

BERNARD LUGAN

*L'Afrique réelle*

Revue trimestrielle Nos. 2/3

Charroux, France

Hiver-Printemps 1994 (Winter-Spring 1994)

96pp, 65 maps

The composer of this atlas is Bernard Lugan, expert on African history, for 10 years professor and archaeologist at Kigale, Ruanda, at present professor in the University of Lyons. He has published several articles and books, some journalistic, inter alia on South Africa, which he visited at least five times. His atlas contains 65 sketch maps in black and white, each with one or two pages of comment. He deals with relief, rainfall, vegetation (forest, savannah and desert) and with the periods of history of Africa from prehistory up to the present. Sketch maps of the entire continent alternate with maps of parts of it. Southern Africa is on p. 20-21, 52-55, 61 (Namibia) and 65 (the campaigns of Lugan's hero Von Lettow Vorbeck in East Africa, 1915-1919). Some of his opinions are outspoken and clash with topical anti-colonial, anti-white ideas. He deals with the Mfecane (the Great Black Migrations, first half of the 19th century) on p. 52-53 and adheres to the exposition of J.D. Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu aftermath* (1965). He rejects the recent negation of the Mfecane as an invention of whites by Julian Cobbing and his followers, discussed by prof. H.J. van Aswegen in *Historia*, Pretoria, May 1994, pp. 19-32.

He implies on pp. 52-57 ("Blacks against Blacks") that black Africa was on the brink of devastation and depopulation owing to tribal warfare and slave razzias by Arabs when the Voortrekkers migrated to the north, 1836-55, and when European powers ushered in the scramble for the rest of Africa, 1880-1920. The whites stopped tribal wars and enslaving campaigns and brought peace.

His maps of the post-colonial era in black Africa show a dismal picture. They deal with the war in Angola since 1971 (p. 75), the cultivated soil as a percentage of cultivable soil (pp. 76-77), the population explosion (pp. 78-79), the small production and income per inhabitant (pp. 82-83), the retrogression in diversification of exports (pp. 84-85), the crushing indebtedness of African states to foreign creditors (pp. 86-89) and the rapid spreading of sleeping sickness, malaria fever and aids (sida) (p. 93).

As an adversary of post-colonial opinions on adverse white influence in Africa, Lugan can be certain of severe criticism. His atlas is a stimulating and interesting publication.

C. DE JONG

University of South Africa