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BOOK REVIEWS

**Behind the Smokescreen: The Politics of Zimbabwe's 1995 General Elections** By John Makumbe and Daniel Compagnon, Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2000, 340 pp, ISBN 0-908307-83-7, ZW\$640

*Behind the Smokescreen* is a welcome addition to the growing literature on elections and democracy in Zimbabwe even though the book comes five years after the 1995 Zimbabwean general elections. The book offers an informed and critical analysis of the limitations of the electoral process in Zimbabwe. It documents the various factors and developments that preceded the elections and made the holding of democratic elections impossible. Among these were constitutional and legal impediments, the state's control of the media, the politics of fear and intimidation, corruption, patronage, and a weakened opposition which suffered from, among other problems, a lack of funds. Moreover, the elections were held in an unwholesome atmosphere characterised by escalating factionalism within the ruling party in Masvingo Province and Mutare, various problems in the Harare South constituency, lack of transparency and democratic values in the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) primary elections, and the boycott of the elections by some opposition parties. In their incisive Chapter on the media, the authors highlight how free and fair elections cannot be possible without a fair press.

*Behind the Smokescreen* also demonstrates clearly how authoritarianism and personalist rule were hidden behind a façade of a flawed parliamentary democracy. This dichotomy between appearance and reality is well captured in the book's title which suggests that, while the ruling party was speaking in the rhetoric of democracy and transparency, it was in fact more concerned with displaying the outward trappings of liberal democracy, such as regular elections, opposition parties, parliament, a "free" press, international actors and observers, rather than with the substance of democracy. The ruling party's project in the elections was the legitimisation and entrenchment of ZANU PF's hegemony and not conducting a true and fair test of the people's wishes, particularly given the undemocratic and unfair constitutional and legal framework over which it presided and under which the elections were held. Furthermore, the ruling party took advantage of and benefited from voter apathy, as most people turned their backs on the electoral process and only a few bothered to vote.

The book's major strength lies precisely in its ability to critically analyse the shortcomings of Zimbabwe's constitutional and legal framework which governed the conduct of the 1995 general elections and

the partisan nature of the country's institutions that is clearly highlighted in the handling of Margaret Dongo's charge of electoral fraud against the ruling party. It demonstrates clearly that the institutions for running elections were, in fact, structured specifically for a one party state. It is thus the book's critical and insightful analysis of the nature of the authoritarian state and the way it manipulates the electoral process in order to ensure its continued rule and dominance which distinguishes it from other existing studies of Zimbabwe's electoral politics.

The above notwithstanding, however, the book could have been enriched by an analysis of the Zimbabwean people's political culture and level of political consciousness both before and during the elections as this would have helped to explain both the voter apathy and the seeming willingness of the people either to ignore or tolerate the manipulation of the electoral structures and institutions by the ruling party. It would also have thrown some light on why the Zimbabwean people refrained from supporting the various opposition parties that were seeking to end ZANU PF's hegemony. An examination of these and other issues would have produced a more nuanced analysis of the forces at work in the 1995 and 1996 elections and would have provided an interesting backdrop to understanding the changes that appear to have occurred in the people's political culture after those elections. Clearly, the Zimbabwean people's political consciousness changed since 1995, as is evident in the June 2000 elections in which, despite all the shortcomings of the national constitution and the flawed electoral process that *Behind the Smokescreen* refers to, the opposition managed to win 58 parliamentary seats. Indeed, the levels of intimidation and violence were higher in the 2000 elections than in the elections examined in the book, yet this did not deter the Zimbabwean people from voting in large numbers and expressing their wishes. The book could also have been enriched by the authors spelling out more explicitly what theory/theories about elections and democracy in Africa informed their analysis rather than limiting themselves as they do to merely documenting events and political developments in the period leading to the elections that they examine.

The above weaknesses notwithstanding, Makumbe and Compagnon have produced a book that is strikingly detailed and insightful. *Behind the Smokescreen* will undoubtedly prove to be a very important contribution to the debate on constitutional and electoral reforms in Zimbabwe. It should appeal to all students of political science and members of civil society who are interested in Zimbabwe's electoral politics.

**Essentials of Financial Management** By Jonathan T. Muzamani, Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2000, 387 pp. ISBN 0-908-307-71-3, Z\$980

In an impressively condensed manner, Jonathan Muzamani, lecturer at the Faculty of Commerce of the University of Zimbabwe, has produced probably the first textbook on financial management with some Zimbabwean flavour. The only other publication nearer to it in its Zimbabwean flavour is a small publication of 72 pages by Gordon S. Roberts.<sup>1</sup> Whilst Roberts' publication only looked at case studies, Muzamani went further and examined principles of financial management and enumerated several Zimbabwean case studies.

*Essentials of Financial Management* is essentially a product of the author's experience in teaching finance diploma courses, professional courses [Chartered Institute of Secretaries (CIS) and Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) in particular], undergraduate courses and Master of Business Administration (MBA) courses at the University of Zimbabwe. As a result it integrates various aspects of financial management in a fashion that elucidates the basic building blocks of the subject in a manner amenable even to the non-specialist.

The author explores the three analytical pillars to finance — the time value of money, valuation and risk management in six sections each with an average of three chapters. Section 1 examines the foundations of financial management. Section 2 covers the techniques of working capital management. Section 3 examines capital budgeting techniques. Section 4 defines the concept of risk and return. Section 5 looks at valuation and cost of capital concepts. Section 6 examines capital structure theory and practice. Section 7 examines methods of raising long-term financing, while section 8 examines those for raising short-term and medium-term financing. Section 9 examines corporate expansion and failure. Finally, the text ends with section 10, which discusses financial ratios, budgeting and profit planning. At the end of each chapter, there are practice questions for which model answers are appended to the text. This makes the text user-friendly to both the student and instructor.

The categories of students likely to find the script useful include *business diploma students, undergraduate students taking introductory finance courses and MBA students for their introduction to finance course.* For the specialist it is a good reference text because, while it does not go

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon S. Roberts (1984) *Financial Management Cases: Zimbabwe* (Centre for Development Projects, Dalhousie University).

into the rigour of modelling of financial theory, it has some useful references for further readings.

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DANIEL MAKINA

**The Dominican Friars in Southern Africa: A Social History, 1577-1990,**  
By Phillipe Denis, Leiden, Boston, Massachusetts, Brill Academic  
Publishers, 1998, 322 pp, ISBN 0-924-9389, \$53,92.

Studies on the work of the Dominican friars in Southern Africa abound. They range from specific works such as Mudenge,<sup>1</sup> to general works such as Axelson<sup>2</sup> and Mudenge.<sup>3</sup> This is in addition to numerous works in Portuguese. Each of the above studies, however, focuses only on specific periods and areas of Southern Africa; none covers the entire Southern African region as a whole. In contrast, Denis sets out to provide a more comprehensive coverage of the region and over a longer period than any of the above studies. In his words, he sought to gather "in a single narrative the disparate stories of Dominican friars in Southern Africa over the past four centuries" (p. ix). This is a daunting task by any standard, particularly since the Dominicans who worked in Southern Africa belonged to no less than five different entities: the Portuguese, Irish, English and Dutch and the Southern African vicariate. Moreover, four centuries is an awfully long period to cover in one volume and may easily lead to superficial treatment of some periods and themes. These problems are somewhat mitigated by the fact that Denis is a member of the Dominican Religious Order. As an "insider", therefore, he was able to access information that would otherwise be unavailable to lay researchers.

The book is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the Portuguese Dominicans in Southeast Africa. It argues that the beginning of the Dominican enterprise in South-eastern Africa was facilitated by the close relationship between the Crown and the Cross. Dominicans acted as agents of the Portuguese Crown in facilitating Portuguese imperial policies, in return for financial assistance and military protection. This co-operation lasted until the nineteenth century, when a conflict developed over the extent of the state's jurisdiction over Dominican affairs. Over the years, the Dominicans had become increasingly independent. This

<sup>1</sup> S. I. G. Mudenge's (1976) "The Dominicans at Zumbo: An aspect of missionary history in the Zambezi Valley, c. 1726-1836" in *Mohlomi* I.

<sup>2</sup> E. Axelson (1973) *Portuguese in South-East Africa 1600-1700* (Johannesburg, C. Struik).

<sup>3</sup> S. I. G. Mudenge (1988) *A Political History of the Munhumutapa c. 1400-1902* (Harare, ZPF).

alarmed the state which then decided to replace them with "secular clergy" and thus expelled the Dominicans from South-eastern Africa in 1834; marking the end of 260 years of Dominican presence in the region. Also explored in this chapter were the conflicts between the Dominicans and the Jesuits as they fought for spheres of influence. The chapter ends with a discussion of the reasons for the failure of the Dominican enterprise in South-eastern Africa.

The work of the Irish Dominicans is the subject of Chapter 2. Through a biographical study of Bishop Patrick Griffith, the author examines the establishment of the Catholic Church in the Cape Colony. He points out that, although Griffith's strategy of concentrating only on the white settlers resembled that of the Portuguese Dominicans in South-eastern Africa, he was more successful in his venture. This was partly because he enjoyed a high degree of independence to devise and implement his own programmes and also was financially more stable because of the stipend that he received regularly from government.

Chapters 3 and 4 deal with the British and Dutch Dominicans, respectively. The English were the first to establish themselves in South Africa, to be followed by the Dutch when it became clear that cultural differences between the English Dominicans and the Dutch population of South Africa reduced the effectiveness of their ministry. As in the case of the Portuguese and the Irish, the thrust of the English enterprise was towards the white settler community. It was only in the 1920s that there was talk of extending missionary work to the indigenous people. Evidence that ministering to the indigenous South Africans was considered secondary was the fact that those missionaries who concentrated on work in this sector of the population were discriminated against. According to one source, "the white priest was a parish priest. He had a car. The priest serving the black lived with him, was fed by him and usually had a bicycle. If the former was away, the other was expected to drop his black people and serve the whites" (p. 119). The Dominicans thus practised a policy of "separate development" in South Africa long before the formal introduction of apartheid.

In Chapter 5, Denis argues that it was only after the introduction of apartheid when the problems associated with missionary work among blacks surfaced that the decision to train an indigenous clergy was taken. By then, the Group Areas Act was making it difficult for the Dominicans to continue to live with their flock in those areas designated as African locations. Also important was the growing political consciousness among African Christians, fuelled by such organisations as the Black Consciousness Movement, Black Sash, Catholic Students Association of South Africa and Young Christian Workers and the deportation of a number of Dominicans by the South African authorities. It was only in

1968, however, that the training of indigenous clergy commenced. Chapter 6 traces the activities and role of the Dominicans in Apartheid South Africa and argues that the Dominicans took long to join the fight against apartheid mainly because their Religious Order comprised only whites. In the 1970s, they concentrated their criticisms only on those apartheid laws that directly affected their work. By the 1980s, however, they had become one of the most vocal and militant groups in the fight against apartheid.

*The Dominican Friars in Southern Africa* is an impressive book except for a few shortcomings that could have been easily avoided. For instance, the chronological approach that the author uses falters somewhat in Chapters 3 and 4, for, although the English were the first to establish themselves in South Africa before the Dutch, for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the two worked side by side. The author's treatment of the two groups within a chronological framework thus is not entirely appropriate. Also regrettable is the fact that the author uses some specialist terms without explaining to the non-specialist reader what these mean. A glossary of terms explaining the meaning of such words as "padroado", "tostao", "postulant", "aggiornamento", and "socius", among others, would have been useful. In addition, closer editing to eliminate a number of irritating typos and grammatical errors would also have improved the book. Finally, although the book claims to cover the history of Dominicans in Southern Africa, it, in fact, focuses only on the Zambezi Valley and South Africa and does not discuss experiences in the rest of Southern Africa. In that sense, therefore, it shares the same limitations as the studies listed at the beginning of this review.

These shortcomings, notwithstanding, Denis' book is a significant contribution to knowledge of the forces that helped shape the history of Southern Africa and provides a mine of information on the Dominicans' activities in those areas that it examines. It should prove particularly useful to historians of the missionary enterprise in Africa, scholars of religion, seminarians, university students and anyone who has an interest in understanding the dynamics of church, state and society in a colonial setting.

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