

earlier publications, it incorporates the perspectives not just of civilian victims of the conflict but of the 'dissidents'. Moreover it provides a historical framework for relating the violence of the 1980s to that of the liberation war and colonial forced migrations. This remedies the ahistorical tendencies often found in chronologies of human rights violations.

Although published by James Currey as part of the Social History of Africa series, the emphasis in sources of official archives, local councillors and chiefs, religious leaders and ex-guerrillas makes it equally, if not predominantly, a political history. Despite this, perhaps inevitable, focus the authors pay significant attention to issues such as agricultural policy, the role of chiefs and community development in both the colonial and the post-colonial periods. The imagery of the 'dark forests' of the subtitle brings the dimension of landscape and geography to the study but is not consistently balanced against the dominant political focus.

Despite this, it is a surprisingly cohesive work by three potentially disparate scholars—divided by age, gender and training—yet linked by their expertise. It brings two prominent young scholars into a productive relationship with Ranger, whose earlier work is both built upon and criticised. Significantly, in the light of debates over Ranger's earlier work, it will doubtless be noted that many of the sources are, once again, highly placed and partisan to the conflicts concerning which they are cited. This is, however, a strength as much as a weakness, in providing unparalleled first-hand accounts of hitherto understudied events.

Speaking to the many current debates about the liberation war—nationalism, forced removal, colonial policy, conservation and development—this book is a much anticipated contribution to Zimbabwean studies and will, it is to be hoped, stimulate further research in all these fields.

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SUSAN NEWTON-KING, *Masters and Servants on the Cape Eastern Frontier, 1760–1803*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 335 pp., £45.00, ISBN 0 521 48153 8.

This book is the result of extensive reworking, over many years, of a doctoral dissertation. Susan Newton-King's first published article on the Cape, a seminal one on labour relations in the early nineteenth century, appeared in 1980, and in 1981 she co-authored an account of the Khoekhoe rebellion of 1799–1802. She does not incorporate her previous work in her long-awaited book, but deals with new themes in the late eighteenth-century history of the Graaff Reinet district. She wishes to argue that relations on the frontier between the intrusive white farmers (*veeboeren*) and the indigenous Khoe and San were not as open and fluid as previous historians—most notably Martin Legassick and Hermann Giliomee—suggested they were. Rather she claims that those relations were characterised by 'unrelenting and provocative harshness', approximating to the harsh regime of slavery in place in the western Cape. What she calls the central 'riddle' of her book (p. 43)—and her lively and enquiring mind conjures up many lesser 'riddles' as she proceeds—is why such was the case.

Much of the book is taken up with her attempt to answer this question. She identifies three main reasons. The first is the nature of the conflict between the whites and the San, and sections of three of her chapters concern the 'Bushmen wars', which the colonists fought against the San from 1771 into the 1790s, and

their consequences. The social relations that emerged from these wars, she argues, resembled those of slavery rather than of patron and client (p. 117). Her second reason relates to the economic ties between the frontier farmers and the colony, and social divisions within the *veeboeren*: while she agrees with the position taken decades ago by S. D. Neumark that the frontiersmen were involved with the market and sensitive to market fluctuations, she spends many pages arguing that they were not a homogeneous group: from a detailed study of deceased estates, illustrated by a set of graphs, she shows that many of them were poor, though in her postscript she remains somewhat puzzled as to why poor people should have employed indigenous people and treated them as *de facto* slaves. The third set of reasons, she suggests, is ideological, but she has not mined the Dutch Reformed Church archives as she has the other documentary sources for her period and area, and religion on the frontier is omitted from her analysis. (She does not even cite a key work by Maurice Boucher on the theme.) She ends by saying that non-material reasons for what happened in Graaff Reinet must be left to 'a younger and more playful historian'.

Her book, then, despite its long gestation, remains incomplete. A mixture of interesting arguments and detailed empirical analysis, it is very definitely for the specialist. Her main concern, the relationship between masters and servants, often gets lost as she goes down byways and into great detail. Though she expresses the hope at the beginning that she has allowed space for 'other voices', few are in fact heard. A more general account of the history of the region may yet suggest that white-black relations were not always as harsh as she claims they were. As her focus is on the hunter-gatherers and Khoekhoe pastoralists, she devotes little attention to the Xhosa in the region, whose presence in the last decades of the century was surely more significant than she sometimes suggests. But her book now joins a select list of major works on the early Cape frontier.

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MIKAEL PARKVALL, *Out of Africa: African influences in Atlantic creoles*. London: Battlebridge, 2000, 188 pp., £15.00, ISBN 1903292 050.

Around trading forts in West Africa and on plantations in and around the Caribbean new, so-called creole, languages developed among local or transplanted Africans. These creole languages came into being between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. There are today more than forty documented creole languages, spoken on both sides of the Atlantic. Their vocabularies obviously go back to the colonial languages, English, French, Portuguese, Dutch and Spanish. The grammatical systems, however, are hugely different from these European languages. The question of how many of these non-European features go back to the African languages spoken by the creators of these languages has been debated by linguists for over a century.

Mikael Parkvall's study may not provide the final answer, but it is undoubtedly the best study of the question of African features in creole languages. Earlier studies were plagued by chance comparisons with arbitrary African languages, silly reconstructions of historical events and other methodological and epistemological shortcomings. Parkvall used more than 800 grammatical, lexical and historical sources for his study, which he defended as a dissertation at the University of Stockholm. In its breadth of