik Nederland baie verswak het en bygedra het daartoe dat Brittanje die Kaap in 1795 kon oorneem.

Swanesang, kenmerkend van Schoeman se werke, is deeglik nagevors en bevat 'n in-diepte beskrywend van die Kaapse samelewing in hierdie tydperk. Hoewel soms moeilik om te lees a.g.v. die deeglike beskrywings en soms langdradige uiteensettinge van historiese feite en gebeure, is *Swanesang* tog 'n boek in eie reg. 'n Boek wat 'n interessante blik gee op die Kaapse samelewing in hierdie tydperk. 'n Verdere uitstaande kenmerk van hierdie werk is hoe die amptelike rolle van die verskeie VOC-amptenare sinvol ontleed word, maar ook hoe deeglik aandag geskenk word aan hulle karaktereienskappe en persoonlike lewens. Deur hierdie benadering slaag Schoeman daarin om die leser persoonlik met hierdie amptenare kennis te laat maak en om as't ware lewe te gee aan hierdie geskiedkundige figure. Met sy gedetailleerde en in-diepte beskrywing van die genoemde amptenare, in hul interaksie met die Kaapse samelewing van die tyd, slaag Schoeman ook daarin om vir die leser 'n beeld te skets van die lewens van die gewone mense in die breër Kaapse samelewing in hierdie tydperk.

Paul Kruger – toesprake en korrespondensie 1881-1900

(Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis, 2017, 612 pp. ISBN: 9781485305743)

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Belangstellendes in die staatkundig-kulturele geskiedenis van Afrikaners, waaronder die geskiedenis van die Boerepublieke in Suider-Afrika in die 19e eeu, sal onmiddellik geïntresseerd wees in hierdie netjies-versorgde publikasie.

Hoewel sommige van die toesprake en korrespondensie van Paul Kruger (staatspresident van die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek of ZAR 1883-1900) in 1881-1900 ook elders gepubliseer is, is hierdie publikasie met sy ongeveer 600 bladsye 'n aanwys. Hierdie wins spruit veral uit outeur Johan Bergh se gebruik van primêre en gekontroleerde bronne vir sy stof. Bronne waarsonder 'n publikasie met dié tema ondenkbaar is en die leser nie direk by Kruger self, sy karakter en denke uitkom nie. 'n Wins wat juis om hierdie rede en met hierdie aantal bladsye, 'n klein bibliotekie/argief oor die ware Kruger vorm.

Bergh verdeel die stof kronologies oor 5 hoofstukke. Hoewel hy natuurlik vir Kruger aan die woord stel, gee hy voor elke hoofstuk 'n inleiding waarin hy die belangrikste sake – vir Kruger in daardie tyd – uitlig én iets van Kruger se aanpak vermeld. Bergh haal destydse bewonderaars in Nederland aan wat na die president se gemoedelike erns en, hulles insiens, ruwe en oorspronklike Boere-Hollands verwys. Sommige mense beweer dat Kruger ook van 'n “Boeresielkunde” of 'n skynverontwaardiging gebruik gemaak het om mense te oortuig. Bergh haal vir Carl Jeppe aan as hy sê:

He was always himself and even when he lost his temper – which was not seldom – he did not lose his head; in fact, many people believed that he was often far less angry than he appeared to be. Be that as it may, his storms of wrath were awkward to encounter, and not many cared to face them.

Hoewel Bergh self spaarsamig oor die persoon en impak van Kruger praat, bou hierdie opmerkings aan die opvatting by veral Afrikaners dat Kruger 'n besondere mens en sterk politieke figuur was. Uit die toesprake en korrespondensie van hom wat Bergh aanbied, blyk die houding van Kruger oor 'n groot aantal sake.

Wat opval is Kruger se gebruik van die Bybel, Bybelgedeeltes of –tekste en Psalm- of Gesangverse in sy toesprake en korrespondensie. ’n Tendens wat ook blyk uit sy telegramme aan burgers te velde na die uitbreek van die Anglo-Boereoorlog in 1899. Kruger was ’n uitgesproke Christenstaatsman wat hom beywer het vir die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek as ’n Christelike staat. By sy beëdiging as staatspresident in 1883 noem hy die Christelike godsdienst ’n steun vir kerk en staat. Vyf jaar later, aan die begin van sy tweede termyn, verklaar hy dat Hy geroep is om oor Christen-Afrikaners, wat hy Ou Testamenties as deel van God se volk beskou, te regeer. Daarom moet hy aan die Almagtige verantwoording doen oor die bewaring van hulle regte en voorregte *“wat deur God aan die volk van hierdie land geskenk is”*. God-Drieëinig as hulle troue Verbondsgod is Allersoewerein en die grondwet van die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek moet rus op die 10 gebooue. Die staat moet die kerk beskerm en aan haar die ruimte waarborg waarbinne sy die Evangelie kan verkondig.

Kruger spreek hom as ’n persoon met ’n geringe skoolagtergrond dus oortuigend oor die verhouding kerk-staat uit. Hy wys enkele kere self op sy skolasiese agterstand, hy het hoogstens drie maande skool gegaan, maar skroom nie in die 1890’s om met ’n mede-Calvinis, die Nederlander Abraham Kuyper, oor die stigting van ’n Christelike universiteit in Pretoria te korrespondeer nie. ’n Ideaal wat hyself nie vervuld gesien het nie. Staatsekretaris WJ Leyds bevestig Kruger se statuur as hy wys op die hoë dunk wat die Duitse kanselier, Otto von Bismark, na ’n besoek van Kruger, van hom gehad het. Daarby is Kruger ’n erkende Dordtse Kerkorde artikel 8 predikant in die Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika. ’n Bevoegdheid wat hy ontvang vanweë sy *“singuliere gawes”* vir die amp.

In sy dispuut met hoofregter Kotzé wat in 1898 lei tot Kruger se afdanking van die regter, glo Kruger dat die houe die wette van die land moet toepas en nie self kan maak of toets nie. Hierdie wette kom van die Volksraad as die verteenwoordigers van die koningstem, die stem van die volk. Hoewel die volk die Here moet gehoorsaam, hoor hy ook die stem van God in die stem van die volk. Kruger tree beslissend op in hierdie debat.

Vir ons tyd is Kruger se houding oor die Jode, Engelse en swartmense soos deur Bergh aangetoon, binne en buite die ZAR belangrik. Hy open in 1892 die Joodse sinagoge in Johannesburg. Kruger gun hulle hulle vryheid van geloof in die ZAR. Getrou aan sy eie oortuigings – en eie aard – spreek hy egter die hoop uit dat hulle die Woord van God getrou sal opvolg. Op voorstel van

Kruger besluit die Volksraad van die ZAR in 1899 om dit vir Jode en Rooms-Katolieke ook moontlik te maak om tot die raad verkies te word. Vir immigrante wat soek na goud, maar getrou is aan die Republiek, begin Kruger en sy Volksraad met 'n Tweede Kamer. Kort voor die Anglo-Boereoorlog skep hulle ruimte vir stemreg vir hierdie mense na 5 jaar.

Volgens Kruger het swartmense die reg om regverdig behandel te word. Teen 1888 is daar na raming sowat 100,000 blankes en 800,000 swartes in die ZAR. Hyself was as 'n 10-jarige 'n oor- en ooggetuie van die Groot Trek van 1835-1838. Hierdie Trek was 'n emigrasie en nie 'n rebellie nie en het in oop dele van die binneland van Suid-Afrika ingetrek en nie grond van swartmense gesteel nie. Die ZAR was grotendeels deel hiervan. Hy werk nou vir hulle afgebakende lokasies en eie gebiede. Hy beywer hom vir die beskawing van die swartes sodat hulle, hulle plek in die wêreld kan volstaan. Alle mense is voor God geestelik gelyk, maar nie liggaamlik of in hierdie lewe nie.

By die herdenking van die Gelofte van 1838 by Paardekaarl in 1886 en 1896, herhaal Kruger sy siening oor die Groot Trek wat in onbewoonde gebiede ingetrek het. Syns insiens vra die Gelofte onder andere dat die Afrikaner die Here as die Verbondsgod met sy lewe elke dag vereer. Hy haal die bekende vraag van Heidelbergse Kategismus aan, naamlik “Hoeveel dinge moet jy weet om getroos te lewe en te sterwe...?” én die tweede vers van 'n berymde Psalm 25: “Leer my Heer u regte weë.” Kruger speel 'n groot rol in die hernuwing van die Gelofte by Paardekraal in 1880 voor die Eerste Vryheidsoorlog.

Hoewel Kruger Britse Imperialisme verafsku, wil hy verhoudinge met Engelsprekendes normaliseer. Die Engelse en Hollanders spruit immers uit een stam. Hy voorsien ook 'n verenigde Suid-Afrika: langs vreedsame en konstitusionele weg. Intussen glo hy dat God in Sy voorsienigheid die ZAR beskik het en dat hy hierdie onafhanklikheid moet koester. Dit is sy houding oor die Londense Konvensie van 1884 en enige versoek om vrede na die uitbreek van die Anglo-Boereoorlog in 1899.

Vir Kruger is die vriendskapsverbond met die Oranje-Vrystaat in 1889 en 1897 'n hoë prioriteit. Hy en president MT Steyn van die Vrystaat (1896-1902) ontwikkel as die ouer en jonger staatsman 'n groot waardering vir mekaar.

Hoewel Bergh met sy kantaantekenige en verwysings sake in 'n historiese perspektief stel, probeer hy nie om 'n patroon in Kruger se denke bloot te lê nie. Hy gee geen tipering van Kruger se republikenisme, neo-Calvinisme of

(soms fundamentalistiese) Ou Testamentiese aanslag nie. Hy probeer ook nie om kritiese vrae te beantwoord nie, maar laat Kruger in sy eie konteks self aan die woord. Wat uit die verf kom, is 'n energieke, bekwame, kindergelowige Christenstaatsman. Kruger is 'n uitstaande Afrikaner én 'n Dopper van sy tyd en 'n soeker na die wil van God in alles, ook staatsake.

Uit hierdie hoek is Bergh se werk 'n aanwinst vir historici.

*The contested idea of Zimbabwe and the violent power politics:
Lessons for South Africa*

**(Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2016, 280 pp.
ISBN: 9781 86914 3114)**

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This review of Michael Bratton's book comes at a time when Zimbabwe is again poised for another election, a moment which heightens political stakes, power dynamics, and the haunting possibility of violence as a mediator of politics and power. The review is also taking place at a time when Zimbabwe's neighbour (South Africa) is caught-up in unprecedented political ructions within the ruling African National Congress (ANC) with ripple effects on the national economy and national politics. While on the surface, President Jacob Zuma's problematic leadership is given as the main cause of the crisis which has seen the national currency (the Rand) nose-diving and South Africa degraded by the credit-rating agencies *Standard & Poor* and *Moody* to junk status; there are deeper issues linked to the very contested idea of South Africa and the failure of the ANC to quickly and successfully transition from a movement to a cohesive political party. The operation of the ANC as a 'broad church' has come to haunt it at a time when it is expected to take radical decisions on the economy and corruption.

Unlike the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), which successfully captured the state since coming to power in 1980, the ANC's attempts to "capture the state" has provoked serious opposition including the calls for President Zuma to resign as state president.

President Zuma's links with the Gupta family of businessmen and women from India has been used as an empirical case of "state capture" as though the South Africa state was ever free from capture by European capitalists since the colonial and apartheid times. For far too long, Zimbabwe's experience has been used by South Africa in a rather cynical manner as a political scarecrow of the world and this time around, when distant tentacles of global governance through the credit-rating agencies have become imbricated in domestic politics, heightening the internal political heat within the ANC, giving confidence to the opposition to ratchet its calls for President Zuma to fall, the political trajectory of Zimbabwe offers some useful lessons.

Bratton's book poses penetrating questions that are of relevance to both Zimbabwe and South Africa today: Why did a predatory clique of black rulers cause such destruction? Why have rival political elites in Zimbabwe never been able to reach a valid political settlement, up to and including the recent charade of "power-sharing"? What, if anything, can be learned about current political outcomes in Zimbabwe from the country's own history, and from the histories of other countries that have also experimented with governments of national unity? How can developing countries avoid civil strife? What are the institutional requirements for strong and legitimate states? Do power-sharing pacts provide answers to recurrent problems of legitimacy? Do these kinds of political settlements foster or undermine the consolidation of democracy? For South Africa, the Convention for Democratic South Africa (CODESA) was a site of compromises and pact-making that produced what became known as the "new South Africa" in 1994. The tripartite alliance was another element of "power-sharing" pact in South Africa. The question is: Did the pact of 1994 and the tripartite alliance deliver a legitimate government and provide an environment conducive for consolidation of democracy? It would seem that indeed a legitimate government was delivered in South Africa but the unresolved questions of social and economic justice have come to haunt South Africa 23 years since 1994. The outbreak of the Rhodes Must Fall Movements highlighted the return of the contested nature of the idea of South Africa, with the descendants of those who have been excluded from apartheid economic looting and empowerment agitating for a South African ideal that put black lives at the centre.¹

¹ SJ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Rhodes must fall: South African universities as sites of struggle" (Public Lecture delivered at the London School of Economics and Political Science, Hong Kong Theatre, Clement House, London, 9 March 2016).

Therefore, for Zimbabwe as it is for South Africa, the current power politics cannot be understood outside the contested idea of Zimbabwe. A Mugabe-centric explanation of the Zimbabwe crisis just like a Zuma-centric discourse of the South African crisis is simplistic and inadequate. There is need to historicise and theorise the complex dynamics of power politics in “postcolonial” Zimbabwe and “post-apartheid” South Africa. Bratton’s book offers such a window for such a critical reflection. At the centre of the idea of Zimbabwe are key issues that were eloquently posited by Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos in terms of “the politics of land and resource distribution; reconstruction of nation and citizenship; and the remaking of state and modes of rule”. In South Africa, the Zuma regime is speaking of radical economic transformation and turning the treasury into an institution that supports the new politics of changing the economy in such a way that it benefits the poor. On the contested idea of Zimbabwe, Hammar and Raftopoulos elaborated on its entangled constitutive elements in this manner:²

... a historicised and racialized assertion of land restitution and justice, versus an ahistorical, technocratic insistence on liberal notions of private property, ‘development’ and ‘good governance’; a new form of ‘indigenization’, authoritarian nationalism (based around claims to loyalty and national sovereignty), versus a non-ethnicized, ‘civic’ nationalism (grounded in liberal democratic notions of rights and the rule of law); a radical, Pan-Africanist anti-colonial, anti-imperialist critique of ‘the West’, versus a ‘universalist’ embrace of certain aspects of neo-liberalism and globalization; and a monopoly claim over the commitment to radical redistribution, versus a monopoly claim over the defence of human rights.

At this moment the ruling ZANU-PF just like the ANC is rocked by factionalism as both former liberation war movements face elections in 2018 and 2019 respectively. In Zimbabwe, President Robert Mugabe has been identified as the symbol of the crisis – the undertaker of the Zimbabwe nation as well as the presidential candidate for 2018 elections. He would be 94 years old.³ The call for Mugabe to go dates back to 2000 if not before. Today, South Africa is inundated by calls for President Zuma to go taking the form of marches to the seat of government – the Union Buildings in Pretoria. But in both cases of Zimbabwe and South Africa, as Sarah Rich Dorman⁴ has

2 A Hammar, B Raftopoulos and A Jensen (Eds.), *Zimbabwe’s unfinished business: Rethinking land, state and nation in the context of crisis* (Harare, Weaver Press, 2003), pp. 1-47. pp. 1-47.

3 SJ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, (ed.), *Mugabeism? History, politics, and power in Zimbabwe* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

4 SR Dorman, *Understanding Zimbabwe: From liberation to authoritarianism* (London, Hurst & Company, 2016).

warned there are deeper issues beyond Mugabe in Zimbabwe as they are in South Africa beyond Zuma presidency. Bratton is acutely aware of the limits of an analysis focused on what he termed “African Big Men” without absolving them from responsibility (p. 2):

An obvious, but all too easy, explanation for misrule in Zimbabwe lays blame at the feet of the country’s only leader during more than 30 years of independence: President Robert Gabriel Mugabe. His biographers have lent merit to this case... A veteran of the colonial liberation war, Mugabe is a quintessential purveyor of power politics... His path to the apex of state power - by bullet as well as ballot - shapes the way he has subsequently governed. As Zimbabwe’s top official, Mugabe has concentrated authority in the presidency and thus gained sweeping discretion over political decisions. Displaying his trade-mark political symbol of a clenched fist, he is usually seen in public surrounded by a phalanx of uniformed security forces. When challenged, he has seldom hesitated to apply his self-proclaimed ‘degrees in violence’ against enemies – real and imagined.

Yes, we have to liberate analysis from “undue attention to the biographical details and personal quirks of the towering gladiators who play starring roles in the political arena” (p. 7). This is important because besides the role of “Big Men” there is the “postcolonial” and “post-apartheid” struggle for control of political institutions, the media and civil society, for instance, in both Zimbabwe and South Africa and the complex resistance to this politics of capture. There is a see-saw between politics of control and co-option. Bratton articulated his conceptual/theoretical departure in this way (p. 7):

My goal is to de-emphasize individual leaders and instead emphasize the persistent elite coalitions and inherited political institutions through which they operate. My conception of power politics does not ignore political agency; rather, it situates groups of actors collectively within political structure.

The emphasis by Bratton on elite coalitions speaks to the ongoing attempts by Zimbabwean opposition forces to come together into a grand coalition with one presidential candidate to face Mugabe in 2018 elections. The fulcrum for the crystallization of opposition is the Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T) led by the veteran trade unionist Morgan Tsvangirai. In South Africa, the concept of elite coalitions speaks to the post-local government elections developments where the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and the Democratic Alliance (DA) agreed to co-govern some of the metros like Tshwane and Johannesburg. What Bratton ignores in his analysis, however, is the long-arm of the so-called “global governance” that is invisible but active to discipline deviant politicians and deviant regimes through such

means as down-grading by credit-rating agents and the imposition of sanctions. Dorman⁵ emphasised that in our analysis we have to go beyond pre-occupation with personalised politics so as to delve deeper into a complex understanding of “the state, nation and political identities which it forged, and the nature of its control over those political institutions”. Under President Zuma, it seems the ANC is struggling to take control of state institutions, and unlike in Zimbabwe, is facing stronger opposition and civil society activism that is quick to raise the flag of “state capture”. The Chapter 9 institutions particularly the Public Protector’s office under Thuli Madonsela specifically became an active and agile institution that opposed state capture, in the perspective of those opposed to the ANC and Zuma. With the departure of Madonsela and the recent problematic reshuffle of cabinet by President Zuma; there is a sceptical feeling that the move is part of implementation of state capture. President Zuma and his supporters, argue that the cabinet reshuffle is meant to facilitate the implementation of radical economic transformation of South Africa.

Bratton (p. 6) identified three essential power resources which are available for deployment in building power politics: coercion, incentives and persuasion. In Zimbabwe, coercion and violence has been key to the survival of ZANU-PF and Mugabe politically. But Mugabe and ZANU-PF have also used effectively the strategy of “punishing” for disloyalty and “paying” for loyalty. The Fast-Track Land Reform (FTLR) was a dark site of patronage, corruption, clientelism, and patrimonialism. Membership of ZANU-PF was a major determinant in gaining a piece of land. Civil servants particularly those in the judiciary, army, police, intelligence, and other government offices were another constituency that enjoyed preferential treatment in land redistribution. On top of the list of beneficiaries of the land reform were of course Mugabe himself, his wife, relatives, ministers, and ZANU-PF members of parliament.⁶

Having expressed his conceptual/theoretical thrust, Bratton then focused on the politics of power-sharing and offered a three-fold typology: “power capture” in which “a dominant elite unilaterally imposes its own rules” as is the case in Zimbabwe where the dominant elite “rule by law” while subverting “rule of law”; “power sharing” in which “contending elites” struggle to institutionalize competing sets of rules as was the case during the tenure of

⁵ SR Dorman, *Understanding Zimbabwe...*

⁶ SJ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, (ed.), *Mugabeism? History, politics...*

the Inclusive Government (2009-2013) in Zimbabwe and is the case in South Africa today; and “power division” in which “elites agree on the rules for periodic circulating power among contending elites” (p. 10). What became known as the “Tsholotsho Declaration” of 2004 in Zimbabwe where elites from dominant ethnic groups negotiated how power was to circulate to the satisfaction of all ethnic groups was agreed.⁷

What Bratton has offered us is an institutional perspective that compares institutional arrangements in power-sharing politics as well as challenges such as electoral management, security sector reform and transitional justice in the specific case of Zimbabwe. This institutional analysis provokes one to delve into the dominant approaches that have been used to understand Zimbabwe. One can identify the following major scholarly trends: political economy approach; institutionalism approach; democratization approach; biographical approach; and the traditional nationalist anti-colonial approach, which is regaining ascendance because of the resurgence of decolonial approaches. Dorman⁸ isolated only three dominant approaches – political economy, institutionalism and democratization – which she argued reflected discipline of political science’s orientation. Dorman is critical of the value of these three approaches:

I suggest that they have proved unsatisfactory in explaining the changes and continuities in the relationship between state and society in Zimbabwe, because they were trying to answer particular questions and focused on discrete aspects of state power, rather than investigating interconnections between material, coercive and discursive aspects of power as developed by the regime. Nor do they examine patterns of governance which extend across rural and urban governance, state engagement with different societal groups, and the shaping and politicization of state institutions.

Political economy approach that is symbolized in the work of Ibbo Mandaza⁹ particularly his book *Zimbabwe: The political economy of transition, 1980-1986* (1986) focused on four key issues: class, policy making, ideology, and international geo-political environment. Institutionalists like Jonathan Moyo¹⁰ focused on studying institutions of the state, service delivery, governance, and power politics. Institutionalists were part of the first group of intellectuals to critique the state and reveal democratic and human rights

7 SJ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, (ed.), *Mugabeism? History, politics...*

8 SR Dorman, *Understanding Zimbabwe...*

9 I Mandaza (ed.), *Zimbabwe: The political economy of transition, 1980-1986* (Dakar, CODESRIA Book Series, 1986).

10 J Moyo, “State politics and social domination”, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 30(2), 1992, pp. 305-330.

deficits. What Dorman¹¹ termed the “democratization” approach, focused on such diverse issues as the role of civil society, constitutionalism, human rights violations, democratic deficits, elections, labour, race, and gender. The work of Brian Raftopoulos¹² represents this multi-issue research with its activist components. Bratton’s work straddles the institutionalism and democratization approaches. Dorman’s¹³ criticism of the institutionalist approach for presuming “a neutral administrative state, assessed on the basis of its material accomplishments” and for ignoring “the role of the party or fractions within the party in assuming and retaining power” is unfounded. Those scholars who have focused on institutions are equally critical of the state and the party. To Dorman’s credit, she was courageous to try and classify the diverse literature on Zimbabwe ideologically and disciplinary-wise.

Back to Bratton, while his book is empirically focused on explaining the failure of Zimbabwe’s power-sharing settlement of 2008-2013, he opened the canvas to reflect on the trajectory of Zimbabwe from a colony to a sovereign state, then to crisis and power-sharing government. The African experience is also brought into light as is the broader political theory. It is indeed an important book that evokes and provokes one to reflect on contemporary political developments in Zimbabwe and South Africa. One key lesson for South Africa drawn from the political trajectory of Zimbabwe is that of the reality of the exhaustion of liberatory discourse and liberatory memory giving rise to a new politics that pushes a former liberation movement to the defensive. Once it is on the defensive and on the ropes, the former liberation movement re-ignites the anti-colonial radical discourse and engages in ill-thought-out radical economic transformation that is no longer acceptable in a global neoliberal environment. The attempt to implement radical economic transformation provokes not only the anger of local capitalists but also the distant global governors of the world market. Once this anger is aroused down-grades and sanctions kick in as the general population cry for the blood of the president. What is called “global governance” is a site of market fundamentalism that demands good behaviour from those like Mugabe and Zuma who are entrapped in this coloniality of markets.¹⁴ Bratton’s analysis ignores the aspect of entrap-

11 SR Dorman, *Understanding Zimbabwe...*

12 B Raftopoulos, “Beyond the House of Hunger: Democratic struggle in Zimbabwe”, *Review of African Political Economy*, 54, 1996, pp. 59-74; “The Zimbabwean crisis and the challenges of the left”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 32(2), 2006, pp. 203-219.

13 SR Dorman, *Understanding Zimbabwe...*, p. 8.

14 SJ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “The entrapment of the Global South in global economy” (Keynote Address delivered at the International Conference on Global Crises, Global Change (GCGC, Westminster Undergraduate Conference, Westminster College, USA, 30 March to 1 April 2016).

ment of postcolonial Africa in global coloniality where the “misbehaviour” of a leader to the dictates of the markets invites economic and political disaster to the local economy. If the leader does not “misbehave” to the market’s laws then it is impossible to launch any radical economic transformation and the leader is in trouble from those who aspire to the bourgeoisie after centuries of subjugation by colonialists and the workers and peasants too hungry to be patient with a leader who chooses loyalty to the markets rather than the voters. Worse still entrapment in coloniality inevitably ensnares the leader in corrupting tendencies of capitalism and those capitalists who survive by capturing treasuries and states in Africa.

Hermann Giliomee: Historian Autobiography

(Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2016, pp. 344. ISBN: 0813922372 (Afr.),
9780624066835 (Eng.))

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Professionally it is a special accomplishment for a modern historian to write an autobiography. Since the advent of postmodernism in the 1970s, the growing sense of consciousness of the self as actor and agent in a contingent universe of historical description, historians have tended to be circumspect about writing their autobiographies. Fernand Braudel's self-history of 1972¹ and Pierre Nora's egohistory² set the agenda for fierce contestations that by the early 2000s featured prominently in memory studies.³ In the field of intellectual history and the theory of history, historians' autobiographical writings have remained a field of deep and thorough reflection. By the mid-2010s the notable feature in historians' autobiographical writings was its *interventional* nature. Typically, there is evidence of the historian as author of the self, to actively mediate and intervene in theoretical (or historiographical) forays in the text.⁴ Hermann Giliomee's latest study can be categorised in the current context of the autobiographical historian as active participant and (empirical) theoretician exploring the project at a deeper level than would normally form part of the mainstream historian's focus. In terms of theorisation, his focus clearly has a pronounced political history inclination, based on many years of actively working in the field of South African studies as both historian and political scientist, frequently sharing his vast knowledge with key role players in public life.

It is therefore with good reason that the book is both a rewarding, but simultaneously a disturbing read. On the one hand, we have potentially one of the most prolific Afrikaans historians of the late 20th century narrating his personal observations and experiences since the 1950s – an era of Afrikaner greatness –

1 F Braudel, "Personal testimony," *The Journal of Modern History*, 44(4), 1972, pp. 448-467.

2 J Aurell i Cardona, "Autobiographical texts as historiographical sources: Rereading Fernand Braudel and Annie Kriegel," *Biography*, 29(3), 2006.

3 J Winter, "The memory boom in contemporary historical studies," *Raritan*, 21(1), 2001.

4 J Aurell, "Making history by contextualising oneself: Autobiography as historiographical intervention," *History and Theory*, 54(2), 2015, pp. 244-268.

to the recent past of a rapidly transforming South Africa. The rewarding part of the study is to take note of the personalised glimpses into the world of a native “Bolander”, who could hardly properly speak and write the English language, but nevertheless was absorbed into a very exclusive intellectual space of South African Anglo-Saxon culture. In this context, he has played an important role in sharing with South Africa’s English speakers valuable insights into the mind and thinking of their Afrikaans-speaking counterparts.

The study is partly a narrative of how a single Afrikaner, qualified in the field of history (primarily mainstream Afrikaner history), became part of the proverbial simulation process of the Afrikaners’ thinking at the University of Cape Town, where, as of the 1980s, the future South Africa was under intense investigation. His emigration from the heartland of Afrikaans intellectual thought in Stellenbosch, is the disturbing part of Giliomee’s personal discourse. It was both painful and a relief, interspersed with a logic of its own. The study deals primarily with the top intellectual layer of a unique African community. However, when Giliomee does look at mainstream Afrikaners, he interestingly foregrounds observations on his cameo study of the coloured Afrikaners of Stellenbosch and the bad deal they had from the former apartheid leaders.⁵

The study is a jewel for historiographers and intellectual historians of South Africa. In retrospect, it becomes more than apparent how the discourse on South Africa and its Afrikaners has changed. Giliomee makes it clear that he is an Afrikaner and is passionate about the language and the people who consider themselves part of the Afrikaans community. For the intellectual historian Giliomee describes the cultural landscape at the University of Stellenbosch in the mid-1950s – a perfect and typical middle-class Afrikaans-speaking South African in a world – not unlike a South African version of an American Ivy league, or British (Oxbridge) institution. He comes across as a typical history nerd, but one with a bent for seeing something different in the Afrikaner cultural environment where trend-setting political ideas of the ruling National Party and the Afrikaner Broederbond were in a constant state of innovative incubation. At the student level, organisations like the Afrikaanse Studentebond and a vast array of related institutional groupings, thrived on a path dependency determined by deep Afrikaans intellectual cultural, religious and political thought.

⁵ HB Giliomee, *Nog altyd hier gewees: Die storie van 'n Stellenbosse gemeenskap* (Kaapstad, Tafelberg, 2007).

As a graduate with a leadership record and sound academic credentials he briefly worked at the South African diplomatic service in Pretoria where he honed his youthful journalistic skills, before joining the staff of the History Department at the University of South Africa. It appears not to have been too good an experience. There was the positive exposure to a more liberal academic environment. But UNISA was also where he met his academic nemesis – Floors van Jaarsveld. Giliomee acknowledges the genius of Van Jaarsveld, but he evidently met up with the mercurial historian when he was increasingly drifting from being a historian with fairly liberal European nationalist ideas, to a formidable conservative 1960s Afrikaner historian. While at UNISA, it was soon a foregone conclusion that Giliomee would be seeking a career in academia. As alumnus of Stellenbosch, he jumped at the chance of returning south. Back at Stellenbosch Giliomee, against the grain of his peers and seniors in the History department, was eager to do contemporary history. However, PJ van der Merwe's presence was still pronounced and a strong conventional classical history scholarship approach prevailed in the department.

After completing his PhD Giliomee spent a year in postgraduate studies at Yale, under Leonard Thompson – one of the leading liberal historians of South African history. Thompson had earlier been a victim of a typical Floors van Jaarsveld historiographical attack on the 'appropriate nature' of South African history. The matter would obviously have featured in talks between Giliomee and Thompson. At the time, Giliomee was in a critical phase of his evolution as a critical historian. After the USA encounter he was a changed man. Back at the History Department Giliomee became an outsider for propagating alternative and new learning content materials for the students. It was considered strident with the mainstream Afrikaans university system thinking. Giliomee explores the different mentalities and systems of communication amongst academics at the country's top Afrikaans and English universities of the day. The academic reader of the 21st century comes to realise how the academic landscape in South Africa has changed since the mid-1990s.

Giliomee's generation represented the mature adult cohort of South Africans who intensely experienced the Soweto uprisings of 1976. They also responded in a highly diversified manner. Some became more conservative; the vast majority followed the prevailing thinking of the governing National Party; and a third group started articulating an alternative view of looking at their own community and the emergence of a rapidly changing South Africa. Giliomee formed part of the "oorbelig" intellectual leadership. In his writings and engagements

with South Africans in many walks of life he was a spokesperson for his generation shaping the mentality of a changing society. He was a critical Afrikaner articulating a different view of mainstream South Africa.

For South African historical studies, Giliomee's departure from Stellenbosch, was beneficial, especially for a younger generation of historians. It was, as he explains, largely as a result of the Afrikaner Broederbond, that he departed for UCT. It was there, under the influence of many of the top liberal humanities and social science scholars in the country and a multitude of valuable friendships, that he would, in time to come, edit and expand, in conjunction with Leonard Elphick, the seminal *The shaping of South African society*.⁶ The study would set the trend for significant changes in South Africa historical scholarship in many parts of the country.

Giliomee had an impeccable political track record and very special connections. As a historian teaching academic politics, he had access to key role players in South Africa's corporate sector – both English (British and American) and Afrikaans. At the same time, he and some fellow Afrikaner intellectuals started *Die Suid-Afrikaan*. They were at the forefront of a new way of thinking about South Africa and its population, of which the Afrikaners formed a small, but significant part. This journal would become the feedlot for a new critical generation of Afrikaners. In the Afrikaans media Giliomee maintained ties of friendship with the leading Afrikaans journalists who fearlessly sought to pursue a line of *realpolitik* while propagating the government's policies. He also maintained strong ties with a former colleague and rising politician, Frederik van Zyl Slabbert.

Giliomee spends a considerable part of the book in propounding his Afrikaner credentials. There is literary and poetical justification for his autobiography. He had staked his claim as specialist historian with a ground-breaking *biography* of South Africa's Afrikaners.⁷ A time of relative isolation from direct contact with his people, enabled him to formulate a lucid group word portrait. Despite being outside the fold he thrived. Giliomee was far more influential in shaping the minds of a new generation of South Africans increasingly critical of bush wars and government's half-truths shared in the country's legislative assembly. Moreover, government came under fierce attack from the outside world. International isolation loomed large on the political

6 R Elphick, and HB Giliomee (eds), *The shaping of South African society, 1652-1820.*, 1986 ed. (Cape Town, Maskew Miller Longman, 1979).

7 HB Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a people* (Charlottesville, VA, University of Virginia Press, 2003).

and economic horizon. Internally the opposition was no longer confined to South Africans of colour and the English-speaking liberals. Amongst the people arrested by the security police were also Afrikaans youths who refused to abide by the laws of the land.

Throughout the book the autobiographer layers his views to come over as an even-handed historian who has the interests of the Afrikaner at heart. His foray into the 'dismal' history of the University of Stellenbosch's language policy since the 1990s, underlines his depth of knowledge on the nature of the lines that had been drawn in the sand to maintain Afrikaans as language of choice at the US. He also relies on the views of leading Afrikaans writers and fellow academics for coming to a better understanding what direction to chart into an uncertain future. His elitist connections do not put Giliomee in a favourable position to always understand the mind and thinking of all Afrikaners and their fellow South Africans at grassroots level. He later compensated, in part, for that by writing a cameo history of Stellenbosch's coloured community, he rightly describes as his fellow Afrikaners.⁸

Politically Giliomee is well-versed in comparative studies in democracy, strong democracies and near-authoritarian regime systems. Much of his insights were garnered from valuable contacts with overseas academics, extensive reading in the process of grappling with the problematic politics of South Africa since the 1970s. When it comes to raw political power and leadership Giliomee is a past master. His analysis of the Afrikaner leaders of state is incisive. But there are also flaws. If he wanted to make a symbolic statement in sharing at some length PW Botha's 'silence' during the cabinet discussion and the decision to pave the 'Rubicon' way for South Africa's transition, it is not clear what he was looking for. Perhaps he could not understand the mind of a Free State Afrikaner (Botha) who in the Cape Province cut his teeth as young leader of the National Party. Similarly, in his assessment of FW de Klerk, Giliomee argues, there simply was no proper and effective leadership. A debate between himself and FW de Klerk's chief of staff, Dave Stewart, on the matter does not enlighten the reader properly. Maybe the copy-and-pasting of a blog text into the autobiographical manuscript was an easy way of escaping from accounting for a complex time in South Africa's political system. Perhaps it may even be that Giliomee is sensitive to the still angry crowd of right-wing Afrikaner leaders who have remained steadfast, since the early 1990s, in their negative assessment of De Klerk. Fact of the matter is that FW de Klerk

⁸ HB Giliomee, *Nog altyd hier gewees...*

(himself a conservative NP leader) had to consult the political looking glass of his day at a time when, immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, the role of South Africa in Africa and the rest of the world, was subject to substantive change. In the northern parts of the country, there was not the comfort of inching up to moderate coloured South Africans. The vast majority of black South Africans were resident in the northern parts of the country. They were angry and impatient, to say the least. This was the key stakeholder group of which De Klerk had to take note in the process of transition.

The industrial heartland of South Africa, as result of the diminishing easy mineable mineral resources as of 1973, was set for entering a phase of post-industrial development, partially as a result of globalisation. FW de Klerk had to facilitate the process. That was, at most, all the government of the day could do. The onset of a phase of uncertain creative destruction – most evident in the demise of the National Party – starting in the early 1980s, left a South Africa in which not only the new power brokers, but the Afrikaners as a community, were subjected to states of consciousness of constantly having to re-invent themselves.

Much symbolism can be read in Giliomee's exposition of the 'Battle of An-dringa Street' in the early 1940s. The autobiographer outlines how he managed to retrieve from popular memory the clash between white Stellenbosch students and coloured people at Senitzky's cafe where the Stellenbosch students thought the coloured townspeople were 'uppity' when they tried to press to the front to secure a copy of the English Cape Town newspaper reporting on a symbolic student protest in Cape Town's Adderley Street, to a moment of silence for the Allied forces fighting the war. The incident additionally informs the modern reader how much in demand an English newspaper was in Stellenbosch in former times. It also sheds light on the bitter conflicts between Afrikaners of all shades. There are many more interesting reflections in the book. Giliomee's autobiography is worth the read, even if it is disturbing in places. It was a good investment in cultural capital on the part of his publishers to support the project. Giliomee is an important transitional figure in the history of the Afrikaners' adaptation to contemporary South Africa. The fact that he wrote most of his seminal texts in the English language made it possible for an often-misunderstood cultural community in South Africa to reach a critically important reading community. This study is bound to serve the same purpose.

The creation of the Zulu kingdom, 1815-1828: War, Shaka, and the consolidation of power

(SA, Cambridge University Press, 2004, 419 pp. ISBN 978-1-107-07532-0)

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Elizabeth A Eldredge is an independent scholar whose publications include: *A South African kingdom: The pursuit of security in the nineteenth-century Lesotho* and *Power in colonial Africa: Conflict and discourse in Lesotho, 1870-1960*. *The creation of the Zulu kingdom* is a scholarly account of the emergence and growth of the Zulu Kingdom in the early nineteenth century. The author used a wealth of Zulu oral traditions coupled with written sources to reconstruct the history of the Zulu Kingdom. The rich Zulu oral traditions reveal Shaka as a nation builder whose ambitions saw him conquer the greater part of Southern Africa, becoming the arbiter of the Caledon valley and beyond.

The author is aware of the shortfalls of oral traditions hence she used vast oral accounts to minimize the bias that may lie in oral history. Oral traditions may seduce historians into taking them literally because of their immediacy and emotional power. Thus a vast collection of oral traditions allowed the author to compare and contrast information provided for authenticity. This helped her uproot bias and address the common oral history twin sins of omission and commission. However on the other hand the accounts may have been affected by their translation from Zulu into English.

Using Zulu oral traditions, Eldredge gives a vivid account of Shaka's birth, his graduation to manhood and his accession to power. As the most junior and illegitimate son of Senzangakhona, he had no claim whatsoever to the Zulu chieftaincy. However Shaka took his position as a chief by force. The author demonstrated that chieftaincy was sometimes fiercely contested. It is thus a position for the powerful and popular.

Shaka used his military to impose the Zulu Kingdom upon other chiefdoms across the region. The author puts no emphasis on Shaka's military revolution that saw him conquer the greater part of Southern Africa. She instead notes that Shaka was socialised into the new fighting methods of Dingiswayo. This reduces Shaka to a position of an imitator rather than that of an initiator. However Shaka was a good student who used the new fighting methods he learnt from Dingiswayo to revolutionalise the Southern African military terrain, hence he has been considered a military genius.

Even though Shaka is painted as a blood thirsty tyrant in Eldredge's gathered oral accounts and other Eurocentric scholarship, he was kind to the poor and the disabled. The Eurocentric scholarship that demonises Shaka was meant to discredit his military account and legitimate the destruction of the Zulu Kingdom and eventual colonization of the region. Eldredge rests the responsibility of the disturbances in Caledon Valley squarely on the shoulders of Shaka. It is however paramount to note that Europeans and slave raiders from Delagoa Bay were also responsible for the political disturbances in the Caledon Valley as argued by Julian Cobbing in his seminal article: *The Mfecane as Alibi: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolompo*.

The author, though she used Zulu oral accounts to concur with Eurocentric scholarship also contradicts them, revealing a more humane side. He was kind to the poor and mentally disabled. He rewarded courage and loyalty. He spared women and children in most of his military expeditions assimilating them into the Zulu socio-political structure. He even went further by welcoming the whites to his kingdom (even though he was advised to kill them) and forging alliances with them. Like other chiefs, Shaka felt threatened by the powerful leaders in Nguniland which explains his violence against them. Eldredge notes that women in precolonial history of Kwa-Zulu Natal were less visible. This is because women were in patriarchal societies trapped in domesticity and viewed as instruments of reproduction and production. The production of historical literature was done by men about men for men. However the author's strength is to reveal women's active participation in political and socio-economic arenas of the Zulu Kingdom. Women actively participated as regents, soldiers and mat carriers for warriors. Shaka relied on royal men and women to govern the large Zulu Kingdom. Wives and daughters of the royal family were also involved in succession disputes. Chiefs chose their wives from royal families to create and reinforce political alliances. Thus

women like their male counterparts played significant and necessary roles in the Zulu Kingdom.

Shaka's iron rule led to his attempted assassination and eventually his death. He was assassinated by his half-brothers Dingani and Mhlangane. This confirms that those who live by the sword die by the sword. Dingane took over as the Zulu Chief after the assassination of Mhlangane. It was the change of personalities at the helm but the continuation of the same socio-political system that prevailed under Shaka's reign. Dingane continued killing his opponents and his brothers to consolidate his power. His accession to power coincided with the increased migration of Europeans – with their superior firepower – into Southern Africa. This ultimately led to the disintegration of the Zulu Kingdom and opened a new era of exploitation.

The creation of the Zulu kingdom is a very valuable study of the emergence and growth of the Zulu Kingdom in Southern Africa under the leadership of the military genius, Shaka. The author was able to use diverse Zulu oral traditions to reconstruct the history of the Zulu Kingdom under the leadership of Shaka. The vivid oral accounts coupled with the analysis of the events keeps the reader riveted. The scholarly account is therefore a valuable font of information for historians wishing to study the history of the Zulu Kingdom from 1815 to 1828.

Race, class and power. Harold Wolpe and the radical critique of apartheid

(Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2015, 368 pp., ISBN: 978-1-86914-286-5)

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Harold Wolpe and three other detainees captured the imagination of an international audience after their daring escape from a South African prison in 1963. Wolpe had been arrested a month before for his involvement at the anti-apartheid base at Liliesleaf. Unable to continue his life in apartheid

South Africa, Wolpe instead led an exiled existence in England. However, his newly-found fame, and even infamy in some circles, came at a painful personal cost of being divorced from the coalface of the struggle. *Race, class and power* explores this trope by providing an intellectual overview of the ideological contributions that Wolpe made remotely to Marxist theory in an apartheid milieu.

Steven Friedman's latest publication is not another ubiquitous biography of a proponent of the liberation movement. Instead, *Race, class and power* aims to explore how Wolpe's academic contributions affected the consciousness of a country struggling, first, under inimical apartheid legislation, and thereafter, struggling with safeguarding a smooth transition to democracy. Concomitant to this aim, *Race, class and power* also seeks to place Marxist theory into a transnational perspective, quantifying, in three general phases, how Wolpe's contributions influenced those individuals who prescribed to Marxism from the 1970s and beyond.

Race, class and power is replete with oral sources of prolific thinkers of the time, who extensively shared their personal perceptions of not only Wolpe but of the Marxist and liberal *zeitgeist*. This is indeed, from a historical perspective, one of the book's strengths, much to the credit of Judith Hudson, who was responsible for collecting these memories. A lot of conclusions pertaining to Wolpe's influence on Marxist theory is predicated on these interviews of figures such as Martin Legassick, Ahmed Kathrada, Jeremy Cronin, Raymond Suttner and Shula Marks, to name but a few. If historians strive towards constructing the most objective truth through an exhaustive survey of sources, Hudson's contributions are certainly the fulcrum on which this book is based. In the interest of balance, however, and in a minority of instances, the scope of interviews could perhaps have extended to other echelons of intellectual thought.

If the reader is interested in a theoretical overview of Marxist ideological development in South Africa and internationally, *Race, class and power* comes highly recommended. In particular, Friedman's erudition of the Marxist debates within academia, anti-apartheid political organisations and intellectual circles captures the abundance of conflicted and multifarious approaches with remarkable efficiency. Not only does *Race, class and power* provide a prism into Marxist thought, but it also enlightens the reader of the rigid and intransigent Stalinist convictions of the South African Communist Party at the time. This inculcates with Wolpe's travails to contribute intellectually to the liberation

struggle while remaining loyal and perceivably uncritical (at the fear of being further ostracised) to the organisations to which he belonged.

Grounded on Friedman's personal experience as a journalist and academic, *Race, class and power* also provides adept contextualisation of Marxism's influence (or often lack thereof) in both South African politics and the public domain. Towards the end of the book, the author alludes to some of the current challenges which the country faces, as well as the contemporary implementation and relevance of Marxist theory. The book certainly gains relevance as a result thereof. One of the book's highlights relates to Wolpe's prescient approach towards redressing inequalities in higher education during his so-called 'third career' (after law and sociology) devising educational policy in the 1990s. Wolpe's difficult task related to keeping 'the ANC conceptually coherent while not remaining oblivious to political realities' (Friedman, 2015: 244). The reader cannot help but wonder how the current movement towards free, decolonised education in a tertiary environment would have been affected, had Wolpe's debates enjoyed more traction with influential governing bodies.

Up to the penultimate chapter, *Race, class and power* is somewhat bifurcated. While Wolpe's contributions to the development of South African Marxist theory is ostensibly significant, Friedman points out that the evidence of the legacy of his work through concrete examples is sparse. Friedman's discussions are predominantly presupposed on a comprehensive prior knowledge of not only Marxism but also South African politics and central figures thereof, which does run the risk of alienating certain audiences. Similarly, Friedman uses abbreviations expansively and the inclusion of an abbreviation list would have greatly improved the ease of understanding the book. *Race, class and power* relies on extensive quotations and as a result some sections are formulaic: Wolpe's argument is stated, followed by a summary of the most important reactions to it. Often analysis of reactions to Wolpe's writings could have portrayed evidence of deeper engagement. However, the author does redeem himself in this regard in the final chapter, 'Questions, not answers: Transcending the Marxist tradition'.

Ultimately, *Race, class and power* subsumes Wolpe's theoretical contributions to wider historical debates surrounding Marxism. A recurring motif in the book is Wolpe's intellectual rigour, which (like the French Marxist, Louis Althusser) was never fully embraced. Friedman attributes this observation on the largely theoretical nature of Wolpe's work, making it inaccessible to the

casual reader. Ultimately, much like Wolpe, *Race, class and power's* theoretical base is likely to obfuscate some readers, despite the salient scholarly contribution which it makes to provide not only an overview of South African Marxist historiography but also a prism into Wolpe's role in the evolution of Marxist thought.

West Africa before the colonial era. A history to 1850

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The field of African history in general and West African history in particular has come of age in the last five decades. West Africa has attracted scholarly attention because it was the centre of the slave trade and most of the populations (approximately 50%) of the African diaspora in the US, the Caribbean and Latin America came ultimately from pre-colonial West Africa. Although a lot has been written about West Africa, it still remains a poorly understood region in part because of precolonial African myths, unfounded and sometimes erroneous, which often colour our understanding of West African history. Other scholars – JD Fage (Cambridge, 1955), JD Hargreaves (Macmillan, 1963), A Boahen and JA Adayi (Longman 1963) and, recently, T Falola (Carolina Press, 2001) – however, have produced surveys questioning these assumptions. They have explained how ancient African societies had established complex political systems for their governance, created sophisticated civilisations and the extent to which internal conflicts and outside forces/pressures brought about their decline.

The book, *West Africa before colonial era: A history to 1850*, authored by the internationally renowned scholar and journalist, Basil Davidson, surveys West African history before the arrival of Europeans. Using his widely acclaimed text, *A History of West Africa 1000-1800* as a point of departure, Davidson delves into the rich cultures, societies and politics of this region before the advent of colonial rule. Davidson's work traverses familiar African history scholarly terrain because it summarises and clarifies topics treated elsewhere

by scholars, including, but not limited to, N Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana and Mali* (Cambridge, 1986); G Connah, *African civilizations: Precolonial cities and states in tropical Africa: An archaeological perspective* (Cambridge, 2003); E Savage, *The human commodity: Perspectives on the Trans-Saharan slave trade* (London, 1992); K Shillington, 3rd edition, *history of Africa* (Palgrave, 2012) and B Barry, *Senegambia and Atlantic Slave trade before the colonial conquest* (Cambridge, 1998) JD Fage (*An introduction to the History of West Africa* (1955) and JD Hargreaves, *Prelude to the partition of West Africa* (Macmillan, 1963). However, what sets Davidson's text apart from these other works is the fact that he contextualizes West African empires and sets them in their broader context. He provides not only new information, as in the case of the origin and dissolution of Mali, but also traces the rise and fall of these empires, and sees a common thread running through all of them.

Although Davidson's text has sixteen chapters, it can be divided into two sections. The first section (chapters 1-8) discusses the rise and fall of West African empires from the early centuries AD until the eighteenth century. Ghana, Mali, Songhay and Kanem-Bornu empires are the subjects of part 1. Here, Davidson analyses how these empires gained control of the trans-Saharan trade; the extent to which this trade contributed to their origin, development and, ultimately, decline. A similar narrative runs through all these empires. That is, how strong leadership and trade contributed to their formation. In the case of Ghana, King Tunka Manin's strong leadership stimulated ancient Ghana's rise through "the control of long distance trade" (p. 30). We know from available sources that this was a result of trade between the Saharan Berbers from the North who brought salt and other trade commodities to the Soninke of Bambuk and Bure in the South in exchange of gold. Ghana's imposition of two forms of taxation, "export tax" and "production tax", on goods entering and leaving Ghana, was important for the day-to-day running of the administration (p. 31). "The rulers of Ghana," Davidson tells us, "used their control of the long distance trade" to finance and feed the soldiers (p. 30). Like ancient Ghana, Mali came to great heights because of long distance trade and strong leaders, such as "Sundiata, Mansa Sakuru and Mansa Musa" (pp. 41-42). Mali's Kangaba traders, Davidson reminds us, were involved in the gold trade with Ghana (p. 38). For Songhay, Davidson explains, it was Sunni Ali who expanded Songhay's power through building "a large and unified system of law and order, central government and peaceful trade." Like Mali, Songhay experienced growth through three important leaders: "Sunni Ali, Askia the Great and Askia Dawud" (p. 55).

Generations later, these empires overreached, which in turn led to their disintegration by both internal and external invaders. In 1050, for example, Davison asserts that the Almoravids, a group of Islamic religious sect, under Abu Bakr, “waged a long war against Ghana” (p. 32). While Davidson sees the disintegration of Ghana as a result of external invasion, he believes that Mali disintegrated owing to poor leadership, Gao rebels and “Tuareg nomads” and “the Mossi” attacks (p. 44). According to Davidson, Mansa Musa was a powerful leader who held Mali together, but his successors lacked such leadership skills. As he puts it, “Mali had outgrown its political and military strength” (p. 44) Songhay, like Mali and Ghana, declined as a result of external forces. Davidson argues that attacks by “the Mossi and their neighbours” and “the Hausa states” led to the decline of Songhay. But of far greater importance, he believes, was the Moroccan invasion of 1582, which was motivated by economic considerations. Davidson asserts that “the Sultan of Morocco sent a force of 200 soldiers to seize the vital deposits of Taghaza as well far in the north of Songhay...” (p. 58).

Part II of the book comprises chapters 9-16. This part begins with the paradox that West African peoples were technologically slow as they moved forward economically and culturally. “South of the great desert of the Sahara,” Davidson writes “West Africa was by no means cut off from developments elsewhere, because the long-distance caravan trails to and from North Africa continued to operate” (p. 131). Despite this, West Africans boasted “rich and interesting” (p. 133) civilisations of “variety” and “unity” (p. 132). Having explored these rich civilisations, Davidson then discusses the development of religion, the arts, social thought, politics and economics. Religiously, Islam introduced new written forms of communication which allowed for the establishment of the more complex political systems to rule stratified societies. “The ideas and beliefs of Islam,” Davidson tells us, “helped build larger states than before” (p. 54). Besides, serving as a unifying force, Islam was important in the governance of states. Islamic laws, Davidson reminds us, “were about the administration of justice, the inheritance of property and the improvement of market organization” (p. 154) and West Africa’s overall “political culture” (p. 155). Davidson also discusses the origin, development and impact of the slave trade. He traces the origin of the slave trade in “master-servant organization,” which existed in countries such as Africa (p. 189). Like other scholars, Davidson presents a problematic claim that slavery originated in Africa or Europeans succeeded to capture and buy enslaved African captives because Africans, especially the elite, were familiar with the slave trade.

The only difference, Davidson believes, was “that they had fewer rights” (p. 189). He maintains that “as in any countries of the world, then or at other times, chiefs and kings regularly turned war-captives and certain classes of law-breakers into slaves” (p. 189). One would have expected to hear much from this eminent scholar about the role of raiding, kidnapping, wars and other modes of enslavement. Equally disappointing is Davidson’s provocative argument without persuasive evidence that “it seems unlikely that African kings, chiefs and merchants would have stopped selling their servants and war-captives even if they had known the fate to which they were sending these men and women”, suggesting or, rather, insinuating that African kings or chiefs knew about the brutalities of slavery awaiting enslaved Africans in the Americas (p. 190).

While Davidson’s text provides valuable insights into ancient African societies and their cultures, it has been weakened by lack of factual details, questionable unsubstantiated claims and poor organisation. For instance, in his discussion of the role of long distance trade in the formation of ancient societies, Davidson tends to overlook, in the case of ancient Ghana, the central role of agriculture, evident in the domestication of sorghum and millet, made possible by the development of the Soninke new farming techniques. Equally neglected by Davison is raiding in which the Soninke used their superior weapons to subjugate weaker neighbouring communities. Like in ancient Ghana, agriculture played a crucial role in the growth of Mali, which was inextricably tied to the empire’s core religious belief, “the spirits of the land” whom Malians strongly believed that they ensured the success of their crops. Mansa, the village head, was the direct link with Malian ancestors upon whom continued production of their crops depended. The same applies to Songhay. Trade was not the only factor that contributed to the rise of this empire as Davidson claims. Songhay, moreover, was inhabited by Do Farmers, Gow hunters and Sorko fishermen, and this fact in itself attests to the importance of farming, hunting and fishing in the growth and development of this ancient African state. Besides the trans-Saharan trade, farming (especially livestock herding), raiding and payment of tribute played a major role in the rise of Kanem-Bornu. Davidson does, however, correctly point out that tribute played an important role in the Hausa city states, arguing that “neighbouring farmers paid to the men who ruled the city, who turn paid the soldiers and kept law and order” (pp. 71-72).

Equally problematic are Davidson's seventh and fourteenth chapters on "Senegambia," which are underdeveloped and, at best, poorly organised. The fourteenth chapter should come immediately after chapter seven for better chronology of events. Despite this organisational problem, chapter 7 materials become a bit clearer when Davidson reintroduced Senegambia in his examination of political changes brought by the origin and development of the Atlantic slave trade in chapters 13 and 14. Davidson's treatment of the slave trade is also problematic. For instance, his discussion of resistance to the slave trade in Africa and the Americas – with Haiti and Cuba as case studies – is not properly organised. Logically, one would have expected to read about how the slave trade "expanded" (pp. 196-197) before it was resisted either in Africa [pp 192-194] or the Americas (pp. 195-196). Also, for better chronology, the following chapter subheadings "Expansion of the Atlantic slave trade" (pp. 196-197), "the kingdom of the Fon and the Delta states", (pp. 199-200), "Ardrah and Whydah: dealers in slaves" (pp. 200-201), "The Fon autocracy" (pp. 201-202), "The Fon and Oyo" (pp. 202-203) and "The state of the Niger Delta" (pp. 203-205) should be removed and placed at the end of Davidson's discussion of "the growth of the Atlantic slave trade" on page 190. The subheading "the slave trade: consequences in West Africa" should be placed at the end of the subheading "resistance to the slave trade" on page 194. There are other organizational problems, which the present reviewer has no space to address.

Despite these weaknesses, ... *West Africa before the colonial era*, is a major work in West African history that is likely to stimulate much new research and inspire those of us who intend to study West African history. This work is a survey and thus should not be asked to provide much of an original contribution to scholarship. While the text has questionable unsubstantiated claims and poor organisation, it could benefit undergraduate students because it is enriched and enlivened with useful appendix of comparative dates (pp. 239-249), illustrations and maps on its various pages. It is a welcome supplement to introductory courses in West Africa before colonial rule, especially African history survey courses such as Africa to 1800 and Africa Since 1800.