

Book Reviews

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Boekresensies

Magisterial biography of a prominent nineteenth-century figure

Tim Keegan, *Dr Philip's Empire: One Man's Struggle for Justice in Nineteenth Century South Africa*

Zebra Press, Cape Town, 2016

413 pp

ISBN 978-1-77022-710-1

R350.00

Dr Philip's Empire: One Man's Struggle for Justice in Nineteenth Century South Africa by novelist and historian Tim Keegan is the first full-length biography of the prominent nineteenth century missionary and humanitarian campaigner, John Philip, since Andrew Ross's *John Philip (1775-1851): Missions, Race and Politics in South Africa* published in 1986. Born in Kirckcaldy, Scotland in 1775 and schooled in the principles and precepts of the Scottish Enlightenment, Philip took up residence in the Cape Colony in 1819 as the newly appointed superintendent of the London Missionary Society (LMS) in southern Africa. He remained a towering figure in the region, and beyond, for the remainder of his life, passing away in August 1851 at Hankey mission station amidst the turmoil of the eastern Cape frontier's latest conflagration, in the form of the Eighth Frontier War (or Mlanjeni's War) and the Kat River Rebellion. In a century marked by numerous turning points of lasting significance, the combined effects of the Eighth Frontier War and Kat River Rebellion risked undermining Philip's vision for the Cape, in particular for its political future and race relations. Keegan delivers a comprehensive account of Philip's illustrious evangelical-humanitarian career, skillfully weaving together the narrative thread of Philip's life with insightful analysis of the context in which he operated, and which he influenced and was influenced by in turn. Indeed, the value of any historical biography lies in the biographer's ability to shed light on the complexities, contingencies and contradictions that shaped the contours of the protagonist's life, thus illuminating the historical context.

The depth of analysis offered by Keegan has been ably assisted by the significant growth in scholarship of nineteenth century Cape colonial history since the early 1990s, much of which has focused on, or has been influenced by, the missionary endeavor and its archival footprint. The 30 years between Ross's and Keegan's biographies has seen the historiography of the nineteenth century Cape evolve in range, vigor and sophistication, marked by the influential contributions of Stanley Trapido, Andrew Bank, Elizabeth Elbourne, Robert Ross, Nigel Penn and others. Indeed, Keegan's work on Philip is as much a lesson in the value and influence of this scholarship on our understanding of the nineteenth century Cape and, by extension, South Africa's colonial past, as it is a gripping account of a looming figure in the history of the period.

In setting out his rationale for re-visiting Philip, Keegan notes that he is "an oddly anachronistic figure" and yet "he had a considerable impact" for the time (p 1). As a prolific writer, producing the hugely influential *Researches in South Africa*, published in 1826, Philip drew imperial attention to the Cape. As a well-connected humanitarian campaigner, Philip was tied to an extensive global network that stretched from the United States to the House of Commons, where one of his closest allies, Thomas Fowell Buxton, promoted Philip's cause at the heart of the colonial enterprise. Philip's influence was made possible by the Cape Colony's brief experiment with evangelical-humanitarianism as a political philosophy. This mirrored a similar, short-lived spell of influence for evangelical-humanitarianism as a political force at the Colonial Office in the 1820s and early 1830s. The emerging imperial world was characterised by numerous contestations over the sorts of ideals and moral impulses guiding colonial expansion and governance. Evangelical-humanitarians enjoyed considerable clout during the period in which Philip was superintendent of the LMS at the Cape. Philip's social standing, education, polemical skills, political connections and religious zeal saw him occupy a far more prominent position in the history of these contestations within the LMS, in the Cape Colony, and in the realm of global mission than would have otherwise been the case.

Arguably, Philip's vision for the Cape Colony and the wider southern African region, was both noble and deluded. Racial essentialism "was not yet the all-consuming creed it was to become later in the century" (p 5). As such, the early nineteenth century presented

possibilities for alternative futures, not limited to the path of race-based identity politics South Africa was to follow in subsequent decades. To his credit, Keegan manages to deliver a biography of a major figure in South Africa's colonial past at a time when such a study could be easily dismissed by an African nationalist critique. After all, Philip was an unashamed cultural imperialist who may have campaigned against the harsh realities of settler-colonialism and the dispossession and destruction meted out to the Cape's indigenous inhabitants, but who never questioned the moral authority of his mission to transform Africans into "productive imperial subjects" (p 8). In South Africa's current cultural and intellectual milieu, Philip is anathema. While not denying this, Keegan notes that "we need not necessarily admire him" (p 333).

Rather, by recognizing that Philip campaigned against the destructive forces he witnessed spreading across southern Africa and that he "believed in the inherent sameness and equality of all humans", we should not merely dismiss him, especially in light of his temporal and spatial contexts. Notably, Keegan's biography of Philip reminds us that we gain little if we pluck historical characters from their context and judge them by standards and criteria that were not available to them at the time of their living. Given that Philip worked to champion the belief that humans are free agents, able to aspire to happiness, liberty and prosperity, it is possible "to assess him by the scales of those values that we regard as universal and timeless", thus casting him as more interesting, unusual and important, and certainly in a more nuanced guise than the reductionist, intellectually stale binary of "colonisers" and "colonised" can accommodate. Though racial dispossession and subjugation continued to shape the colonial advance in South Africa towards the end of Philip's life and beyond, as the entrenchment of empire demanded harsher ideologies of hegemony and racial identity, Philip, and other "radical" missionaries like him, planted seeds which in time "sprouted as a potent form of African self-realisation" (p 339).

At a cursory glance, Philip's life appears to have been a failure. His vision of an empire of liberty and equality was inherently flawed and self-defeating. However, as Keegan observes, his ideas have proven to be compatible with the "social gospel" of African liberation theologians, as well as the hybrid cultural forms and political identities associated with anticolonial resistance in the twentieth century, meaning that he has

remained relevant long after his living (p 339). The idiosyncrasies and contradictions of Philip's life also raise important, disruptive questions about empire and colonialism, "reminding us of how contingent and unpredictable history must have seemed to those living through it" (p 339). The work is recommended to anyone interested in the nineteenth-century missionary movement in southern Africa, the history of the Cape Colony more generally, and the possibilities of historical biography as substantive scholarship.

Jared McDonald

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The origins and development of nineteenth-century towns

Gerrit Haarhoff, *Forgotten Tracks and Trails of the Escarpment and the Lowveld*

Shanghai Kangshi Printing Co. Ltd, Shanghai, 2018

314 pp

ISBN: 978-0-620-78543-3

Price Unknown

The wheel was late to arrive in the South African Lowveld, as it was only in the 1830s that the first explorers and emigrants ventured far inland in their ubiquitous ox wagon. Describing the events as they unfolded and the people involved, this book gives an accurate and concise history of the forgotten tracks and trails of the Escarpment and the Lowveld in South Africa, during the period leading up to the establishment of the Eastern Railway line to Delagoa Bay (1891). The author, Gerrit Haarhoff is a member of the Mpumalanga Heritage Society and his book is a work of gigantic proportions with 720 high quality colour photographs, with more than 60 maps, the stories of a people driven by trade, who dared to create a living against fearful and invisible odds, unfold. With old maps and charts and using the latest drone technology, forgotten roads were identified during his field trips as they crossed mountain passes and forded drifts.

Forgotten Tracks and Trails documents the origins and developments of towns and their roads in south-eastern Mpumalanga during the 19th century, and consists of five parts, which include 23 chapters, three vignettes, and six travellers' tales with endnotes. In the

first part, named 'Before', Haarhoff gives general background information on trade footpaths of pre-colonial times in Chapter 1, followed by the earlier history of Delagoa Bay, the wagon and the pace of an ox, in Chapters 2 to 4. The second part, Chapters 5 to 9, titled "Expansion", discusses the Voortrekkers' expeditions and land agreements, the old roads through Lydenburg (Mashishing) and Swaziland, as well as Alexander McCorkindale's schemes. The third part, "Lydenburg Gold Fields" (Chapters 10 to 15), looks closely at the search for gold, diggings in Pilgrim's Rest, and the old Harbour Road to Delagoa Bay. In the fourth part, "De Kaap Valley" (Chapters 16 to 20), the escarpment roads, the roads from Pretoriuskop, the Barberton Mountainlands, and roads to the east are discussed. The last part, "the end of the Transport Riders" (Chapters 21 to 23), gives an overview on "Jock of the Bushveld" and concludes with the history of Gould's Salvation Valley and Kowyn's Pass. This is followed by three appendices, a helpful glossary, a reference list, and an index.

This book is an important contribution to the South African history, because the author based his investigation on original archival research in English, Dutch and Afrikaans, and on collections in both public and private archives. Meticulously researched primary sources which have been neglected or ignored by other historians, supported some of his findings. By means of historical analysis, Haarhoff exposes several generalisations, assumptions and myths, and accurately describes the true history. In this regard, he clears up questions around: the position of Pretoriuskop and how it happened that Pretoriuskop was wrongly named (pp. 285-288); the grave wrongly attributed to Willem Pretorius, which in fact is the grave of an unknown Portuguese traveller (p. 284); what the real history is behind the Blyde River (Mohlatse) and the Treur River (pp. 34-35); the truth about the story of Jock of the Bushveld (pp. 236-249); and the land agreement that dates back to the early 19th century between the emigrants and Mswati I, king of the Swazis (pp. 37-38).

The author based his investigation not only on archival records, but also used the latest drone technology, aerial photography, Lidar, and Google Earth®, to make the long-forgotten roads visible again. The old roads were first traced from contemporaneous reports and narratives, before reviewing the old maps to identify and accurately pinpoint the old highways. Original farm diagrams and aerial photography of the 1935

Series of the Union of South Africa were superimposed on technology of Google Earth® in order to locate possible remains of the roads. This was followed by repeated site visits, walking the roads by foot where possible, and using drone technology to capture the faint scratches and marks still visible today. In addition, cutting-edge Lidar technology was used to determine the old roads where forestry had destroyed the marks and gouges through cycles of replanting. As a result, the author has created accurate maps of the original wagon tracks.

You will walk in *Forgotten Tracks and Trails* with the people who shaped the tracks and roads of the Escarpment and the Lowveld many years ago, read about their tales, gold diggings, and their trials and tribulations during their trips through the beautiful Lowveld wilderness. You will 'see' the infant towns and communities where they lived and toiled, some of which were destined to disappear forever, reclaimed by nature. The book is not only valuable reading for historians who take an interest in the contribution of past generations, but also for cultural tourists who appreciate the beauty, grandeur and historical significance of sites in the Lowveld region, as well as those interested in the history of land agreements, towns, roads, the gold fields, and early days in the Lowveld of South Africa. The beautiful photographs, historical maps and images, and the ease of reading makes this book eminently suitable for the casual reader.

Claudia Gouws

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A century of academic, social, political and cultural shifts

Paul Maylam, *Rhodes University, 1904-2016: An Intellectual, Political and Cultural History*

Grahamstown Institute of Social and Economic Research, Grahamstown, 2017

383 pp

ISBN 978-0-8681-0612-0

R295.00

Rhodes University, 1904-2016: an intellectual, political and cultural history researched and written by Rhodes University history professor, Paul Maylam, is an insightful and revealing book. The book covers different themes in the history of this institution during which aspects of the intellectual, political and cultural history of Rhodes University is unravelled. This account of the history of Rhodes University is however not an 'objective' version told by a neutral impartial observer. This is because Maylam has been associated with this university for almost thirty years. During 1967-1970, he was a student at Rhodes. From 1991 – 2012 he acted as head of the History department and from there he spent four years in retirement working on this book.

This is certainly a story told subjectively although the author attempts to be critical in his analyses of the different themes explored in this book. The author himself is outspoken in this regard and he makes it quite clear that he attempts to identify significant academic, social, political and cultural shifts that have occurred over the 112 years this book covers.

This work does fit into a body of historical writing on South African universities and is representative of institutional history. It also compares favourably with similar historical works on institutional history. In this regard, specific reference is made to historical works published on the histories of three other historically white English-medium universities in South Africa. That being the University of Cape Town (UCT), University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN) and University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). This book however is different because it is a single volume book virtually covering the whole history of this university. The histories of UCT, UKZN and Wits on the other hand consists of two or more volumes on each history due to the detailed analyses of the different histories of these universities. Maylam's book on the other hand is a single volume book largely because this university is not as large as the other universities referred too. The single volume nature of this work however does imply that a fair amount of condensing has taken place resulting in a less detailed and comprehensive history compared to the three referred university histories.

Rhodes University, 1904-2016 however does succeed in identifying some key turning points and watersheds in the history of this university through Maylam's critical yet

subjective analysis. It is for this reason that he also attempts to uncover, according to him, some of the more shabby episodes of this history by highlight some of the unsavoury aspects of the universities past. It must however be mentioned that the author does not perceive this book to be a comprehensive history largely because of the availability or not of source material.

The book consists of three sections. Part one investigates the history of Rhodes University College, 1904-1951. Here the focus falls on the first twenty-five years of this institution focussing on the founding and establishment of this, initially an Imperial university, as well as the difficult path of becoming an independent university, 1930-1951. In this section, the focus largely falls on the founding fathers of which Cecil Rhodes were at the forefront and their endeavours to establish a true outstanding liberal university. He and the other Rhodes trustees visualised this college developing in time into the Oxford and or Cambridge of South Africa. In this section, special attention is given to the intellectual life during the early years of this university as well as the development of the early student life and infrastructure development up to the 1930's. The second part of this section covers the difficult road to independence from 1930 to 1951. During this time politics, segregation and race took centre stage with the university presenting itself as apolitical although the politics of the time increasingly started to influence the so-called apolitical and liberal nature of this university.

The second part of this book focuses on the history of the university in the apartheid era from 1951 to 1994. In this section, specific attention is firstly given to matters of complicity and opposition from 1951-1975. In this section it becomes clear that Rhodes University continuously came under pressure not only from the apartheid government to adhere to apartheid policies but also from forces within to resist conforming to these apartheid policies. Rhodes University authorities could no longer act in an apolitical manner but had to come to terms with the fact that it had to take a stand against the inhumane practices of apartheid policies and the influences it had on university life in general in South Africa. The development of an active political student culture change the apolitical nature of Rhodes University political life. The second focus in this section falls on desegregation, polarisation and protest 1976 to 1994. In this section several turning points is identified, from changes in university leadership resulting in escalating

opposition to apartheid authorities and policies as well as continues efforts to desegregate the university. This resulted in an increase in student and staff protest actions against apartheid policies.

The third section mainly focusses on the post-apartheid era with the focus on the transformation efforts made by the university. Maylam succeeds in placing the transformation efforts within an international and national context wherein the concept of transformation is conceptualised and related aspects such as curricular and pedagogical transformation to mention a few is analysed.

This book does make for some good contemporary and revealing reading on one of South Africa's oldest and in some case most controversial university.

Juan Klee

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Commemorating the centenary of the SS Mendi

John Gribble and Graham Scott, *We Die like Brothers: The Sinking of the SS Mendi*

Historic England, Swindon, 2017

202 pp

ISBN 978-1-84802-472-4

R210.00

The centenary commemoration of the First World War (1914 – 1918), also once known as The Great War, has stirred worldwide interest in the events, leading to a number of important publications seeing the light in recent years. From a South African perspective, the First World War (WWI) had an important impact on the Union of South Africa and sparked civil unrest in the form of a rebellion in protest to South African involvement in WW1. The story of South Africa's involvement in South West Africa is rather well known and is considered by many as the first allied victory of WWI. The events surrounding the sinking of the SS Mendi is however more obscure and it is also now accepted that the tragedy of the sinking of the SS Mendi forms a neglected part of

South African historiography due to the fact the role of the labourers in WWI has not been fully acknowledged in the past. This is of course not unique to South African historiography, as noted by Gribble and Scott. Despite the important role that the labourers played in the war, their role has not been acknowledged in history books (p. 15).

We die like brothers promises to be more than another book on the sinking of the SS Mendi. As claimed by Gribble and Scott, this book is the first book to examine the story of the SS Mendi and the men on board by drawing upon the archaeological research carried out since the wreck was discovered. It is true that archaeological research is not always properly integrated into history writing and history teaching. In part, this might be due to the misconception that archaeology is mostly concerned with the remains of early humans. But, there is much more to archaeology than the remains of early humans, and remains such as shipwrecks and other archaeological finds are valuable heritage resources which can play an important part in furthering our knowledge of events such as, amongst others, the WW1. In addition, maritime archaeology is an extremely scarce skill, and a typical historian will simply not be knowledgeable enough on the subject to properly incorporate it into their research.

The story of the SS Mendi is a fascinating and important story and it is well documented by the authors. During the WWI, the use of black South Africans in the war was a very controversial matter of which had it been laid before the Union parliament, would most likely never have been approved. Gribble and Scott details how the Union parliament was sidestepped in the matter and how these workers found their way to the battlefields of Europe. Many black South Africans supported the WWI and they were eager to take part in the events with the hope that WWI will eventually lead to a change in their political situation. Black participation in the war however, threatened white superiority and the role of black South Africans was therefore confined to manual labour. Solomon Plaatje (1876 – 1932), the then Secretary General of the South African Native Nation Congress observed that “it seems to have occurred to the authorities that the best course is to engage the Natives in a capacity in which their participation will demand no recognition” (p 27). In fear for being exposed to foreign ideas and influences, the South African Native Labour Corps (SANLC) was therefore housed using

a compound system, similar to those found in South African mines of the time, but despite not being considered as formally part of the military, they were subjected to the same military disciplinary system and procedures as the troops. In addition, the SANLC were also often exposed to military action.

We die like brothers details the run-up to the sinking of the SS Mendi. The book is provided with numerous pictures, maps and statistics that bring the story of the men on board of the SS Mendi to life and it steadily builds up to the chapter detailing the events surrounding the sinking of the SS Mendi. The archaeological history of the SS Mendi is then particularly set out in chapter 13 under the heading 'The wreck of the Mendi: an archaeological insight'. In this chapter, the first explorations and identification of the SS Mendi is detailed, up to the most recent explorations. It is a fine and fascinating chapter on the archaeological insights surrounding the SS Mendi. However, it does leave one feeling that the archaeology is once again documented separately from historical narrative. The integration between archaeological insights into historiography continues to remain a challenge.

The story of the SS Mendi forms a critical part of the history of South Africa and the wreck is also of significance from a British perspective. According to Gribble and Scott, there remains a need to conduct more research on the wreck of the SS Mendi. The lack of funding for archaeological research resulted in research on the SS Mendi being neglected in the past and the wreck is steadily deteriorating. *We die like brothers* is therefore an important and timely contribution to the subject of the SS Mendi and the book will hopefully stimulate further research into the SS Mendi. The book is also important as it provides proper recognition to the men who tragically lost their lives while serving their country and whose role has been neglected in the past.

Barend van der Merwe

KhotsoFlatela Northern Cape Provincial Archives

The untold story of South Africa's contribution to the Desert War

David Brock Katz, *South Africans versus Rommel*

Stackpole Books, Guilford, Connecticut, USA, 2018

352 pp

ISBN 978 – 0 – 811 – 71781 – 6

Price unknown

The subtitle of the book “The untold story of the Desert War in World War II” already indicates that the author tried to add a new dimension to the history of the Desert War which in itself had been extensively researched by numerous historians. As recent as 2004 Niall Barr did ground breaking work with his book on the fighting near El Alamein in 1942 in *Pendulum of War – The Three Battles of El Alamein*, published by Jonathan Cape in London, exhibiting new discoveries from archival sources and visits to the battlefields. In 2012 the American University of Cairo took the initiative to arrange a symposium commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Desert War. The resultant papers submitted in Cairo found form in the book, *El Alamein and the Struggle for North Africa*.¹ The whole spectrum of the war as experienced by different Commonwealth countries, the previous Axis forces and even an Egyptian perspective is included.

To provide new insights and especially from a South African perspective would be a daunting task. Taking into account not only the above-named and official publications such as J.A.I. Agar-Hamilton, and L.C.F. Turner, *Crisis in the Desert and The Sidi Rezegh Battles, 1941*, published by Oxford University Press, Cape Town, respectively in 1952 and 1957. Also, N. Orpen, *South African Forces World War II, Vol. III, War in the Desert*, can more be said about this historic event? Katz definitely provides new insights, starting in chapter 1 with a thorough investigation on the issue of military doctrine and how the military history of South Africa led to a different approach in two World Wars from that of the British armed forces under whose command the South Africans had to serve. He explains how the history of the South African armed forces led to the combination of different military cultures and how the political situation in both

¹ J. Edwards (ed.): *El Alamein and the Struggle for North Africa – International Perspectives from the Twenty-first Century*, American University in Cairo Press, Cairo and New York, 2012.

conflicts made South African commanders even more sensitive to higher casualties. This was directly influenced by historical experience and a tradition of abhorrence to high casualties and the political dividedness of South African society in both conflicts.

In chapter 2 the experience of the inter-war years and the first application of a unique South African approach, focussing on mobile warfare is explained as it was applied during the campaign against the Italian Forces in East Africa during 1940 – 1941. South African commanders had more of a free hand than what they would have in the North African desert and there was less of a conflict during this first phase.

Chapters 4 to 8 investigate the Desert War from 1941 to 1942, the crux of the study. The different campaigns are clearly explained and how the South Africans fitted into the bigger picture. The clash of military doctrines runs like a golden thread through all the arguments, but the opinions are not one-sided from a South African perspective. On the one hand he explains how the British high command never understood the South African approach, especially with regards to a natural role that the South Africans would have preferred in terms of mobile warfare. The example is given of the possibility of integrating the South Africans into British armoured formations, rather than delegating them to defending static positions. On the other hand, Katz elaborates on the criticism from the British perspective and how they perceived the South African shortcomings to negatively have impacted on the ability of the 8th Army to win the war in the desert.

The first part of this debate starts with the conflict with the actions of the then brigadier D.H. Pienaar and his refusal to advance the 1st South African Brigade to support the 5th South African Brigade near Sidi Rezegh in 1941. Katz is also very critical of Pienaar's decisions as described in the official histories and even claims that the later so-called decisive victory at Taib el Essem on 25 November 1941 was a myth created by authors such as A. Pollock and Eric Rosenthal (p. 145). Katz provides substantial evidence to demonstrate that Pienaar was under the wrong impression that his formation was attacked by German forces, while the Italian Ariete Division actually half-heartedly attacked the South Africans. This argumentation provides food for thought and should make for interesting analysis in class amongst students at an institution such as the Military Academy.

The surrender of the Tobruk garrison by a South African commander, major-general H.B. Klopper in 1942 aggravated this already tense situation and it prevailed until the South Africans returned home to the Union at the end of the said year. Katz again provides the opposing points of view in a detail analysis that demonstrates insight into the complexity of command in war. Nothing is simple, and both sides had good arguments. This is followed by another controversy again involving Pienaar, by July 1942 a major-general and in command of the 1st South African Division at El Alamein. Pienaar again accused the British commanders of having a non-care attitude to high losses and the situation being heightened by a decision to divide the brigades of the South African division to be under command under British divisions. Pienaar could be criticized for his decisions during the actions at Sidi Rezegh in 1941, but on 3 July 1942 his obstinacy was proved correct as his insistence that the 1st South African Brigade be moved further east saved this formation from annihilation. Shortly after a as a British column deployed in the original South African position they were destroyed by the Axis forces. Such is the debate that this book brings to the historiography of this war.

Katz decided to adhere to the interpretation by the already mentioned South African official histories of the war with regards to the events at El Alamein in July 1942. One can make a good argument for the 1st Battle of El Alamein to cover the period 1 – 3 July as the events from 14 – 17 and 21 – 22 July were initially in the British official history of the War described as the 1st and 2nd Battles of Ruweisat Ridge.² However, Barr (p. xxxix) argues that most historians currently see the 1st Battle of El Alamein is covering the period of July 1942. History is a debate without end, but the problem with Katz's approach is that he does not mention the attack on 13 July 1942 by the 21st Panzer Division on the 3rd South African Brigade in which 10 South Africans lost their lives. It also fails to mention the fact that this proved that armed with adequate anti-tank weapons and with properly prepared defensive positions, the South Africans could hold their own, in spite of the accusation by some British commanders that they were not prepared to make sacrifices for victory.³

² Butler, J.R.M. (ed.), *History of the Second World War*, United Kingdom Military Series, *Grand Strategy, Volume III, June – August 1942, Part II*. London 1964, pp 353 and 614-615.

³ See J. Jacobs, *The First Battle of El Alamein, 1 – 30 July 1942*, iNtgrty Publishers, Centurion, 2018, p. 176.

This book is based on a Master Thesis in Military History supervised by the Military Academy and it is regretful that the publishers decided not to allow that author the use of the extensive amount of maps provided in the initial study as this would have enhanced the value of the publication. Nevertheless, the amount of research based on an intensive literature study and archival research causes this book to be major contribution to the better understanding of the war in North Africa in the period, 1940 – 1943.

James Jacobs

Pretoria

Defending the El Alamein Fortress

James Jacobs, *The First Battle of El Alamein, 1-30 July 1942: A South African Perspective*

iNtgrty Publishing, Centurion, 2017

261 pp

ISBN 978-0-620-78416-0 (print)

ISBN 978-0-620-78417-7 (e-book)

R300.00

The majority of academic and popular studies on the South African participation in the Second World War continue to focus on the varied offensive deployments of the Union Defence Force to the operational theatres in East Africa, North Africa, Madagascar and Italy. As of late there is somewhat of a renewed drive to study the South African participation in the war from a more general war and society approach, where the prime focus is on such diverse topics as the individual experience of war, the South African home front, prisoners of war, demobilisation, and various medical aspects to name but a few. Despite this renewed drive to study the South African participation from a far broader perspective, the mainstay of professional and amateur historians continue to focus on key events surrounding the Union Defence Force deployments to North Africa and Italy in particular. Of these, the South African reverses at Sidi Rezegh and Tobruk continue to receive the bulk of the attention, mainly due to the immense impact these reverses held for the Union at a political, societal and military level. Moreover, the fact that nearly 14,000 South African soldiers were captured during these

battles continue to overshadow the vital role that Union Defence Force troops played during the remainder of the campaign in the Western Desert.

James Jacobs, a retired senior officer in the South African National Defence Force, and the former resident Military Historian at the South African Army College and the South African National War College, provides a fresh perspective on the first Battle of El Alamein in his 2017 treatise *The First Battle of El Alamein 1-30 July 1942: A South African Perspective*. This study formed the basis of Jacobs' MA dissertation in History that he obtained from Stellenbosch University in 1988, titled "n Evaluering van die rol van die Eerste Suid-Afrikaanse Infanteriedivisie tydens die Eerste Slag van El Alamein, 1 tot 30 Julie 1942". Jacobs' book offers a detailed account of the crucial, and often underappreciated, South African contribution to the larger first Battle of El Alamein.

The book is constructed over thirteen chapters in which Jacobs provides an unrivalled analysis of the significant South African contribution to the first Battle of El Alamein, particularly at the strategic and operational levels of war. Of particular interest are the chapters devoted to discussing the sequence of events that led up to the first Battle of El Alamein, as well as those that address the critical role that the 1st South African Division played in defending the El Alamein Fortress against combined German and Italian onslaughts throughout July 1942. Throughout these chapters, Jacobs straddles the strata of war in his approach, though, for the most part, the discussion is at the strategic and operational levels of war. The text is further enriched through the addition of a number of maps, tables and black and white illustrations.

When Jacobs' book is judged from a South African perspective, several key factors come to the fore. First, Jacobs' book deserves to be read in conjunction with David Katz's work *South Africans versus Rommel: The Untold Story of the Desert War in World War II* (Maryland: Stackpole, 2017). These two works are indeed the first notable accounts to appear on the South African deployment to the Western Desert since the publication of *Crisis in the Desert* (1952) and *The Sidi Rezegh Battles, 1941* (1957) by the former Union War Histories Section. The Union War Histories Section, originally tasked with writing the official histories of the South African contribution to the Second World War, was unfortunately terminated in 1961 after the appearance of only three publications. The publication of both Jacobs and Katz's books are thus welcomed since they are the first

works in nearly fifty years to critically engage with important aspects underpinning the South African contribution during the campaign in the Western Desert.

Second, the vital role that the 1st South African Division played during the entire first Battle of El Alamein is re-established, especially regarding defending the crucial El Alamein Fortress against repeated German and Italian attacks during the first week of July. Moreover, the dogged South African defence prevented Erwin Rommel, and his crack German 90th Light Division in particular, from breaking through the Allied defensive line on a number of occasions. If the German forces had managed to break through the Allied defences at El Alamein, the overall outcome of the war in the Western Desert might well have been considerably different. Jacobs is indeed right in his summation that the inability of Rommel to break through the El Alamein was indeed a testament to the overall fighting spirit and bravery of the South African soldiers. Third, Jacobs and Katz are commended for engaging with several primary documents located in the Department of Defence Archives (Documentation Centre) located in Irene, South Africa. The access that both authors gained to primary documents contained in the Union War Histories, Divisional Documents and WW2 War Diaries archival groups, adds a particular layer of depth to the final manuscripts. The systematic trawling of the military archives inevitably ensured that both authors gained access to documents infrequently engaged with by historians, including a wealth of captured Italian and German documents relating to the war in the Western Desert. The result of this unprecedented access to archival material in the case of Jacobs' book is a rich and descriptive text, which offers an in-depth discussion on an often underappreciated episode in South African military history.

That being said, some aspects of the book proved problematic. These problems are, however, minimal, and did in no way detract from the book's contribution to South African military historiography. First, it immediately became evident that the original manuscript was written in Afrikaans. The author confirmed that he translated the original text himself and that a language expert then worked through the English manuscript. Unfortunately, there are some instances where the text reads difficult, particularly in the first few chapters of the book. Second, at times it felt as if the text could have been enhanced through the addition of more maps. Due to the drum and trumpet nature of the work, as well as the large number of offensive and defensive military operations that occurred during July 1942,

more in-depth and additional maps would have been welcomed as one is often forced to page backwards to find a suitable map from which to make sense of the unfolding military operations. The maps in general also lack uniformity, which may be addressed in subsequent editions of the book.

The book is unfortunately published by a rather nondescript and unknown publisher, iNtgrty Publishing (Pty) Ltd, located in Centurion. The author on at least two occasions approached leading South African publishing houses, who outright stated that even though his manuscript was well researched and written, there was no market in South Africa for a book of this kind. This proves rather unfortunate at many different levels, mainly since a good publishing house may have provided the necessary editing support to rectify the issues of translation and perhaps commission better maps. Moreover, during the first print run, there were only 100 copies printed, with the author confirming that only 20 or so unsold copies remain – making it a rare book indeed.

One is left with more questions rather than answers regarding the possibility of publishing military historical works in South Africa. Recently a commissioning editor rather bluntly confirmed that Second World War history does not sell in South Africa, but that the specific publishing house would gladly accept manuscripts covering the Anglo-Boer War or the larger war for southern Africa/Border War. This is somewhat alarming, mainly since it is not an isolated incident. War, or at least the history thereof, definitely sell in South Africa, though commissioning editors in no small degree, and somewhat alarmingly, broadly decide what military history the South African readership engage with. With the centenary of the outbreak of the Second World War a mere twenty years or so away, one can only hope that the status quo changes.

In general, however, Jacobs' book is a welcome addition to the burgeoning literature on South Africa's participation during the Second World War. The book provides a fresh perspective on the deployment of Union Defence Force troops during the vital defence of the El Alamein Fortress in July 1942, and is highly recommended to all those interested in the South African participation in the Second World War.

Evert Kleynhans

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Exploring the origins of Bantu Education

Linda Chisholm, *Between Worlds: German Missionaries and the Transition from Mission to Bantu Education in South Africa*

Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 2017

304 pp

ISBN 978-1-77614-17406

R380.00

This is an ambitious book which focuses on the period from the inter-war years to the implementation of Bantu Education in the early 1950s, although in passing it touches on the entire colonial period that dates back to the 1800s. Chisholm's work reveals the many ways in which the unique historical beginnings of western education and the implementation of Bantu Education in South Africa were more complex and complicated than simply a racial analysis of the white colonizer conquering and socializing the African through education. In this book, Chisholm situates the mission in its broader Lutheran context and discusses differences between them over their educational politics. She further explores how power relations shifted between the mission, the state, and communities and how the mission's influence was gradually and differentially eroded in Natal and the Transvaal. Finally, she examines the politics of continuities and changes in curricular, medium of instruction and textbooks in schools and teacher training.

In this book, Chisholm explores why and how the African education changed overtime in South Africa. She did so by focusing on how one mission institution got involved in this change and also answers one of the most important questions about the way in which the Hermannsburg Mission responded to the implementation of Bantu Education. The book covers transnational historical dynamics that connect the small and less visible German Mission Schools of the Hermannsburg Mission Society to the influence outside of school, unlike popular schools, such as Lovedale, Adams Mission and others whose opposition to apartheid was vocal. For instance, Chisholm enlightens us that these mission schools were isolated, conservative and reluctant to take a stance on political matters.

Chisholm reveals that the ambition of the Hermannsburgers was explicitly linked to segregationist policies and it was shaped in a direction that did not challenge the existing social order. This was intensified by their close identification with Afrikaners and colonial authority as well as appropriation of notions of themselves as 'Prussian feudal lords'. Similar to other missionary societies, the monograph maintains that Hermannsburgers adopted a missionary position, which was informed by transnational, diasporic movement of people from Europe to different parts of the world. It was also informed by the political economies of the colonial provinces in which they operated. Based on the need for African labour, Chisholm alerts us to the fact that Hermannsburgers missionaries restricted African aspiration for schooling; they introduced unscientific, old-fashioned and inefficient approach to African education. These missionaries supported Christian National Education, which later became the foundation of Bantu Education. The book further interrogates the controversy behind the Primary Education Upgrade Programme that was promoted in Bophuthatswana in the late 1970s. It inquires how this programme fostered opposition to apartheid, while on the other hand, it also bolstered apartheid ethnic programmes. In order to gain a clearer understanding of African experience with regard to education by the Hermannsburg Mission, Chisholm ventures beyond mission records and traces the short life histories of Hermannsburg mission educated converts from different regions. More important, one of the converts was a female and her story reveals how she found personal independence within the Hermannsburg mission station.

Chisholm does a very good job in contrasting different sources that include the short biographies of the converts and archival material. All this ensures that the narrative presented is reflecting the multiplicity of experiences and opinions. While the primary data is very rich, allowing for a textured narrative full of fascination details, Chisholm does not engage with the expansive literature on archives as site of knowledge production. The ongoing strength of this book is Chisholm's ability to situate the story of the German missionary education at the intersection of multiple broader stories. In the historiographical context, Chisholm's reveals in heart-breaking details the neglect and grossly unequal educational treatment that Africans endure from the Hermannsburgers and South African national government. This book makes a significant contribution towards three different fields, Firstly, it adds to the existing scholarship on education,

and African education more specifically; secondly it engages with transcontinental missionary networks played in generating ideas about education. Finally, the evidence in this monograph is very detailed and demonstrates Chisholm's ability to draw upon a great variety of sources.

Vusumuzi 'Vusi' Kumalo

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Law and politics in the making and remaking the state

George Hamandishe Karekwaivanane, *The Struggle over State Power in Zimbabwe: Law and Politics since 1950*

Cambridge University Press, Cape Town, 2017

290 pp

ISBN 978-1-107-19020-7

R300.00

The struggle over state power throughout Zimbabwe's modern history has been a complex affair. Literature has demonstrated that the contestations had several interesting dimensions, involving such issues as land, labour, religion and ethnicity. However, what remains understudied is the position of law in the struggle. Yet, the law was central in the constitution of both the colonial and the post-colonial Zimbabwean state. Against this background, George Karekwaivanane's *The struggle over state power in Zimbabwe*, which grapples with the interplay between law and politics between 1950 and 2008, is a welcome contribution to Zimbabwe's social and legal historiography. This strand of Zimbabwe's social and political history takes forward key debates about how scholars have sought to understand the relationship between law and state power. By nuancing the role of law in struggles over state power, the book offers a useful window into the continuous process of making and remaking the state.

Chapter One sets the base by providing a historiographical backdrop against which the legal developments from 1950 onwards must be understood. It rigorously engages with a wide array of literature which directly and indirectly speaks to the establishment and

operation of Rhodesia's legal terrain between 1890 and 1950. The overview demonstrates that the establishment of the legal system was an integral part of the colonial project. An important intervention of the chapter is its discussion on early African interactions with the colonial legal systems. Relatedly, it discusses the evolution of colonial policy on indigenous legal systems (pp 39-45). Also key is that there were tensions that emerged within the state, especially between the Native Affairs and the Law Departments over the content and administration of the law. By exploring these ideas, Karekwaivanane sets the stage for the unfolding struggles about the law during the post-World War II period, that are the focus of the rest of the book.

Chapter Two, 'Customizing justice and constructing subjects' focuses on the state's attempts to draw on 'customary law' to reconstitute the state's legitimacy in the 1960s and 1970s in the wake of the crisis brought upon by the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951. It argues that this was part of attempts to discursively construct Africans as ethnic subjects bound by customary obligation, as opposed to right bearing citizens who were protected by the law from the arbitrary exercise of state power (p. 49). However, it posits, these efforts failed due in large part to the defiance of villagers across Rhodesia who contested the unwelcome impositions of the state. The debate over chiefs' powers is set against the backdrop of important social and political changes in Southern Rhodesia. The emergence of rights bearing citizenship coincided with the growing influence of African nationalism. In light of this, as Karekwaivanane concludes, the state overestimated the ability of chieftaincy to lend legitimacy to unpopular land use policies.

Chapters three and four shift focus to law and politics. They examine the legal responses of successive settler governments to the rise of African nationalism. Chapter 3 focuses on the period between 1950 and 1964, and analyses the government's legal encounters with Africans in the context of rising nationalist politics. Nationalists exhibited increasingly sophisticated forms of legal agency as they resisted the state's efforts to silence them (p. 98). By paying particular attention to the debates about the relationship between the law and the legitimate exercise of state power, the chapter deviates from much of the literature which has tended to treat the passage of the Law and Order Maintenance Act of 1960 as the key turning point. This approach occluded

the decade between 1950 and 1960, during which several repressive acts were enacted. Flickers of nationalists' success in the courtroom, the chapter shows, added to the state's challenge to balance coercion with legitimacy in the eyes of various sections of the population.

Chapter Four, 'Legality without legitimacy', picks up the story from the mid-1960s, and shows that the proposals to make the laws targeted at African nationalism more repressive sat well with the Rhodesia Front administration. By exploring the 15 year period leading to Zimbabwe's independence, it discusses how the government's use of the law decisively shifted from legitimation to coercion. The ruthless suppression of African political dissent confirmed the 'state of exception' as a feature of Rhodesian statecraft (pp 111-113). This shift, however, was accompanied by a corresponding change in the attitudes of the nationalists and guerillas towards the Rhodesian legal system, who no longer recognised its legitimacy. The strength of this chapter, as with the overall book, is that it systematically discusses the African response to the legal developments, which is missing in existing literature.

The theme of African legal agency is carried forward by Chapter Five. It examines the involvement of African lawyers in the legal arena between 1950 and 1980. These lawyers not only exercised agency themselves, but also enabled other Africans to exercise it. It highlights the important role they played as translators, articulators and critiques of the law and politics, contributing to the development of the African legal consciousness and ideas of personhood. Karekwaivanane notes that black lawyers, themselves operating in a racially restrictive environment, helped to reshape African subjectivities.

Chapters Six and Seven examine two contrasting dimensions of transformation and continuity that characterised developments in the legal sphere during Zimbabwe's first decade of independence. Chapter Six explores how the new independence government tried to transform the inherited legal system in which law intertwined with violence, racial and gender domination. As in the colonial era, it attempted to use law to construct a particular social, political and economic order based on enacting a modernising vision. The chapter identifies three key areas of legal reform established by the government:

Africanisation, reorganisation of customary law courts, and reforms to the legal status and rights of women. Indeed, there was a substantial degree of transformation on this front in 1980.

Chapter Seven looks at the legal continuities in the political arena and how the postcolonial government embraced the practices of the settler governments by failing to challenge the 'state of exception'. Law and coercion continued to be used to suppress political opposition. While the continuities were a product of institutional legacies, also important were the party's own authoritarian tendencies and long standing animosity with other nationalist parties. Three arguments emerge: like its predecessors, the government mobilised a discourse of law and order that criminalised political opposition; citizens' agency proved to be largely ineffective against a vindictive state; the content and administration of law continued to be a source of tension within the state, particularly between the executive and the judiciary (p. 227). While the executive insisted on using the law for political coercion, many judges adopted human rights positions, inviting rebuke from the government which saw them as becoming judicial activists instead of being strictly interpreters of the law.

Lastly, Chapter Eight, 'The past as prologue', examines political struggles in the legal arena in Zimbabwe since the late 1990s into the 2000s. It demonstrates that the 'authoritarian rule of law' that characterised Zimbabwe between 1997 and 2008 can be traced to much older practices, particularly of the Rhodesia Front era. Similarly, the use of law by citizens to confront the state was a continuation of the legal strategies devised and deployed before independence and in the 1980s. As in the 1980s, the executive refused to be bound by the judiciary, which eventually lost its independence. These dynamics, Karekwaivanane notes, are no coincident, but indicate key continuities in the place of law in the struggle for state power in Zimbabwe (pp 241-242).

By covering the colonial and post-colonial period, the book successfully established three key issues. First, the struggle for rights in Zimbabwe has a much longer history than is often acknowledged. Second, although law was important in state making, it was often the source of division between various government branches. Third, the 'victims' were crucial in shaping the legal landscape. However, Karekwaivanane does not

effectively engage with the government's 1980s and 2000s concern that several judges were adopting 'judicial activism'. The government argued that judges were 'interpreters' and not 'makers' of the law and, by going beyond 'interpretation', they were actively entering the political arena. This raised questions about the doctrine of separation of powers.

Karekwaivanane's book was enriched by the diversity and depth of sources he used. He used archival material, newspapers, court records, government documents, organizational reports and interviews. This wide array of material allowed him to place these legal struggles in the context of broader social and political dynamics. Even more, the use of both chronology and themes in arranging the book, added to the use of accessible language, makes the book an easy read. It is indeed a must read for those interested in understanding the place of law in 'the struggle over state power in Zimbabwe.'

Lotti Nkomo

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The remarkable journey of a black psychologist during apartheid

N. Chabani Manganyi, *Apartheid and the Making of a Black Psychologist: A Memoir*

Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 2016

210 pp

ISBN 978 1 868148622

R350.00

N. Chabani Manganyi is the first qualified black clinical psychologist in South Africa. He is a biographer, a writer and a theorist who has intensively written on the subjective experiences of black people. In *Apartheid and the Making of a Black Psychologist*, Manganyi turns to himself as the subject of study by utilising an autobiographical method. This method is plausible, as it is empowering. In what Manganyi calls "the story of how I became a man, a citizen and a scholar" (p. xi), he offers a narrative of a black man negotiating his identity during apartheid in South Africa. This act of revealing one's

experience using their own voice is empowering, to both the writer and the reader. Manganyi's story is therefore a reassuring one, it is a story of resilience and triumph. In writing this review, it is important that I position myself as a young, black woman, psychologist born post 1990. The familiarity of this story to mine is of personal interest. Although I can never fully align the experiences expressed by Manganyi in his memoir to those of today's young psychologists, it is still important to note that there remain traces of Manganyi's isolated and racialised experience in many of us. My personal experiences with the psychology curriculum as a student are evidence to this. In engaging with this book and many other works of Manganyi, I wonder how my own story and experiences of navigating academia and studying psychology would have been different had I been introduced to Manganyi's writing earlier, perhaps in a psychology class.

Manganyi begins his book by taking us to Mavambe (situated in what is now Limpopo) as a child. Opening up about his family, Manganyi reveals how the apartheid migrant labour laws forced onto black man affected black communities, including his own. Manganyi further gives an account of his early career life and reveals the racialised experiences while navigating excluding spaces as a scholar, from working at Ellerines and Brothers to pursuing his career as the only black clinical psychologist in Baragwanath Hospital. Here, Manganyi reveals the effects of the racially segregating policies that would mean he could not practice as a clinical psychologist at the only psychiatric hospital that would have been most suitable - Tara Hospital. Despite having the academic qualification to allow him to train at this hospital, he was denied entry based on the colour of his skin. Manganyi then landed an internship at Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto. This meant that he had to train at an institution without other psychologists who would induct and provide supervision. While this working environment was an isolating one, Manganyi continued to thrive, leading him to further his studies and thus opening an opportunity to work outside the hospital setting. His research driven visits to many universities in the United States of America would lead to a determination of returning to Yale University. Indeed, following difficulty obtaining an academic position in South Africa, Manganyi welcomed an offer to enroll into a post-doctoral fellowship programme at Yale University.

Manganyi articulates his racial experience outside of the borders of South Africa. He mentions the comfort he found in his own writing, in an environment which potentially would have been alienating. He mentions how he drew his professional confidence from work such as *Being Black in the World* that he had already written at the time. Manganyi reflects on how being outside of South Africa meant being a 'free man', but it also meant allowing himself to let out the rage he had nursed while back at home. During this time, Manganyi had already started *Mashangu's Reverie and Other Essays* in 1977. He writes, "In the US I was a free man in the 'land of the free'. Being free I could be self-consciously and shamelessly angry. There was no need to look over my shoulder. There was no time for procrastination. What I was feeling and thinking needed to be recorded in one form or another. Thus it was the winter of 1973, not long after my arrival in New Haven, I started writing a memoir" (p. 46). Manganyi in this part of the book seems to insist on telling how he "became a psychologist from a number of perspectives" (p. xv), he does not seem to dwell on describing further this anger and rather show how this racialised experience compelled him to write on the black subject.

In the last chapters of the memoir, Manganyi tells about his involvement in the South African courts as an expert witness encountering the political violence and injustices of the apartheid regime. Following his involvement in the administrative development of the University of Transkei and his ten-year service at the University of the Witwatersrand as a researcher, Manganyi took up a position as a vice Chancellor and principal of the University of Limpopo. He concludes this book by reflecting on the challenges and successes while working in the university space. Currently, Manganyi continues to lead a life of scholarship as has been clearly shown in this publication.

The importance of Manganyi's work on race, violence and the black subject is paramount. Perhaps his refusal to write as a victim of a system that sought to oppress him, is what makes this work even more impressive. In light of the de-coloniality project in contemporary South Africa, one hopes that Manganyi's work will be recognized, especially by mainstream psychology. If South Africans are truly determined to emancipate the black subject and change the narrative that has led to their dispossession, then they must allow the emancipated black subject to tell their own story. The South African people must also be intentional about the inclusion of their

own stories in the curriculum, after all- “the most important contribution on the black experience will have to come from Africa” as written by Manganyi in (1973).

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A deeply personal struggle memoir

Raymond Suttner, *Inside Apartheid's Prison*

Jacana Media, Johannesburg, 2017

232 pp

ISBN 978-1-4314-2517-4

R245.00

The updated edition of Raymond Suttner’s *Inside Apartheid’s Prison* is a timely reminder of how unromantic and painful the struggle was for those enlisted to join in the struggle against apartheid. Moreover, the book reminds all South Africans that the fight against apartheid or any other injustice is one that will have various facets and faces, even in the form of a white middle class lecturer. Yet, two facets of the books keep that keep it alluring are its open discussion concerning the unglamorous and sometimes painful consequences of the fight against the National Party’s Apartheid system.

As Suttner explains, ‘Underground work can take a variety of forms-all of which are very stressful and extract a toll on one’s personal life. Everything essential-what one is, what one feels, and what is most significant on one’s life must be concealed. You reveal only the inessential, in order to safeguard the most meaningful aspects of your being. Working undercover makes it difficult to form or maintain intimate relations. Mine was a very isolated existence. I longed for communication from my contacts in exile’ (p 15). It is this unromantic and non-glorified aspect of the struggle against apartheid that the book expertly captures and reminds a younger generation of how lonely fighting apartheid was for an activist, even those of European descent like Professor Raymond Suttner. This viewpoint is an often unexplored historical aspect of the South African

historical political narrative, where isolation and fear greatly characterised the everyday existence of most political activists.

The second facet of the book which makes it a good read for a newer audience presently and beyond is its reflection on the non-African experience of the struggle. It is openly yet subtly communicated by the author how the white society in South Africa was blind to the struggles of the majority African socioeconomic struggles, but it is fascinating to note how Suttner and others like him were able to pick up on this struggle. In his narrative, Suttner is ever aware of his race but consciously details how fighting for the majority race is a deep conviction for his existence. This point is pointedly captured by him, when he states that, 'perhaps I will be caught tomorrow, though I do not think so. I will continue with the struggle as long as long as I can. I can't simply opt out in order to lead a happy life. This alternative is not open to black people. If I identify with the majority of South Africans, I have to demand of myself what they demand of themselves' (p 126). This particular narrative running throughout the book, raises fascinating questions about how minorities (whites, beneficiaries of colonialism and apartheid rule) interact and respond to their own particular role in the new South Africa. Suttner's answer to this and other related questions is not to give long winded speeches about South Africa being his home as well, but rather to acknowledge that he is a white individual in a country that gives whites numerous socioeconomic systemic advocates and then simply demand that black citizens be given the same rights and system.

It is for this reason one feels and would argue that this updated version of the book is still a good read in a South Africa that is experiencing massive political issues, related to some of the decisions Suttner and many of his comrades participated in e.g. adoption of liberally minded constitution, non-resolved land issue, moral weaknesses of numerous leaders post-1994 with regards to corruption and management of political power. If history is a first draft of what the future might look like, this is a good book for most South Africans to have and learn from. This is especially true of South Africans involved in political parties and other related institutions, who need to be reminded that it takes time and some suffering to see problems like corruption and poverty being irradiated.

Therefore, this book would be a good read for advanced students studying university courses like Political Science, History and Law. The message for students studying these subjects from this book is a threefold one. Firstly, political systems when challenged tend to either change or revert to a violent form of their political philosophy. In this regard, a Political Science student in South Africa would learn from this book that systems are long lasting and are not simply beat by negotiations and non-strategic long term planning. Secondly, for students of History and Law, this book revisits the question of violence on the part of state apparatuses like the policemen and women.

Lightly put, the author importantly goes over this predicament which many South Africans face when thinking about who to actively support and vote in most elections. It is for these and other stated reasons this book should be a good read for most South Africans interested in how the country will continually develop and mature politically and institutionally.

Kagiso Pooe

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