

Good introduction to Africa's political leaders

BY SHELAGH GASTROW

WHO'S WHO IN AFRICA: LEADERS FOR THE 1990s by Alan Rake, The Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, N J & London 1992.

AS outlined in its preface, this book is an attempt to provide pen portraits of the most prominent political figures in sub-Saharan Africa.

Alan Rake, together with John Dickie, produced a similar publication in 1973 and one can only hope that he does not intend to wait another 20 years before the next update!

A book of this nature has been sorely

needed by those with an interest in Africa: diplomats, academics, journalists or laypersons interested in African politics. However, as with any "Who's Who", it is always difficult to stay up-to-date and the reader cannot assume that all the personalities featured in this book remain relevant. For example, the coup in Sierra Leone has swept away many of that country's entries in the book.

Rake has also included some second-tier leadership in cases where he expects them to make an impact in future. However, taking into account the resources of *New African* which Rake edits, and the contacts he must have on the continent, more of such entries should have been included.

In the case of South Africa, this shortcoming is exposed by the lack of entries on such figures as Cyril Ramaphosa, Jacob Zuma and Dikgang Moseneke. In contrast there is an emphasis on church figures such as Desmond Tutu, Frank Chikane and Alan Boesak and some of the old guard including Alfred Nzo, Denis Worrall and Magnus Malan. In the Angolan section there are no entries for MPLA general secretary Marcelino Moco and Joaoquim Pinto de Andrade who established the civic movement, while both are key figures in any future leadership scene. Furthermore, at least one Malawian opposition figure, such as trade unionist Chadufwa Chihana, should have been provided, and not merely current power figures like Banda and Tembo.

Rake also includes a paragraph assessing each figure and some of these assessments are questionable in that he has tried, perhaps, to be too kind to some who have clearly enriched themselves at the expense of their countries. In addition, some descriptive terms, such as "highly civilised" (Joshua Mayani-Nkangi of Uganda) can be insensitive.

Taking into account that every critic will complain about who has been left out in a "Who's Who", Rake should be commended for being able to compile a collection of 320 profiles from a continent where such information is difficult to obtain, except through personal interviews or extensive research. In developed countries one has access to newspaper libraries, microfiche, academic theses, trial records, history books and more, but in many African countries these sources are non-existent and a great deal of initiative and inventiveness is required to put together an accurate profile.

The entries are informally written and make interesting and easy reading. General information is first given on each country, such as the system of government in operation and population size. Rake indicates that emphasis has been given to the most important or populous countries and therefore Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Cote d'Ivoire have comparatively high coverage compared to many others (although Lesotho does well with 11 entries compared to Gabon, one of Africa's richest countries, with six). South Africa has 21 entries.

This book can be highly recommended as a reference source and should be stocked in any good library.

Shelagh Gastrow co-ordinates Idasa's Africa Programme and is the author of "Who's Who in South African Politics".

Creative thinking on environment and development

BY LALA STEYN

RESTORING THE LAND: ENVIRONMENT AND CHANGE IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA, Mamphela Ramphela (consultant editor) with Chris Mcdowell, Panos UK 1991.

THIS is a useful and thought-provoking publication on the need to link environmental restoration to the economic development of communities most devastated by apartheid.

It is a collection of 23 articles compiled in 18 easily readable, and, for the most part stimulating, chapters. As such it does not try to develop a coherent argument or theoretical base although the thread that emerges to bind it together is the belief expressed by many authors that economic development and environmental restoration must be linked. It covers a wide range of environmental issues, both rural and urban, touching on environmental law and including perspectives on Southern Africa. It includes useful articles on the search for alternatives, some are case studies while others postulate general principles.

In her conclusion the consulting editor, Mamphela Ramphela, states that "the restoration of the land to itself means, too, the restoration of the land to the people". This is an important point which does not always clearly emerge from all the contributions.

Ramphela expresses a concern that it is not going to be easy to maintain a balance between the conflicting demands of economic development and the maintenance of ecological balances. Jacklyn Cock raises the need for an alternative developmental perspective which "links the struggle against poverty and social injustices with the struggle against abuse of the environment". She

raises the issue of the "rainbow coalition" between green groups, trade unions, community organisations and others, as an important way forward towards realising this alternative developmental perspective. One serious omission is that there is no article that deals with the issue of the restoration of the land to the people of South

Africa. As the book was published in 1991 we can assume that most articles were written in 1990. This was the year the government scrapped racist land laws and installed, after protracted struggle, an Advisory Commission on Land Allocation to hear the land claims of the communities forcibly removed. This was the year such communities "illegally" returned to their land, facing arrest, assault and prosecution.

It is precisely the environmental issue which the government uses as one of its reasons for not wanting to restore the land to victims of forced removals. They say these communities will denude the land and practise bad farming methods. Communities' responses to these accusations reveal how



Desegregated but still divided

ALL SCHOOLS FOR ALL CHILDREN
by Julie Frederikse, Oxford University
Press, 1992. (135 pages)

THIS book holds many essential and sobering lessons for us in South Africa who are only starting out now on the long journey to non-racial, non-sexist, equal and equally accessible education for all our children.

A collection of extensive interviews with Zimbabwean teachers, parents and pupils who have experienced the transition to a desegregated, post-independence educational environment, it gives us an opportunity to anticipate – and hopefully avoid – some of the pitfalls lying in the way of major transition. Frederikse wrote this book under the auspices of the National Education Co-ordinating Committee, and the NECC's foreword implores "all South Africans who care about the future of education in this country to read this book, and ponder the lessons it has to offer".

The success story of post-independence Zimbabwe is one of a rapid move towards integration and multiracial harmony among the young, coupled with a dramatic increase in the numbers of children attending schools, particularly at the primary levels. The down side is the warning repeated in so many of the frank and explicit accounts; Zimbabweans found that as racial tensions in their schools diminished, new class-based

discrimination and conflict emerged in its place. As Frederikse puts it: "There is clearly a danger that social divisions on class lines could become as contentious and unjust as the racial divisions of the past... The interviews in this book indicate that this growth of class consciousness has been matched by an almost total collapse of race consciousness."

Frederikse found desegregation in Zimbabwean schools meant predominantly two things; a flood of wealthier black children entering formerly white suburban and privileged schools, with "township" schools remaining uniraical and becoming increasingly impoverished and under-resourced.

She issues another warning: most newly integrated schools continued the practices of the former white schools with black students forced to adopt the customs, structures and ethos of what is largely a colonial or British model at the expense of their own languages and priorities.

She concludes: "A major lesson of this study is that unless the integration of schools is based on firm principles of redressing past inequities, it will merely result in the admission of a minority of blacks to positions of privilege in a society which is still divided." For us, who are experimenting with "Model C" varieties of limited integration, it is a timely warning that we would do well to heed.

Moira Levy, Media Department

Many questions, no single answer

QUESTIONABLE ISSUE: ILLEGITIMACY IN SOUTH AFRICA edited by Sandra Burman and Eleanor Preston-Whyte, Oxford University Press 1992, 296 pages.

TRADITIONALLY illegitimate births are defined by most societies as those births which fall outside certain social and legal boundaries, namely the institution of marriage.

Defining illegitimacy within the South African context becomes extremely difficult if one considers the country's diverse cultural composition as well as the devastating effects of apartheid on the family unit.

Clearly it has become a way of life with over 40 percent of all children in South Africa born to unmarried women.

The book proves to be a rich source of diverse perspectives presented by academics and practitioners in the fields of law, anthropology, religious studies, economics, clinical psychology, psychiatry and paediatrics. Case studies show the psychological effect of illegitimacy and shocking statistics of inadequate welfare facilities. Inadequate legal rights and provisions and the social status of such children and their unmarried parent are among the issues dealt with.

The book explores the incorporation of the child into the family and society within the confines of the Hindu, Jewish, Christian and Islamic religions. The extent and success with which this is done varies and the emotional scars are born by all, be they adult or child.

Several recommendations have been proposed by the authors and they include: legal reforms; improved state welfare and maintenance structures; provision of public health facilities and clinical and educational intervention programmes; and removal of gender stereotyping which limits social mobility for poorer women and their children.

The editors, however, feel that there is no single answer to the need for positive guidance towards more desirable social models.

With the South African situation of disrupted family life posing such a unique problem, a problem which according to this book shows no signs of abating, there is an urgent need for action. This book provides the guidelines for that action.

Chantel Edwards, Media Department



Environment and development

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they grapple with the need for land and for justice to be done, and the need to protect the environment for future generations. A range of communities and NGOs would have been able to make a valuable contribution in this field. The omission of this issue seems to be a glaring oversight.

Some of the articles written by academics or journalists fail to identify the key issue at stake in a particular situation. For example Emile Boonzaier comprehensively explains how the Richtersveld park came to incorporate the community in its management, gives a good description of what happened but is unable to hone in on key issues and lessons that would be useful for other communities in similar situations.

On the other hand, the article on the fight for health and safety in the workplace written by the Chemical Workers Industrial Union, which describes the "rainbow coalition" in action against Thor Chemicals, is one of the most useful and challenging. The

perspective of those directly involved in struggles on the ground, and not removed, is most instructive, especially in case studies.

One of the most probing and thought-provoking articles is that by David Dewar entitled "Cities under stress". He sketches the environmental problems of rapid urbanisation clearly and succinctly as well as tackling the thorny question of how to address these. This is one of the few articles on the urban environment which directly addresses the effects of urbanisation on the land, water, air and vegetation. It is encouraging to look for solutions from his perspective, one which views the urbanisation process as one of the "most positive dynamics in the history of our country".

In the foreword the Panos Institute expresses the hope that the book will make a useful contribution to debate and understanding in post-apartheid South Africa. This book should do that.

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