included his childhood in the home of a farm labourer, Catholic mission-school education, teacher training at Adams College and teaching in Free State where he first encountered Afrikaner nationalism. He completed three degrees through correspondence and served legal articles in Johannesburg. Here he first made contact with organized African politics. As an activist, he made a signal contribution in developing a philosophical base for his generation's challenge to the genteel authority of the sedentary elders who had presided over the ANC's declining fortunes since the First World War.

Lembeke's political ideas were premised on his conviction that each nation has its own peculiar unique character and that national communities were subject to Darwin's eternal law of variations. In such a social universe, no nation could find common philosophical ground with another. Africans, continentally, formed a single nation, reflecting a uniform cultural predisposition derived from a spirit of the environment, in other words, a social consciousness formed by adaption to the geography of a particular region. Such adaptations in the case of the coloured races endowed their members with physical superiority.

Black South Africans were participants in a colonial national struggle that was indivisible from other struggles on the continent. Accordingly, they should avoid engagement with foreign ideologies such as communism, and they should recognise the political imperatives of racial solidarity as opposed to those arising from class oppression. Uncompromising ideological emphasis on African racial identity represented for Anton Lembeke the most effective antidote to a pathology of inferiority, a state of mind perpetuated by dependence on liberal or Marxist allies. Africans had no need for such external sources of inspiration; in their ultimate state of self-realization, they would be naturally socialist and democratic.

As an essayist, Lembeke's strengths derived from logical rigour and lucid expression. Even so, his arguments are neither attractive nor persuasive nor original. As his editors concede, much of his thought was influenced by the biological determinism that was such a staple ingredient in the scientific racism that accompanied totalitarian nationalism. If his ideas embodied his primary legacy, what is one to make of his flirtation with fascism? To Edgar and Msumza, this represents merely a blind alley, but if one subtracts from Lembeke's testament his racial essentialism there is not much of substance left. In the obituary tributes to Lembeke from his associates reprinted in this volume, there are many admiring references to his academic accomplishments and oratorial gifts. Significantly, though, none of his peers appeared at the time of his death especially interested in the content and implications of Lembeke's thinking, notwithstanding their claims that his language touched the inner chords of the African people. However, with the recent advent of another African renaissance, Anton Lembeke's texts may yet find a fresh assembly disciples. If so, they will have good reason to be grateful to the conscientious scholarship which has sustained the editing of this elegant volume.

University of the Witwatersrand  
TOM LODGE

HERERO 'SELF-PEASANTIZATION'


Schlettwein Publishing in association with the Basler Afrika Bibliographien, which rightly prides itself on being the only Namibia resource centre in Europe,
has begun publishing academic theses that deal with Namibian history. As a result, Namibian history, a thoroughly under-researched area, has become more accessible. The books are attractively produced and printed in South Africa, thus ensuring that they remain within the price range of people living in southern Africa.

Werner’s book was originally submitted as a doctoral thesis at the University of Cape Town in 1989 and quickly became a standard work, with increasingly illegible photocopies of it being passed around within an expanding community of historians dealing with central Namibia. It is now published with the addition of a limited index.

The study focuses on economic determinants in the reconstitution of Herero society in the aftermath of Imperial Germany’s occupation of Namibia. Werner seeks to apply the concept of ‘self-peasantization’ and looks at the manner in which Herero, who had been robbed of their land and cattle during the German occupation, reacquired cattle and re-established a society based on pastoralism and labour tenancy, firstly on squatted crown lands and later on newly established reserves.¹

The book takes us on the roller-coaster ride that is the Namibian economy in the interregnum and shows us the manner in which Herero society was influenced by economic developments, as well as the manner in which Herero sought to influence these economic developments. Werner neatly outlines how reacquiring cattle and land stimulated the development of Herero ethnic consciousness coupled with a conscious attempt to withdraw from colonial control. Developments that were reflected in a near universal rejection of missionary teachings, the reintroduction of male circumcision and the establishment of a country wide paramilitary self-help organization known to the colonial administration as the Truppenspieler (Soldier players).²

Extensive coverage is given to economic developments, particularly in settler agriculture, the sector of the economy that, having appropriated the former lands of the Herero, now directly competed with the Herero for their labour and their products. In reference to the reserves, into which the Herero were being forced, Chief Hoseah Kutako noted:

> In fact it is a desert where no human being ever lived before. It is a country only good for wild beasts. On top of that it is not healthy for the people or the cattle... You should rather bring the Europeans here and let us stay where we are... (p. 105).

Even so, Herero continued to compete with settler farmers, who unwilling to countenance the economic competition of the Herero, complained to the colonial administration of ‘syphilitic natives... permitted to handle dairy products’ (p. 191). Settler demands were equally shameless: ‘such butter, if permitted on the open market, should be graded fourth grade and marked or stamped “Native butter for cooking purposes only”’ (p. 192). Be that as it may, by 1946 Herero society was far from the cowed huddle of survivors which had come through the Herero-German war.

¹ Terence Ranger coined the term ‘self-peasantization’ to refer to the process by which Africans became peasants to resist having to become labourers for the settler market. Ranger developed this concept by enlarging upon the earlier work of Sharon Stichter: *Capitalism and African Responses*, cited in Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla War in Zimbabwe* (Harare, 1985), 26–31.
Thankfully, Werner’s attempt to cast his excellent work within the confines of ‘self-peasantization’, though dating the work, in no way obfuscates the dramatic and immensely readable history of a people reestablishing themselves. Unfortunately, Werner does have the tendency to hop around chronologically. A case in point is his discussion of the Truppenspieler in the period 1915–19, which is substantiated with a source that relates to 1940 (p. 82). The addition of photographs and additional maps would have improved the work, and their absence will be sorely missed, particularly for those new to Namibian history.

In conclusion, this book will continue to be a standard work for years to come, and is not to be missed by anyone dealing with Namibian or Southern African socio-economic history.

University of Cologne

JAN-BART GEWALD

NAMIBIAN POLITICAL HISTORY


Lauren Dobell’s book is an admirable analysis of the politics of SWAPO, Namibia’s major nationalist movement. Her primary thesis is that the SWAPO leadership in exile pursued its struggle for Namibian independence largely through diplomatic means. This strategy meant that the ideological alignment of the movement was pragmatic rather than broadly-based, reflecting its attempts to position itself to advantage among shifting global forces. Dobell argues that the leadership had no deep commitment to wealth redistribution after independence, and that its socialist rhetoric was generated by its relations with eastern bloc countries and so easily shed after the Cold War ended.

According to Dobell, SWAPO’s commitment to action on the diplomatic stage led to a neglect of other areas, chiefly the radicalism of younger SWAPO members joining the movement in Angola and political activism within Namibia itself. The authoritarian character of the movement inclined it to suppress real or imagined challenges to its leadership, such as the ‘rebellion’ of 1976, when PLAN fighters and newcomers to exile protested against internal disorganization and corruption. SWAPO partly admitted the charges and made some concessions to greater openness, but imprisoned many of the protesters. Nor did the movement in exile, concerned above all to exert control, accord much authority to the SWAPO leadership inside Namibia.

Moving on from the period of exile, the author outlines the settlement over Namibia and the transition to independence in 1989–90. In the final section of the book, she argues that, in the post-independence period, the SWAPO government has had to steer a course between the broad economic and political forces constraining its actions – the ‘politics of power’ – and the demands of SWAPO’s support base – the ‘politics of support’. The book concludes with an analysis of the SWAPO Congress of 1991, at which the leadership was challenged and on occasion defeated by the delegates, as ordinary members increasingly began to find a voice.

If aspects of Dobell’s story – particularly SWAPO’s reactions to dissent – are well-known, her book nevertheless adds significantly to our understanding of the political forces at play in Namibia’s recent past. It is based on documentation produced by SWAPO at key moments in its history, but the author – partly by means of numerous interviews – skilfully places these texts in their political context. SWAPO’s Struggle for Namibia is a refreshingly dispassionate account of