

## FOREWORD

# PUBLISHING IN ZIMBABWE

ROGER STRINGER

This article examines the present state of publishing in Zimbabwe, particularly since the country's independence in 1980, as publishing prior to that event has been well surveyed by Louis Bolze (1980). There are also a couple of brief articles, by Geoffrey Dellar (1969) and Fr Plangger (1979), which analyse the listings of the *Rhodesia National Bibliography*. My approach has been to try to identify particular areas of publishing, and to attempt to identify the trends which characterise them. These areas cannot be strictly defined and there is inevitably some overlap, but I hope they will paint a picture of the present situation — at least as I see it.

*The transition.* The transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe was marked by a 'surge of nostalgia' among the White community, and this nostalgia was reflected in much of the general book publishing that took place between 1978 and 1982 (Roberts, 1983b). But, as Roberts points out, 'the market for nostalgia was moving south', in the early years of Independence, and much 'Rhodesiana' was being published in South Africa.<sup>1</sup> Books of Zimbabwe (formerly Books of Rhodesia), which specialised in reprints of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writings on Rhodesia, moved towards the publication of original works during the same period; yet most still had a nostalgic approach. The series 'Men of our Time' and 'Down Memory Lane', for instance, consisted largely of autobiographical reminiscences of prominent white Rhodesians, and other examples of well produced 'coffee table' Rhodesiana were *Some Renowned Rhodesian Senior Schools* and *More Rhodesian Senior Schools*, *Cricket's Rich Heritage*, *Bulawayo's Changing Skyline, 1893–1980* and *Salisbury's Changing Skyline, 1890–1980*. These have been surveyed by R. S. Roberts (1982a, 1983b) in *Zambezia*.

The political changes inevitably brought many studies of the end of Rhodesia and the birth of Zimbabwe, yet few were published in this country (see Roberts, 1983a). Local publishing has, perhaps, concentrated on the 'other side of the story' — on the liberation struggle rather than the Rhodesian war — although the quantity of such publications indicated a trickle rather than a flood; those published in the early years of Independence were reviewed by Masipula Sithole in *Zambezia* (Sithole, 1983).<sup>2</sup> The most comprehensive story of the liberation struggle so far is David Martin and Phyllis Johnson's *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: the Chimurenga War*, published by the Zimbabwe Publishing House (founded by the authors) in 1981 soon after it had been published by Faber in London.

Other locally published works on the period concentrate on narrower topics: for example, A. J. C. Pongweni's *Songs that Won the Liberation War* (College Press, 1982), Julie Frederikse's *None but Ourselves* (Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1982), Patricia Chater's *Caught in the Crossfire* (Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985) and Martin and Johnson's *The Chitepo Assassination* (Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985). Personal accounts by the principal characters in the liberation struggle have not yet been

forthcoming, despite many promises by those now in ministerial posts. Eddison Zvobgo, acting ZANU(PF) Secretary for Publicity in 1981, said, on the establishment of the party-owned Jongwe Printing and Publishing Company: 'It will ... publish books, textbooks, literature used during the war and other material' (*The Herald*, 18 August 1981). However, apart from publishing *Zimbabwe News*, the official organ of ZANU(PF), the company's activities have been almost entirely concentrated on printing rather than publishing. Mambo Press published in 1983 *Our War of Liberation: Speeches, Articles, Interviews, 1976–1979*, by Robert Mugabe, and Maurice Nyagumbo's autobiographical *With the People* was published by Graham Publishing in 1980. Prime Minister Mugabe, in his foreword to *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, has promised that 'the actors themselves will publish the drama of their struggle' (Martin and Johnson, 1981, vi): but this drama is still awaited.

Several titles were reprinted to meet the demand for books reflecting the views of opponents of the Rhodesian government which had been either banned or unavailable before Independence. Examples are Judith Todd's *An Act of Treason* and Didymus Mutasa's *Black behind Bars* (Longman Zimbabwe); and Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, W. E. Smith's *Nyerere of Tanzania* and Nelson Mandela's *No Easy Walk to Freedom* (Zimbabwe Publishing House). The National Archives published a pictorial presentation of the history of the country, *Zimbabwe Epic*, a new version of the out-of-print *Rhodesian Epic*, which gave less emphasis to the history of the European settlers and included photographs from the liberation struggle.

*Creative writing.* The Literature Bureau has continued to sponsor and publish creative writing, particularly in the Shona and Ndebele languages. (The work of the Literature Bureau prior to Independence has been the subject of several articles by its former Director, Walter Krog (1974, 1978, 1979).) However, the objectives and policies of the Bureau have changed since 1980. 'The Bureau was not very free to publish political material. Although there was no law barring this, not many authors ventured to write on this subject' (Chief Publications Officer, 1987, personal communication).

The Literature Bureau's sponsored publications are still almost all published by the major commercial publishers (Longman Zimbabwe, College Press, Mambo Press and Zimbabwe Publishing House). However, there has been a gradual decline in the Bureau's output, due, according to the Chief Publications Officer, to shortage of staff at the Bureau. The annual number of sponsored publications between 1980 and 1986 is as follows:

1980	23
1981	28
1982	26
1983	18
1984	16
1985	12
1986	2
Total	125

It would seem, however, that perhaps a lack of quality in the manuscripts submitted to the bureau might also have a bearing on the number of publications produced. The Chief Publications Officer reports that the bureau holds workshops 'to encourage the Shona and Ndebele people to develop writing skills and thus improve the quality of the vernacular literature'. It should be noted that the Bureau-sponsored works are not the only ones published in the vernacular languages. Longman Zimbabwe, College Press,

Mambo Press and Zimbabwe Publishing House have all published prose, poetry and drama in Shona and Ndebele. Given the decline in output of the Literature Bureau and the volume of manuscripts that are submitted to the commercial publishers, it may be that the Bureau's role is becoming redundant. As the market for literature in Shona and Ndebele expands, and as the purchasing power of the people grows, such literature is becoming more commercially viable and does not, perhaps, need the sponsorship it has received in the past.

The direction of creative writing in English has also perhaps not met the promise of Independence. McLoughlin (1984, 104) says, 'Since Independence in Zimbabwe, publishers, readers and critics have waited eagerly for what has not come — a convincing novel about the guerilla war,' though his own novel *Karima*, published in 1985 by Mambo Press, might be a contender. McLoughlin also awaits the development of a powerful force of Zimbabwean writers who will treat the realities of contemporary society. Apart from Nyamfukudza (the author of *A Non-believer's Journey*, Heinemann, 1980, and Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1983, and *Aftermaths*, (College Press, 1983)), there has been 'no attempt to analyse or show in a new way the contradictions within the changing society', yet Nyamfukudza himself is 'seldom explicitly political and always intensely personal' (McLoughlin, 1984, 104–5). Referring to Achebe's desire to 'help society help itself', McLoughlin continues, 'Writers in Zimbabwe have yet to show that they mean to do the same. If Nyamfukudza is any indication, they will try first to help society be honest with itself about the present. That might be a more difficult and subversive task, but it is part of the enmity which has always existed between a serious writer and his society' (1984, 107). Dambudzo Marechera is one author who may attempt this task. It is noticeable that novels by white Zimbabweans are less numerous than in the past. Peter Armstrong's *The Last Movie* (Welston Press, 1981) and *The Pegasus Man* (Welston Press, 1983), David Lemon's *Ivory Madness* (College Press, 1983), Tim McLoughlin's *Karima* and Nancy Partridge's *To Breathe and Wait* (Mambo Press, 1986) are the only such novels to appear since 1980. A collection of short stories, *Two Minutes to Midnight* was published by Gemini/Kailani Publishers in 1985.

*Educational publishing.* It is in the publishing of school textbooks that the greatest development has taken place. This is perhaps hardly surprising when one considers that primary school enrolment has jumped from 819,586 in 1979 to 1,232,994 in 1980 and to 2,260,367 by 1986; and secondary school enrolment from 66,215 in 1979 to 145,801 in 1981 and to 545,841 by 1986.

Government's policy that all primary and most secondary texts should be published locally, coupled with restrictions on the availability of foreign exchange, have seen a boom in both the number of titles published at these levels, and in the sizes of the print runs. However, not all books, particularly those at secondary level, are original; many are reprints, under licence, of texts previously published overseas, usually in Britain. Licensed reprinting of school texts has, in fact, been one of the major trends in publishing in Zimbabwe in recent years. The lists of the major companies — Longman Zimbabwe, College Press, Zimbabwe Publishing House and Academic Books — now contain a significant number of licensed reprints. Academic Books publish no original material; having simply been representatives of British publishers prior to 1985, they produced fifteen titles in 1985 and forty in 1986, all licensed secondary education books from UK publishers. The company is, however, looking in the future to the localisation of such licensed titles to suit changing syllabuses.

Textbook publishing receives the greatest prominence in the local media, largely when schools are unable to obtain either the quantity or the type of books they require. It is usually the publishers who receive the brunt of journalists' anger when such shortages occur, yet the criticism is not always justified. The issues involved in the publication and supply of textbooks for schools are complex and frequently misunderstood by journalists and the public. A review of events between 1983 and 1986 will, I hope, illustrate this.

Supply of textbooks to schools reached a crisis in 1983, largely as a result of problems in the bookselling trade. The emergence of many new, undercapitalised booksellers, who were unable to satisfy orders they received from educational authorities, meant that schools were without books while publishers held large stockpiles. Publishers were consequently unable to determine their print runs for the following year. Government therefore introduced a contract system in 1984 whereby booksellers who wish to supply schools must be approved according to certain criteria concerning the viability of their businesses. This move did a great deal to solve the problem, though other factors also caused difficulties in supply. In 1985 Senator Joseph Culverwell, the Deputy Minister of Education, was blaming shortages of textbooks in schools on gross administration in local authorities who distributed government grants for books to schools under their control (*The Herald*, September 1985).

Schools were, however, still suffering problems in 1986, this time due to foreign currency shortages. *The Herald*, in its leaders, was again blaming local publishers, who were 'not making as much use as possible of university lecturers and other teachers to produce some of our much-needed school texts' (1 June 1986); but later: 'one would have liked to see concerted efforts by the Ministry of Education, writers and publishers together to give our schools the books they need' (21 August 1986). It is easy, of course, for newspapers to blame the publishers, but the publishers' case had been well explained earlier by Longman Zimbabwe's Publishing Manager, Nda Dhlodhlo, who said that while 'Zimbabwe did have teachers capable of writing almost all the required textbooks, they lacked experience in textbook writing and had many commitments so that the books could take years to produce' (*The Sunday Mail*, 27 January 1985). He suggested that a solution might lie in publishers and government co-sponsoring programmes to establish full-time writers. I am not aware of any such programmes having been established, although organisations such as the Friedrich Naumann Foundation from the Federal Republic of Germany have run courses for journalists and for editors and illustrators involved in book publishing.

Publishers have also come in for criticism from the newspapers in terms of the type of material they publish. 'Africa ... needs publishers who are genuinely committed to the production of relevant literature. Their commitment will be better measured by their deeds, not by verbal utterances of solidarity with the African cause. Yet how many of those publishers that profess to belong in Africa espouse the philosophies of the countries in which they operate? To how many of them does man come first, not money?' (*The Herald*, 29 August 1984.) I am not sure how the leader writer expects publishers to be able to survive if they don't think of money, but I think it would be fair to say that most Zimbabwean publishers have taken losses on certain books in order to make their contents available to the public. Senator Culverwell was more positive: 'You as publishers carry a heavy responsibility — that of liberating the minds of our people through the ideas in the books you produce ... the publishers are just as much educators as the teachers in the classroom and, consequently, have a responsibility to

ensure a continued high standard and to follow closely Ministry of Education policy.’<sup>3</sup> Publishers are indeed aware of their responsibilities as far as national development goals are concerned; but they are obviously guided by the country’s educational policy and the market’s demands. If school syllabuses and examinations require ‘relevant’ textbooks, publishers will produce them; if syllabuses and examinations are irrelevant, publishers have little choice.

An important part in educational publishing in Zimbabwe is played by the government, particularly through the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) of the Ministry of Education. The work of the CDU includes ‘reviewing and renewing syllabuses in the light of Zimbabwe’s social, cultural, ideological and economic needs’. They write pupil’s books on a term-by-term basis and prepare teachers’ resource books ‘to accompany and supplement the Pupils’ books with background material, teaching suggestions and advice on methodology’.<sup>4</sup> These books have been distributed to schools free of charge thanks to the support of donor agencies, but future plans provide for them to be sold at cost. The CDU does not, however, attempt to compete with the commercial publishers. Their print runs are such that each school is provided with one set of approximately twenty books, which are aimed to provide a basic minimum to enable schools to follow the syllabuses. They also produce basic ‘kits’ for science and technical subjects, which contain tools and certain raw materials.

The Curriculum Development Unit also reviews the textbooks printed or published by commercial publishers, prior to their publication. This is done in order to assess the relevance of such textbooks to the syllabuses. If a book meets the approval of the CDU the words ‘approved by the Ministry of Education’ appear on its cover and can have a significant effect on sales. This does not mean that if a book is not approved the publisher will necessarily not continue with its production; but it may cause the publisher to think carefully about the risk, as many schools will shy away from textbooks that do not have the Ministry’s approval. It does mean, though, that publishers cannot expect to get away with the publication of irrelevant or ‘pirated’ textbooks, which is something against which government and the established publishers are united in their opposition.

Tertiary-level textbook publishing is almost non-existent at the moment. Some texts have been licensed in the area of education, where teacher trainees are probably the largest sector, and College Press have recently introduced a locally written series aimed at the same market called ‘New Directions in Education’. Licensed reprinting at this level is continually being investigated, but the smallness of the market is the greatest inhibitor to local printing: print runs of less than 5,000 are not generally economic. The University of Zimbabwe is considering the possibility of producing low-cost, locally written books to supplement available texts at this level.

Other organisations produce a small amount of educational material. The Adult Literacy Organisation of Zimbabwe (ALOZ) in particular has as one of its objectives the provision of low-cost learning material, and has established with donor assistance a small printing company, ALOZ Press, to produce such material. According to the ALOZ chairman’s report for 1984/5, 24,282 books were printed in that period, six in English, six in Ndebele and two in Shona.<sup>5</sup> These publications are distributed to literacy programmes and include functional reading materials on such topics as book-keeping and poultry keeping. ALOZ must, like other publishers, submit their books to the Ministry of Education for approval and this has caused some problems. ‘Some books submitted to the Ministry in 1983, still have not yet been returned to us with the

Ministry's comments', reported the chairman in 1985. 'The delays in the approval of books have created administrative problems to ALOZ in the printing and distribution of reading material for literacy students'.

*General publishing.* It has often been suggested that the emergent literate African population reads primarily to pass examinations and obtain qualifications, and this is probably true of the majority. However, the popularity in Africa of authors such as James Hadley Chase must indicate that there is a potential market for 'recreational' or general-interest reading. David Martin's article (1983) on the founding of Zimbabwe Publishing House points to an interest in general books, and Mambo Press, which has never ventured into the textbook market, has always found a steady readership for its publications (Plangger, 1985).

In addition to the publications on the liberation struggle and creative writing referred to above, there have been several notable general publications. Mambo Press probably lead the field, particularly with their 'Zambezi' series whose eighteenth title is now in press. In this series, *The Traditional Medical Practitioner in Zimbabwe*, by Michael Gelfand and others, was published in 1986, perhaps one of the most valuable sources of information on this topic. In their 'Mambo Writers' series came *The Mambo Book of Zimbabwean Verse in English*, compiled by Colin and O-lan Style, the only comprehensive such anthology yet to appear. Their 'Socio-economic' series has included *Studies on Fishing on Lake Kariba*, by M. F. C. Bourdillon and others, *Local Government in Zimbabwe* by J. Jordan, and *The Commonwealth Observer Group in Zimbabwe* by Stephen Chan.

Zimbabwe Publishing House have developed a strong list in their History/Politics series, though quite a number are co-published with foreign publishers (such as David Lan's *Guns and Rain* and Terence Ranger's *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla War in Zimbabwe*) or are licensed reprints (such as Babu's *African Socialism or Socialist Africa?* and Allen and Barbara Isaacman's *Mozambique: from Colonialism to Revolution*). Among their original titles have been Carol Thompson's *Challenge to Imperialism* and Hardwicke Holderness's *Lost Chance*. S. I. G. Mudenge's *A Political History of Munhumutapa c. 1400 to 1902*, to be published during 1987, will be a significant addition to their list.

Longman Zimbabwe and College Press appear to have devoted most of their energies to textbook publishing or creative writing, College Press in particular having moved away from their ventures into general publishing during the late 1970s. Books of Zimbabwe has now ceased operations, although Louis Bolze published Mac. Partridge's *United College of Education, Bulawayo, 1967-1981* under his own name in 1985. Graham Publishing has continued to obtain the rights to publish international best-sellers locally, recent titles being Irving Wallace's *The Almighty*, Evelyn Anthony's *The Defector* and Shirley Conran's *Lace*. They also published in early 1987 *Beneath a Zimbabwe Sun*, a beautifully produced 'coffee-table' book, lavishly illustrated with colour photographs. Modus Publications (publishers of *The Financial Gazette*) have also moved into book publishing, Dick Pitman's *Zimbabwe Portrait* being a similar, but less well produced, publication to *Beneath a Zimbabwe Sun*.

Quest Publishing are a promising new company. They published Stuart Irwin's *The Birds of Zimbabwe* in 1981 and, after a period of dormancy and a change of ownership, *Historic Buildings of Harare (1890-1940)* by Peter Jackson in 1986. They are at present working on an encyclopaedia of Zimbabwe which is to be published before the end of 1987. Other small companies have produced sporadic publications. Stanlake Samkange's



Harare Publishing House seems to concentrate on the owner's own works,<sup>6</sup> apart from a book of street maps, *The A to Z of Harare*, published in 1981; Books for Africa have published a few books by the controversial historian Aeneas Chigwedere; and there are a number of new small publishers which have produced only one or two titles, for example, Star Press and Nehanda Publishers.

The University of Zimbabwe published a major scholarly work in 1982, D. B. Saddington's *The Development of the Roman Auxiliary Forces from Caesar to Vespasian*. The university's Publications Office is responsible for *Zambezia: the Journal of the University of Zimbabwe*, and also publishes monograph supplements to the journal. After a few years in the doldrums the university's publishing is being revitalised and several scholarly monographs will be published during 1987. Other departments within the university publish working papers and miscellaneous academic publications. Other publishers of a significant amount of scholarly papers include the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management, the Department of Agricultural Technical Extension Services (Agritex), the Geological Survey, and the Zimbabwe Scientific Association. The National Archives of Zimbabwe have recently published the third in their bibliographical series, *Zimbabwean Political Materials Published in Exile, 1959–1980: a Bibliography*, an invaluable source of information about many diverse and fugitive publications.

One particular area of publishing that has not yet developed is the publishing of children's books. The Literature Bureau began producing simple booklets in Shona and Ndebele for children in the late 1950s and 1960s. They were simply stapled foolscap pages of eight, twelve and sixteen pages in length, selling at 5c, 10c and 15c respectively. These were extremely popular with children and were followed up with story booklets, often illustrated with black-and-white line drawings. They were between twenty and thirty pages in length and sold for between 15c and 30c each; well over 200,000 copies have been sold and new titles are still issued today.

Similar cheaply produced stories have been published by the Zimbabwe Children's Literature Foundation (ZCLF), which was set up in June 1980 by a local librarian and author, Mrs Tendai Makura. Registered as a welfare organisation, the ZCLF's objectives include: promoting children's literature in the African languages by discovering talent through competitions, etc; facilitating the publication of literature for children by providing illustrators and artists for good manuscripts; and sponsoring the publication of children's books in the African languages. The ZCLF has not, however, had any great impact upon children's publishing in Zimbabwe. According to the *Zimbabwe National Bibliography*, they had produced seven publications by the end of 1985, but, of these, four were written by the founder, none was written in Ndebele, and one was an English translation of one of the Shona titles.

Most literature in English for children, published by commercial publishers, would be classified, as 'supplementary readers' rather than 'children's fiction'. Mambo Press publish a series called 'Dandaro Readers'; eight titles had been produced by the end of 1986. Longman Zimbabwe and College Press have published a few in similar vein. The main attempt at quality children's fiction has been made by Zimbabwe Publishing House. They reprinted Hugh Lewin's *Jafta* series in 1983, and in 1984 published Meshack Asare's *Chipo and the Bird on Hill*, a very well produced story set in ancient Zimbabwe, which won the Unesco prize at the Leipzig Book and Art Exhibition held in the German Democratic Republic in 1985. An alphabet book, *Alphabet for Africa*, by Hugh Lewin and illustrated by Tony Namate, was published in 1985.

Zimbabwe Publishing House also attempted a children's magazine called *Ants*, the first issue appearing in late 1981. The story of its founding has been described by Penny Nyren (1983), but the financial difficulties which she mentions finally caused *Ants* to cease publication with the twelfth issue in early 1984. An article in *The Herald* (12 September 1983) about the project suggested that 'children's books don't sell, mainly because people don't often have spare money for such items, and even for children, they are not a priority'. However, although children's books may not sell in the same way as best-sellers or school textbooks, some booksellers have reported that there is a steady readership for good-quality stories. Publishers do perhaps need to be persuaded away from the 'primary school supplementary reader' and to look at more attractive children's stories, using possibly the two-tone approach of the *Jafra* stories or the brown paper of the *Chipo* story.

One interesting experiment was attempted by Drawbridge Press (now part of Quest Publishing), who produced a children's story called *Treasure Trail*. The story contained clues which could lead to the location of treasure on a map, and offered a Z\$5000 prize to the child who solved it. The idea was very successful: many copies were sold to the general public and, thanks to the support of some foreign embassies, many were distributed to schools. Such an idea cannot be repeated often, but it is somewhat disappointing that similar 'exciting' approaches are not followed up: future children's stories from that publisher are to fall into the 'supplementary reader' category.

Attempts are being made to encourage children to read for enjoyment rather than simply to improve their language ability: the Home Libraries Project — set up on the initiative of two Zimbabwean mothers and now supported by the Children's Libraries Section of IFLA — aims to encourage parents to read and tell stories to their own children and others in the neighbourhood.<sup>7</sup> Such initiatives need the support of local publishers.

*The context of publishing.* Finally, it is necessary to consider the environment in which publishers operate in Zimbabwe.<sup>8</sup> Louis Bolze (1980, 236) described the problems that had not been overcome after the ending of sanctions against Rhodesia particularly of a shortage of foreign currency for the importation of paper and of out-dated printing and binding equipment. The Zimbabwe government allocated large amounts of foreign currency in the first years of Independence to several companies to enable them to upgrade their printing equipment, and to a large extent that problem has been solved. The foreign currency situation has recently worsened, however, with allocations currently well below what they were in 1980. This is affecting not only the printers' paper supplies but also their films, plates, inks and chemicals (see *The Financial Gazette*, 6 February 1987). Nor has the local production of newsprint paper received the support necessary for it to supply the country's needs, and even *The Herald* and *The Sunday Mail* had to cut their print orders in December 1986. *The Sunday Mail*, responding to the Minister of National Supplies' claim that the shortage of newsprint had only occurred six months previously, said, 'The Mutare-based newsprint producing company has been unable to satisfy for many years now'. It blamed the government for lack of co-ordination and planning and for the lack of allocations of foreign exchange to buy new equipment and to expand and modernise its operations (18 January 1987).

The Zimbabwe government's general approach to books has not been supportive. Zimbabwe is one of the few countries which have not signed the Unesco 'Florence agreement'. Imported books are subject not only to customs duties but also to the 20 per cent import surcharge levied on all imported goods. Internally, books are also



subject to a 12½ per cent sales tax. Taking into account also the general fall in the value of the Zimbabwe dollar against the major currencies, and increases in freight charges and imported materials, prices of books in the shops are generally unreasonably high. Price control is also having a negative effect on local publishing, since it is necessary for publishers to anticipate increases in input costs at least five years ahead, and as a result new books may be priced more expensively than they would be otherwise.

Those involved in the book trade have done (and are still doing) their best to try to improve the situation — both by drawing government's attention to the problems, and by generally promoting books and reading among the public. There is no Book Development Council to unite all those involved — although the idea has been mooted (Hurry, 1983; Stringer, 1984) — but professional and trade associations exist for individual sectors. A Zimbabwe Book Publishers' Association (ZBPA) was established in 1953. As well as generally representing the interests of local publishers, the ZBPA has instituted an annual literary award in conjunction with the Zimbabwe Writer's Union (ZIWU). The Zimbabwe Publishers' Literary Award was first made in 1986 and fills the gap left when the PEN office in Zimbabwe ceased to operate. First, second and third prizes are awarded for the best general books (textbooks are excluded) in Shona, Ndebele or English.

The first Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF) was held in 1983 and seems to have become established as an annual event.<sup>9</sup> The ZIBF was initiated by Zimbabwe Publishing House, in conjunction with the Ministry of Information, but there is a feeling among local publishers that responsibility for its organisation should now be widened. The ZIBF has generally been very successful, with writers' workshops and other events being held concurrently. The organisers have tried to identify specific themes in recent years: the 1985 Fair featured women's writing, and children's literature will be the theme for 1987. The ZIBF has not been without problems, however. Bureaucratic obstacles relating to import duties levied on foreign publishers' exhibits, and difficulty in obtaining Reserve Bank approval for the remittance of the proceeds of books imported for sale at the Fair were particular headaches. However, these problems are gradually being overcome and the ZIBF should become one of the major such events in Africa.

The lack of library development is another hindrance to the development of strong local publishing. A network of public libraries can be a valuable market for publishers and can increase the viability of printing certain titles. No national library service yet exists; although the National Library and Documentation Service Act passed through Parliament in early 1985, it had still not come into force by March 1987.<sup>10</sup> Although libraries in other sectors are quite well established (see Harrison, 1978), public libraries have never received much support from successive governments. It is a tragedy that the Zimbabwe government has not taken the opportunity to redress the situation.

The bookselling trade is generally well developed. It is dominated by two major companies, Textbook Sales and Kingston's, but there are a number of smaller companies some with two or three branches. Booksellers, particularly the smaller ones, have been hard hit by the reductions in foreign currency allocations, as most of them depend on imported books to fill the shelves. The 'emergent' booksellers (mentioned above) have largely concentrated on supplying schools with locally published textbooks, though some have succeeded in obtaining foreign exchange and import licences. The introduction of the registration of 'approved' booksellers to schools has rationalised the situation and caused the demise of the so-called 'briefcase' booksellers; but there is still

a need for rationalisation so far as foreign currency allocations are concerned. The British Council has run several short courses for bookselling staff in Zimbabwe, and this will, hopefully, improve the quality of booksellers. Robert Martin, the training officer of the Book Development Council in London, who has been involved in these courses, pointed out that bookshop managers 'did not pay enough attention to staff training and did not often understand the concept of stock control' (*The Herald*, 27 October, 1983).

*Conclusion.* This survey has inevitably been somewhat sketchy but will, I hope, have given some indication of publishing activities in Zimbabwe. I have said nothing about magazine, journal or newspaper publishing, nor about trade directories and similar material: these are a thriving part of the publishing scene. Looking to the future, the advent of desk-top publishing is likely to have a significant impact on local publishing output. One of the smaller publications already possesses this technology, and other companies are in the process of obtaining the relevant equipment. Thus we are likely to see a greater publishing output from the smaller publishers and probably a greater proliferation of small publishers. A number of printing co-operatives have been established since Independence, and with their low-cost production the advantages of low-cost origination should allow more economic production of small print runs.

The foreign exchange restrictions are not likely to improve in the near future and the present trend of printing under licence, rather than importing completed books, is likely to continue; licensed printing was estimated to have 'saved' three publishers a total of Z\$1.7 million by 1983 (*The Herald*, 6 September 1983). There will be a continued move towards locally written books, in line with changes in school syllabuses, to make them more relevant to local situations and conditions.

If these trends are to be effective, there needs to be a much more positive approach from Government to alleviate inhibitors to local publishing. Tariff barriers on the free flow of information must be reduced, as must the high sales taxes charged on books; inputs into the local printing industry — paper, film, plates, inks, etc. — must be made more readily available; price control regulations in the publishing industry need to be reviewed. If the general environment can be improved, publishing in Zimbabwe has great potential and Zimbabwe can become a major publishing force within the southern African region.

### Notes

1 This market is evidently still flourishing in South Africa — one publisher, Galago Publishing, specialises almost solely in Rhodesiana.

2 Pamphlets and other materials published in connection with the political changes between 1978 and 1980 are surveyed in the last pages of another essay review by R. S. Roberts (1982b).

3 Zimbabwe, Ministry of Information, Posts and Telecommunications, Department of Information, press statement 328/86/BCC/MA, 23 May 1986, speech delivered at the Annual General Meeting of the Zimbabwe Book Publishers' Association.

4 Zimbabwe, Ministry of Education, Curriculum Development Unit, 1986, *The Curriculum Development Unit*, Harare: The Unit.

5 Adult Literacy Organisation of Zimbabwe, Chairman's Report: October 1984 — September 1985, Harare: ALOZ. Duplicated.

6 Despite his offers to publish good manuscripts by Zimbabwean authors: see *The Herald*, 16 September 1981.

7 An outline of the project is given in *IFLA Journal* (1985), 11 (3), 223–7.

8 An outline of the environment can be found in the entry under 'Zimbabwe' in S.

Taubert and P. Weidhaas (ed.), *The Book Trade of the World*, vol. IV, *Africa* pp. 344–54, London, etc.: K. G. Saur. However, several developments have taken place since that article was compiled, and those developments are considered here.

9 Although the 1986 Fair had to be cancelled, as it clashed with Zimbabwe's hosting of the eighth summit of the Non-aligned Movement Conference.

10 The movement after Independence towards a national library service has been followed in the *Zimbabwe Librarian*. The momentum faltered around mid-1984 and my personal feelings on that appear in *The Sunday Mail*, 22 December 1985.

### References

- Bolze, L. W. 1980. 'The book publishing scene in Zimbabwe'. *African Book Publishing Record*, 6 (3/4), 229–36.
- Dellar, G. 1969. 'The pattern of Rhodesian publishing, 1961–1967', *Rhodesian Librarian*, 1 (3), 71–6.
- Harrison, A. 1978. 'Libraries in Rhodesia', in *Encyclopaedia of Library and Information Science*, vol 25, pp. 402–38. New York: Dekker.
- Hurry, B. 1983. 'Helping Zimbabwe to read: the need for a National Book Council of Zimbabwe', *Zimbabwe Librarian*, 15 (3 and 4), 33–4.
- Krog, W. 1974. 'The Rhodesia Literature Bureau: its aims, objects and achievements', *African Research and Documentation*, 4, 1–6.
- 1978. 'African creative writing in Rhodesia', *Arts Rhodesia*, 1, 48–50.
- 1979. 'The progress of Shona and Ndebele literature', *NADA: the Annual of the Ministry of Home Affairs*, 12 (1), 67–71.
- McLoughlin, T. O. 1984. 'The past and the present in African literature: examples from contemporary Zimbabwean fiction', *Présence Africaine*, 13, 93–107.
- Martin, D. 1983. 'Zimbabwe Publishing House: the first two years', *African Book Publishing Record*, 9 (2 and 3), 181–4.
- Martin, D., and Johnson, P. 1981. *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: the Chimurenga War*. Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House.
- Nyren, P. 1983. 'Ants magazine', *African Book Publishing Record*, 9 (2 and 3), 89–92.
- Plangger, A. 1979. 'Some observations on publishing in Zimbabwe', *Zimbabwe Librarian*, 11 (3 and 4), 41–4.
- 1985. 'Mambo Press — the first 25 years: a brief look at ourselves', *African Book Publishing Record*, 11 (1), 9.
- Roberts, R. S. 1982a. 'Reprints and reminiscences of white Rhodesia', *Zambezia*, 10 (2), 139–41.
- 1982b. 'Epiphenomena of the struggle', *Zambezia*, 10 (2), 143–50.
- 1983a. 'Last days of white Rhodesia', *Zambezia*, 11 (1), 73–8.
- 1983b. 'Patriotism or profit: nostalgic memento or negotiable asset?', *Zambezia*, 11 (2), 143–7.
- Sithole, M. 1983. 'Recent works on the Zimbabwe liberation movement', *Zambezia*, 11 (2), 149–59.
- Stringer, R. 1984. 'Towards the establishment of a National Book Council', *Zimbabwe Librarian*, 16 (1), 21–5.