

Book Reviews and Notices

THE DUST ROSE LIKE SMOKE: THE SUBJUGATION OF THE ZULU AND THE SIOUX

by JAMES O. GUMP

Lincoln & London, University of Nebraska Press, 1994, xii + 178 pp. illus. maps, US \$25,00 (hard cover)

I must admit to a personal bias ; I like the genre of comparative histories, and *The dust rose like smoke* is good, well-written, comparative history, so I read this new work with considerable enjoyment and interest. The University of Nebraska Press has produced some fine histories of the conquest of the American West and the destruction of the Native American societies by the US Army and rapacious white settlers and developers. Given the long-standing interest on the part of many *aficionados* of the Battle of Little Big Horn in the Battle of Isandlwana, a comparative study of the two conflicts under the imprint of this press is most welcome.

Gump begins with a vivid parallel account of the battles of Little Big Horn in 1876 and Isandlwana in 1879. His opening chapter sets the pre-battle scenes in the *Native American and Zulu* camps in the most evocative way and traces the horror and drama of the two actions in a gripping narrative. *The dust rises like smoke* is not, however, simply a comparative history of two military campaigns; it is a much more textured work. The campaigns of 1876 against the Sioux and of 1879 against the Zulu are not seen in isolation, but in the broad context of worldwide western imperialism and tenacious, but ambiguous and adaptive, indigenous resistance. The thrust of the book is American, and the South African events serve more to illuminate the processes of conquest and incorporation on the Great Plains of the West. Gump declares that a 'major purpose' of the study is to 'issue another challenge to American "exceptionalism"' (p.2). The sections on the Anglo-Zulu War should be assessed in this light.

The role of indigenous collaborators with imperialism, such as Mpande and the Oglala chief, Red Cloud, is discussed with the point being made that collaboration took place within the context of a variety of economic and political constraints, but that it was almost always bounded by a clear perception of the need to protect the indigenous group's interests. The 'other side of the collaborating equation', the role of the men on the spot in both situations, is examined, and the events leading to war are discussed within the context of expanding capitalist enterprise in the Sioux territory (prospecting, expansion of railways, etc.) and in southern Africa (diamonds, discovery of gold, etc.)

The post-conquest fate of the Sioux and the Zulu is well contrasted. The

Zulu became a source of cheap labour, crucial for the development of white South African agriculture, mines and industry, while the Sioux were politically and economically marginalised. Gump attributes these differing results to an inherent logic in British imperial policy, and to incoherent and contradictory Indian politics in America. He concludes with a perceptive analysis of the development of the stereotypes of the Sioux and the Zulu in the media, and in the minds of the contemporary American and British public. He takes the story forward in popular culture to the production of the romanticised images of the Zulu and the Sioux in films such as *Dances with wolves* and *Zulu*. The rise of modern political movements — the American Indian Movement (AIM) and Inkatha — are lightly discussed. Given the recent changes in South Africa, I would like to have read a more thorough analysis of the role of Inkatha in modern politics, but perhaps Gump felt that this was too sensitive an issue to do justice to.

The chief weaknesses in *The dust rose like smoke* of which I am aware (not being a specialist in American history), stem from an inadequate use of recent South African and British literature on the Anglo-Zulu War. There is hardly a post-1988 text cited in Gump's list of references (the rare exceptions deal with texts on the Mfecane and not with the Anglo-Zulu War). This means that the vast output of research by writers and scholars such as Ian Knight, John Laband, Jeff Mathews and Paul Thompson is virtually ignored. Only works such as the Laband and Thompson's *Field Guide* (1979 ed. — cited in endnotes, but omitted from the bibliography) and an early research paper by Laband are cited. As Gump has not consulted Laband's major work *Kingdom in crisis* (1992) his treatment of the Zulu state and its reactions to the war is seriously outdated. The most glaring error is Gump's treatment of the battle of Isandlwana (pp. 22–23). He relies heavily on Donald Morris's classic and now elderly work, *The washing of the spears*, and repeats the outdated and subsequently disproved myths of the Natal Native Contingent being positioned in the angle of the British line and breaking, thus allowing the British regulars to be enveloped, plus the hoary old saga of the ammunition boxes. Consultation of Mathews' and Thompson's various academic works, and Ian Knight's popular works, would have prevented these really serious lapses.

It is a great pity that these errors have crept into an otherwise thought-provoking and well-written book. The reason for this may be that the sections on the battle of Isandlwana and the Anglo-Zulu War generally, together with the 1976 campaign against the Sioux, were originally researched for an article 'The subjugation of the Zulus and the Sioux: a comparative study' which Gump published in the *Western Historical Quarterly* in January 1988.

The dust rose like smoke is an interesting study in a direction which needs further exploration. Isandlwana and Little Big Horn are obvious features to be discussed in comparative history, but Gump has done well to draw attention to the general process of aggressive imperial expansion in the late 19th century and to place the campaigns against the Sioux and the Zulu in their economic and ideological contexts within this worldwide phenomenon.

GRAHAM DOMINY

MY CHIEF AND I OR SIX MONTHS IN NATAL AFTER THE LANGALIBALELE OUTBREAK (originally published under the pseudonym **ATHERTON WYLDE**) and **FIVE YEARS LATER**, a sequel, by **FRANCES COLENZO** edited and introduced by **M. J. DAYMOND** Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1994. 220 pp. R47,95.

Readers of varying interests will be grateful for the publication of a work so well edited and introduced, and so reasonably priced. It will appeal to those interested in the history of Natal, the records of the Colenso family, the history of racial attitudes in southern Africa, the role of women and the relations between Britain and a distant colony in the nineteenth century.

The first work was written in 1874 but not published until 1880 when a note on Isandlwana was included. The second work is dated 1882; it is not clear that this work was in fact published. Both were written under the male pseudonym which Frances Ellen used when she wrote specifically about Anthony William Durnford. In the first her emphasis is on Durnford's work with the 'Putini' who were used as a labour contingent to block passes across the Drakensberg in the wake of the Bushman's River Pass fiasco where three white colonists had been killed. The interpolation of a retrospective narrative account turns attention to Durnford's conduct during the earlier fracas for which white public opinion held him responsible. The Note, i.e. newspaper extract (probably written by F.R. Statham), gives an account of what was found when Isandlwana was revisited in May 1879 from which something of the course of the battle and of Durnford's conduct could be reconstructed. The sequel, *Five Years Later*, defends Durnford's actions at Isandlwana. In her own very skilled and successful Introduction M.J. Daymond explains with sympathy and insight the historical context and something of the dilemmas which confronted Frances Ellen when, as a young woman (b.1849) she wrote these words.

It is not easy to do justice to Frances Ellen Colenso. She enthralled her readers. She delights by her word pictures in which she communicates her own pleasure in what was beautiful and commentworthy, or even quirky and comic, about the people, places and events she depicts. But it is well known that Frances Ellen loved a man she could not marry, grieved over his death at Isandlwana and, while sharing all the Colenso family cares and contentions, dedicated much of her intellectual and emotional strength in the remaining years of her life to redeeming his reputation from undeserved dishonour. One is saddened — even resentful — that so articulate, talented and lovely a woman suffered so much. M. J. Daymond has a high regard for her subject. Perceptive, sensitive and succinct, she dissolves the uneasy embarrassment sometimes experienced in reading the fulsome language in which Frances Ellen (alias Atherton Wylde) expressed her devotion to a man from whom, both as herself in real life, and as Atherton Wylde in the fictionalised depiction, she was doomed to be separated.

If a longer introduction had been possible, M. J. Daymond might well have reminded her readers that Frances Ellen was very beautiful and that she longed to excel as an artist. Clearly, as a girl in England, she responded to the ideas about art and the ideals about behaviour that were woven into the education at Winnington Hall where John Ruskin taught drawing. She accepted the chivalric code which the pre-Raphaelite movement did much to encourage. She was the friend of Edward and Georgiana Burne-Jones. In fact, she was always much more 'England-oriented' than the other Colenso women. Daymond's

contention that after 1880, which is seen as a turning point, the Colensos despaired of Britain is open to challenge, especially in regard to Frances Ellen. She visited England more frequently than her mother or Harriette and, after the Bishopstowe fire, was eager that they should all abandon Natal to live in England. Unlike Harriette, Frances Ellen remained strongly anti-Boer in her views. When she died in 1887, she was deeply disappointed but she remained loyal to, though not uncritical of, Britain and British policies.

Perhaps anticipating criticism from those less sensitive to changing historical contexts and values, Daymond draws attention to what she considers blind spots in Frances Ellen. She did not criticise Durnford for putting ex-slaves into uniforms (ought she to have done?) nor does she protest at the flogging inflicted on a disobedient and destructive wagon driver. (Flogging was abolished in the British army in peace-time in 1868). If such pre-emptive comments are in order, she might have noted that, much as the Colensos loved animals, Frances Ellen shows no distress about keeping baboons in chains or attempting, however humanely, to capture wild dogs.

The works published in this volume were written at a relatively secure period of Frances Ellen's life. True, there was always the anguish of non-fulfilment in her love for Durnford. True, too, her grief at his death drained joy from her life. But in the subsequent years there were more occasions for grief and sadness, especially over the death of her father and the loss of her home in the Bishopstowe fire. Afflicted with consumption since 1878, she was then too frail to live permanently in the dilapidated cottage that housed her mother and sister. There were other reasons for sadness, among them estrangement from friends. As death approached, Frances Ellen was a very brave but essentially a very lonely woman. She needed, at least, a staunch ally in her efforts for Durnford's reputation but did not find one. Even Edward Durnford, alleging the impatience and animus of his wife, drew back from their partnership, for the Durnfords appear to have decided to go no further in the vindication of Anthony Durnford.

As the editor of relatively early works, M.J. Daymond had no call to emphasise the brave and many-sided sadness of Frances Ellen's last years, but it is fair comment that the younger Colenso sister has experienced a paradoxical fate. She is remembered mainly as a committed controversialist, fearless in the disputations in which she engaged; but her temperament and her gifts as a writer could well have been used more richly in other fields of creative work than those into which circumstances impelled her. There was promise in her early stories and, if her talents had been given free rein, she might have grown in confidence to become a novelist of significance, probing individual human relationships in a manageable context of social mores. Southern Africa was too sombre a milieu for this to be possible. A brooding personality and talent, like that of Olive Schreiner, might thrive in such a context; but it did not suit Frances Ellen. We do not know what she might have achieved if she could have written always with delight, as she might have done had she enjoyed hope, love, health and, perhaps a measure of wealth. As it was, she ended an ill-rewarded literary career as a dutiful and committed polemicist using the power of her pen to vindicate not only Durnford but the Zulu cause. Nevertheless, she knew that there was 'a might have been'.

The letter in which Frances Ellen used this phrase was written in 1885, probably from Durban, where she frequently stayed with her brother Robert; certainly not from England for Frances Ellen was in Natal between 1881–1886. It may be, incidentally, that the 'unworthy life' whose continuance she deplored, referred to Durnford's widow, rather than herself.

Printing slips occur on one or two pages where, for example, 'than' appears as 'that' but these are hardly noticeable. One or two — but only one or two — historical judgments are open to question. The responsible government movement was very weak in Natal in the 1870s while, as Daymond herself indicates at a later point, most scholars today (as Colenso did in his day) attribute the Anglo-Zulu war not to Natal expansion but to an imperial initiative for confederation which, with Theophilus Shepstone and Bartle Frere as the local agents, went hopelessly awry.

Daymond pauses briefly to consider the question of why Frances Ellen should have written of Durnford in 1874 when he was responsible for the work of the 'Putini' captives in blocking passes; but the answer is simple. Authors must write of what they know, and this was the episode in Durnford's professional life that Frances Ellen had the best chance of knowing. She would have learnt much from Frank Lyell, as Daymond points out, for Lyell not only accompanied Durnford but lived at Bishopstowe and there were eager conversations. Perhaps she used Durnford's letters to her father, but she would not have had access to his letters to his mother until she visited Britain from 1879 to 1881.

Criticisms are minor. Both Durnford and Francis Ellen Colenso have been too easily dismissed, the one as 'unfortunate' and 'misguided', the other as 'fanatic' in her devoted pursuit of information (deemed irrelevant by her critics) in her vain effort to vindicate the reputation of the man she loved. M.J. Daymond's highly perceptive and gracefully fluent discussion of these works and their author will encourage a more just and generous appreciation of both Frances Ellen Colenso and Anthony William Durnford.

B. M. NICHOLLS

WILHELM POSSELT: A PIONEER MISSIONARY AMONG THE XHOSA AND ZULU AND THE FIRST PASTOR OF NEW GERMANY, NATAL: HIS OWN REMINISCENCES

translated and edited by SIGHART BOURQUIN

Westville, Bergtheil Museum, Municipality of Westville, 1994, viii + 152 pp. illus., R100,00 (hardcover, signed and numbered) R39,00 (paperback).

This is a modern translation from German into English of the reminiscences of the remarkable Lutheran missionary Wilhelm Posselt, first pastor at New Germany in the infant colony of Natal. They were originally published, in Gothic script, in 1887 and reprinted in 1891. 'SB' Bourquin must be congratulated on this meticulously translated and edited work and for making these fascinating insights into mid-nineteenth Natal available to those modern readers who do not understand German. The Bergtheil Museum and the Westville Municipality also deserve credit for arranging and sponsoring the publication of this book.

Wilhelm Posselt wrote his original memoirs in the religious idiom of the period and this flavour has been faithfully maintained in Bourquin's translation. Although Posselt clearly intended his reminiscences as inspirational reading for a Lutheran audience in Germany, he nevertheless provided valuable information on life in the eastern Cape and Natal between the 1840s and the 1860s. There are also numerous cameos of life in the New Germany

area. Perhaps the most useful part of the book, however, is Posselt's account of the traditions and customs of the Zulu people among whom he laboured, even though these were filtered through his preconceptions and stern religious views.

GRAHAM DOMINY

ALONE AMONG THE ZULUS: THE NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY THROUGH THE ZULU COUNTRY, SOUTH AFRICA

by CATHERINE BARTER

edited by PATRICIA L. MERRETT

Durban, Killie Campbell Africana Library and Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1995. 106 pp. introduction, index, illus., paperback, R47,95.

The eighth Killie Campbell reprint from the University of Natal Press is a slim, attractive volume which makes available again Catherine Barter's account of her journey from Pietermaritzburg to the independent Zulu kingdom in 1855.

Readers of early Natal and Zulu history will be familiar with Charles Barter's *The Dorp and the Veld* (London, 1852). Here is his sister's spirited tale of her adventure when she accompanied him to the Zulu country on an elephant hunting trip. While she waited at a Norwegian mission station — and did some cattle trading on his behalf — news came that he and his party were seriously ill with fever. She and her driver set out, through lion country, on a rescue mission to the Phongola River. This lone British Victorian woman managed the frightening hazards of unfamiliar Africa with steely determination and natural aplomb. Equally courageous was the acceptance of her by the Zulu people on whose ministrations she depended. She speculates that, for some, she could have been the first white woman they had seen. Throughout the long journey back to Durban and on to Pietermaritzburg her brother hovered between life and death. He recovered and her account ends simply: 'I have no more to say, except that I would thankfully go through all the trial again for such a blessed ending.'

In case it appears that her role was purely supportive, it should be hastily observed that *Alone Among the Zulus* is essentially Catherine Barter's story. Her own use of the pseudonym 'By a Plain Woman' should not be misconstrued as a lack of confidence. Her achievement fits comfortably into the literature of early women travellers, a genre which is receiving increasing attention. The recent publication of Jane Robinson's *Wayward Women: A Guide to Women Travellers* (O.U.P., 1990) and *Unsuitable Ladies: An Anthology of Women Travellers* (O.U.P., 1994) is evidence of the work being done to restore women to their rightful place in the world of bravery, resilience, adventure and discovery. Catherine Barter could well have been included. Her observations of Zulu life, terrain, fauna, flora, foodstuffs and customs add a richly detailed and personal dimension to our knowledge of mid-nineteenth century Zululand.

Alone Among the Zulus is greatly enhanced in this re-issue by Patricia Merrett's comprehensive introduction and meticulous editorial work. She has placed it in the context of contemporary scholarship in women's studies, and she has gone all out to deal with the sensitivity of Victorian attitudes both towards women and towards indigenous peoples. In fact, she has gone beyond

the call of duty in this respect and could, if anything, have eased up on explanatory footnotes. Nevertheless, terms such as 'savage', 'uncivilised', 'degrading', 'unattractive', if left unqualified in colonial literatures, could make works of this kind unpublishable, and the editor is to be commended for her caution. She has succeeded in bringing to light yet another gem in the women's literature of Natal and Zululand.

SYLVIA VIETZEN

INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS: THE INDIAN WORKING CLASS OF DURBAN 1910–1990

by Bill Freund

Portsmouth, Heinemann; Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press; London, James Curry, 1995. (Series Social History of America). 160 pp., illus., maps. R89,95 (boards), R43,95 (paper).

This book sets out to look at economic history from below, concentrating on the descendants of Indian indentured workers living in Durban and its surrounding areas. It ignores 'the better-known scions of the merchant class' who came to Natal or to the Transvaal as 'passenger' Indians, paying their own fares. It also ignores the small but significant group of white-collar and professional people who arrived from India, often via Mauritius, and who formed the original élite.

Freund poses a number of questions and then sets out to answer them. Why did the Indian peasantry rise and decline like the African peasantry? What was the economic logic of the Indian family and to what extent to new interests in the politics and economics of gender help us to understand that logic? Why did the Indian workers become intensely militant and why did this militancy subside? And what can the study of the Indian working class tell us about the changing nature of South African capitalism? His answers are to be found in the six chapters that follow and which deal with aspects of working class life from 1860 to 1990. Freund's work is essentially an analytical study, not based on original documents or official records but on the published work of scholars, including Freund himself, complemented with oral testimony. The author decided to keep this book short and indeed it has been compressed in every way but particularly in the uncomfortably small print and the use of asterisks to separate sections, rather than the usual branching text. The final result consists of 133 pages, of which the preface takes up five and the text 91 pages. It is followed by endnotes and a bibliography.

The original objective in bringing indentured workers from India to Natal was to supply labour for the coastal estates, most of which were engaged at this time in mixed farming. Only later did the sugar estates take the lion's share of indentured workers and by this time they were also used on the inland farms. It follows then that the agents in India set out to recruit manual labourers, judging their experience from the calluses on the palms of their hands. When agricultural conditions in India were good and recruiting slow, agents accepted artisans of various kinds as well as those engaged in crafts such as basket making, weaving, jewellery and pottery making, together with the odd entertainer, including jugglers. Professional beggars were also accepted in bad times. The caste lists, analysed from the recently completed computerization of all the shipping lists, include clerks, shopkeepers, temple servants, brahmins

and those from the military castes who certainly did not consider themselves working class. Castes, in fact, covered the whole range from lowest to highest with the largest number, as might be expected, in the agricultural and lower castes. During the indenture period the Protector of Indians and his staff seem to have been vague about the caste system and its significance, and much of the antipathy felt towards sirdars on the estates was due to the fact that they were frequently men from the lower castes who were now in the position to give orders to, and even punish, their caste superiors.

Classification of the ex-indentured or free Indians into classes is not straightforward. Once free of indenture most of the artisans became self-employed while others took up posts on the Natal Government Railways or the coal mines. Many of the self-employed, such as the Singh brothers who became well known blacksmiths and wagon makers, succeeded in achieving both a reputation as artisans or craftsmen and a reasonable standard of living. A number of artisans and many of the shopkeepers tried their luck on the diamond fields after 1870, with mixed success.

The Indian labourer with an agricultural background desired nothing more than the ownership of a plot of land, preferably in India; but if this was beyond his capacity, then in Natal. The original 6 445 indentured Indians who arrived between 1860 and 1866 were promised land in lieu of a return passage, and although this offer was rapidly withdrawn and the law changed, an estimated 83 men were granted land at Braemar. Others managed to save enough to buy a plot, usually on or near the banks of a river, but the majority had to be satisfied with renting land which they worked with the help of their extended families. The reports on the great flood of 1905 reveal the extent of the losses suffered by the small peasant farmers whose homes, goods and livestock were lost when the rivers came down in flood. Unable to recoup these losses they were forced to reindenture to stay alive. Those who had acquired land further inland, and particularly in the cottonlands near Verulam, were unaffected by floods but suffered from drought and low prices and many left the land to seek wage labour in the towns or on white-owned farms.

It was not until the 1920s and 1930s that the Indian community in Natal, those now free of indenture (a few ere still under indenture until the early 1930s) or their colonial-born descendants, reached an economic nadir. Burrows, Sykes and others described the poverty and squalor in which many families were forced to live. The serious drought which hit South Africa in 1928, continuing until 1933, was followed in 1929 by the world economic depression and widespread unemployment. With African steadily replacing Indians on the sugar estates and whites receiving priority in the open market, the Indian workers laboured under a severe disadvantage. Most of the trades requiring apprenticeship were closed to them and not until South Africa, and particularly Natal, began to be industrialized in the late 1930s, with secondary industry accelerating during and after the Second World War, did the Indian worker have a chance to enter the labour market on more or less equal terms. And by then the years of poverty and the indifference of government and private sector to their plight had embittered many Indians of the working class, making them an easy target for militant trade unionists.

One of the difficulties with an analytical study of this kind is that it assumes that the reader has some knowledge of the subject matter and so generalizations are made on aspects of Indian social life such as family structure and religious practices without considering the many exceptions. For example, Freund refers to 'the reconstitution of Indian working-class family life' in

Natal; yet for many it had existed from the earliest years. An analysis of the Shipping Lists shows that there were numerous family groups who indentured together, bringing their children, siblings and an elderly relative with them. The official policy was to send the whole family to the same employer and although conditions, particularly housing, were primitive, they were allowed to stay together throughout the indenture period. And apart from these families, the records show that a considerable number already had relatives of some kind in Natal, joining them on arrival by serving the same employer, or immediately after the completion of indenture. In the case of Christian families this is comparatively easy to demonstrate. The first ships brought a disproportionate number of Christians to Natal, including Catholics and Syrian Christians, and among them were complete family groups. The Telegu-speaking Baptists who arrived in considerable numbers from the American and Canadian Baptist missions between 1900 and 1911 brought their entire families and their pastor, having earlier arranged to be allocated to the same employer. The descendants of most of these people are still living on, or in the vicinity of, the Kearsney Estates to which they were originally sent. The pattern of family life and particularly the extended family system was thus well established among Christian Indians from early times. The same is probably true of many Muslims but this is difficult for an outsider to investigate since each mosque is responsible for its own records and access is generally refused, if indeed the records still exist.

Despite these reservations about the validity of some of the generalizations, this is a useful book which adds to the knowledge of urban Indian workers and their living conditions. A more extensive study of this kind, enriched by the addition of the new information at present being extracted from the computer data base, should be possible in the next year or so and would be valuable indeed.

J. B. BRAIN

THE SOUTH AFRICAN GANDHI: AN ABSTRACT OF THE SPEECHES AND WRITINGS OF M. K. GANDHI 1893–1914

edited by FATIMA MEER

Durban and Pietermaritzburg, Madiba Publishers and Gandhi Memorial Committee, 1995, 1248 pp.x illus.

This is a significant book and was launched in early September in Durban with due fanfare in the presence of President Nelson Mandela and Mrs Sonia Gandhi, widow of the late Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi. It had its origins in the Gandhi Festival of 1993 which commemorated the eviction of Mohandas Gandhi from a first class compartment on a train at Pietermaritzburg station. The Gandhi Memorial Committee organised a number of events including a conference and the unveiling of a statue of the Mahatma in Church Street, Pietermaritzburg. A book of Gandhiana was also envisaged and it has now finally appeared, thanks to the sponsorship of the committee and the scholarship of the Institute of Black Research at the University of Natal in Durban.

Carefully edited by Fatima Meer it is a compilation of Gandhi's writings, and related documents, during his years in South Africa from 1893 to 1914.

Meer acknowledges that the documents are drawn from the first twelve volumes of *The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi*, published by the Government of India in over a hundred volumes beginning in 1956. Although this edition therefore rests on previously edited foundations, it is nevertheless an impressive, almost monumental, work of scholarship.

The intellectual effort put into this work came in the selection and arrangement of documents from the massive and relatively inaccessible *Collected works* published in India. The documents are arranged in sections with an introductory note to each section by a prominent scholar or political figure. This unusual arrangement allows for the development of a dialogue with the documents, a dialogue between past and present. Many of the research gems are produced in the sections introduced by Meer and by well known Gandhian scholar Hassim Seedat, but public interest will focus on those sections introduced by prominent public figures. Of these the most interesting, and probably the most important, is President Nelson Mandela's section comparing gaol conditions in Gandhi's time and his own. Deputy President F.W. de Klerk also contributes a short introduction to the section on 'Negotiation', but it is not as deep and reflective as Mandela's. De Klerk includes an acknowledgement of the wrongs of apartheid, but pleads pressure of work for not producing an analysis of Gandhi's writings on negotiation. Mandela clearly identifies closely with Gandhi at an ideological and a human level and his piece is therefore all the more poignant. Other public contributors include Mrs Winnie Mandela, who introduced the section of writings on women. Mrs Mandela's brief contribution is characteristically forthright and well argued and, as with the president's contribution, draws on her own experience.

All in all, this is a technically well produced book — and priced accordingly — which re-focuses attention on the source material on the young Gandhi who cut his teeth combating rising racism in this country before leaving to become a great world figure. Above all it is a work of our times and the interventions of important figures in current national life and in the academic world makes this a vibrant and important work that provides a new context for the study of Mahatma Gandhi.

GRAHAM DOMINY

BETRAYED TRUST: AFRICANS AND THE STATE IN COLONIAL NATAL

by JOHN LAMBERT

Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1995, 232 pp. paperback, R59–99.

[NB – This review is a workshopped critique presented at a seminar of History MA students at the University of Natal, Durban]

When we first heard of the publication of *Betrayed Trust: Africans and the State in Colonial Natal* we were understandably excited since we are currently researching the Umnini Tribal Trust for our Masters in history at the University of Natal, Durban, and relationships between Africans in the Natal colony and white settlers form a background to our own work. Some of the issues we are looking at include the role of the chiefs, the application of the concept of the

'trust' in a range of political settings — one of which is colonial Natal — and land rights in KwaZulu-Natal.

The publisher heralds the book as 'the first close scholarly examination of African homestead society in Natal during the colonial period'. Clearly it is based on his doctoral dissertation completed in 1986. Since Dr Lambert wrote his PhD, a decade of exciting historiography on the colonial encounter has been published. The work of Peires on Xhosa society as well as Crais and the work of Harries on southern Mozambique have provided excellent regional comparisons. For colonial Natal, Hamilton's recent thesis on Shaka, Wright's dissertation on the dynamics of the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region, as well as the post-1986 work of such scholars as Guy on homestead production, have all elaborated on the late 1970s and early 1980s work of Hedges and others. Perhaps the most provocative work on the impact of early colonialism and African responses has been that of Jean and John Comaroff. These historical anthropologists have focused on the Tswana case as a way to explore questions of cosmology, ideology, consciousness, the conversation between missionaries and African communities, and the complexity of analyzing not only the material, but also the cultural impact of colonial rule. It is therefore surprising that Lambert's book does not take account of the wealth of this new historiography.

'Trust', it would seem, is a central theme of Lambert's book. An analysis of 'trust' and its betrayal in colonial Natal would surely involve an engaged debate or argument about persuasion, hegemony and the degree of mutual interest and reciprocity between colonial officials and settlers and Africans in the colony. However, our efforts to unearth the rationale behind the title were in vain. At the end of the book one still has these questions hanging and unanswered: Why did Lambert chose the phrase 'Betrayed Trust'? Who trusted whom? Who betrayed whom? Lambert makes an isolated reference which provides a hint of the larger unanswered issue as promised in the title:

. . . a crucial turning-point in African attitudes to the colonial administration and to Shepstone personally. His office was inundated with complaints and accusations of betrayal: 'We thought you belonged to us but you have gone over entirely to your cousins and abandoned us. You have the power of persuading words, and you use that power in the interests of your relatives to ruin us. (p.56)

According to this passage, one interpretation could be that the indigenous people (Africans) trusted colonial administrators and Theophilus Shepstone in particular, and were betrayed by them. For example, in his factual exposition, Lambert makes much of the introduction of new marriage regulations in 1869 (which legalised divorce and undermined traditional social values), and this is indeed a crucial point. A detailed analysis of the transformation of marriage legislation and practice and the effects of this on relations between colonial administrators and gender relations between African men and women would indeed provide a central insight into the heart of homestead life itself. Although Lambert even ends the book with this theme, he does not elaborate. His closing quotation is ripe with possibility:

You make a law; we obey it. Again you make a law and we accept and obey it. Over and over again you promulgate fresh laws and we abide by them cheerfully, and this sort of thing has continued until we have

become old and grey headed, and not even now, advanced in years as we are, do we know the meaning of your policy. We cut away the wild forests for sugar plantations and towns; we dig your roads. When will this digging of roads cease? We are made to live on farms and pay rent, and are imprisoned if we cannot pay. You chase our wives out of our homes by facilitating divorce. How is it you come to treat us thus, seeing we are your people? Where is that government or king that owns no land? Why are individuals able to oust government subjects from the soil? Why are we put to trouble in respect to farms, with the numerous regulations in connection therewith . . . (p.189)

Once again it seems to us Lambert has drawn together wonderful material from the primary sources but has not made the fullest use of it.

Despite these criticisms this book will be of great use to scholars of Natal and South African history. The book has eleven chapters each of which is intended to be self-contained. This will allow interested readers to follow particular themes, and scholars such as ourselves will benefit from, and pursue his references, in our own work. The chapter delineation, however, is both a strength and weakness of the book.

Betrayed Trust will be consulted by persons hoping to obtain a clearer understanding of Natal history. The themes, ranging from land issues to questions of chiefship, are themselves of topical interest and are sufficiently user-friendly for quick and easy reference. As mentioned above, Lambert provides an extensive survey of primary sources and they will provide direction to generations of scholars.

However, for academic and, particularly, postgraduate studies, the book is disappointing. One loses track of the debate because when one tries to concentrate on a certain theme, the chapter ends abruptly and totally new and different idea is introduced. Then, at the end of the book, instead of a conclusion, the chapter 'Happy are those who are dead' jolts us into the realisation that, despite the abundance of empirical material, Lambert has failed to discuss the central argument of the 'trust'.

Perhaps it is most discouraging to note that Lambert fails to discuss fundamental topical issues which are alluded to but never really tackled. For example the nature of the colonial state is dismissed in a sweeping statement which requires an analysis of its own:

. . . the homestead economy now had to be adapted to meet the needs of a new ruling elite, one which was urban based and part of an imperialist, capitalist community. (p.43)

As students who are being increasingly exposed to the latest developments in KwaZulu-Natal history and historiography, we were disappointed that *Betrayed Trust* has missed the opportunity to engage fully in what could have been Natal's answer to the Comaroffs. We hope that scholars of Natal such as ourselves and others will take up the challenge of the important issues raised by Lambert in our efforts to understand the way that the colonial past of Natal continues to shape debates and struggles in contemporary KwaZulu-Natal.

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