

support widows as to the actual destitution of those women. High costs during an illness preceding the death of their husbands, excessive debts, insolvency, or the failure of work may have compelled widows to seek maintenance arrangements with family or neighbours, and to ask for guild support or parish assistance. In general, however, the widows of artisans were more sheltered from poverty than the widows of the working poor were.

Lanza bases her findings on thorough archival research, but rarely gives an overview of exact figures. Her choice of a more impressionistic rather than quantitative approach does not stem from the lack of quantitative sources. For example, she discusses the “poor widows” register (p. 216), which recorded the poor relief donated to women over a period of no less than twenty-one years (1719–1740), with not only the names of each recipient but also the amount each woman received being given. This seemingly wonderful rich source calls for a systematic analysis. But Lanza merely mentions that “the vast majority” were widows, that 25 per cent had children, and that 315 of the 803 recipients in the years 1719 to 1727 had identifiable employment.

At points, a more quantitative approach would have made her argument more persuasive. Her claim that artisan widows seem to have remarried less frequently than the general population of widows, a claim substantiated by “evidence” that shows “a great many” independent widows running shops in eighteenth-century Paris (p. 182), is not very convincing unless we know how many widows failed to continue the trade of their late husbands and unless we can measure the relative impact of “a great many”. One could also argue that widows of guild masters remarried more frequently than widows from other social ranks, since, as Lanza states (pp. 174, 180), the need for labour and help in their businesses was an important incentive for widows to enter into a second marriage. Moreover, their flourishing enterprises and the possible access they provided to the guild made them highly attractive marriage candidates.

Many of Lanza’s findings concern the privileged and thus limited group of widows of master craftsmen. For women from other classes, widowhood will have been less a period of autonomy. Yet it is precisely her focus on artisan widows that enables her to draw conclusions that reach beyond this case study. Lanza has convincingly shown that widows formed a group apart and that women cannot be studied as a single bloc. The experience of widows of master craftsmen, for example, is inconsistent with the decline thesis, according to which the position of women in the labour market deteriorated during the early modern period. Gender roles were more diverse than is too often presumed, and interacted with other identities. The French Revolution changed the situation for artisan widows, as Lanza argues. Guilds were abolished and replaced by an ideology of liberal individualism that excluded women. *From Wives to Widows* has shown that the roles women could play in the *ancien régime* were not only “dictated to them by their gender” but also by their marital status, their status within the guild, and the roles they might come to play as household heads.

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PRICE, RICHARD. *Making Empire. Colonial Encounters and the Creation of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-Century Africa*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [etc.] 2008. xxix, 371 pp. Ill. Maps. £50.00; \$99.00. (Paper: £18.99; \$36.99); doi:10.1017/S0020859010000106

“It was impossible not to be hooked by the stories that I found in the Cape Archives”, remarks Richard Price in his engaging description of how *Making Empire* came to be written, “the book [...] has been the most enjoyable of all the books I have researched and

written" (p. xiii). An established authority in the field of British history, Price had, by his own admission, little knowledge of African or South African history. But, as he read his way into the specifics of nineteenth-century Eastern Cape frontier history, he became increasingly aware of the extent to which the subject had been under-rated within the context of imperial history as a whole. "*The Xhosa were the first people whom the British had to decide how to rule*", he explains on page 3, adding italics for emphasis. It is an astonishment he experiences again and again: on the short-lived Province of Queen Adelaide ("this remarkable episode is little known to imperial historiography") for example; or on Sir George Grey's policies ("imperial historiography has tended to ignore this nasty little episode [...]. It is appropriate to try to remedy this silence").

The central argument of *Making Empire* is that the "knowledge systems" by which the British eventually apprehended the Xhosa were not imported ready-made from the metropole but were the products of a long and difficult encounter in which Britain's arrogant yet fragile assumptions were shattered by the unexpected strength of Xhosa antagonism. Empire ultimately derived its rationale from Sir George Grey in whose hands imperialism appeared as a democratic force and the indigenous leaders as agents of tyranny (p. 235). Price calls this process "colonial reasoning", which he defines as "ways of thinking and reconciling cognitive contradictions that allow the imperialists to maintain their belief in their own supremacy and superiority" (p. 8). By such devious reasoning, the imperial mind projected onto its victims, its own deceptions and dishonesties (p. 253), and "the values of liberalism were reconciled with the darker arts that were also prevalent in empire" (p. 10).

The burden of Price's argument is carried by his narrative, and a very good narrative it is too. Price has read everything in print, as well as most of the official and missionary archives. He has mastered the personalia and the geography, and he seems equally at home with the Xhosa and the colonist. Much of the ground has become familiar, not least through recent major studies by Alan Lester (*Imperial Networks*, 2001) and Elizabeth Elbourne (*Blood Ground*, 2002), but Price has managed to arrive at his own distinctive line of argument. The book takes us through the missionary trajectory of initial optimism, via disappointment and frustration, to desire for revenge. It then turns to official thinking, concentrating on the unsuccessful efforts of Sir Harry Smith to govern the Xhosa through a "culture of personal rule" (p. 216). The last chapters cover the destruction of the Xhosa kingdom in the aftermath of the cattle-killing, lingering on such matters as "the relationship between empire and justice [...] before the advantages of British justice could be realized in British Kaffraria, it first had to turn into the reverse of itself" (p. 316).

Price ends his book as he began it, by reflecting on the extent to which British historians have neglected the Eastern Cape and expressing the hope that he may have "reclaimed a small slice of that other empire for British history" (p. 356). I fully endorse this laudable objective and sincerely congratulate Richard Price on a provocative and accessible book. But, much as Price may have preferred to avoid "engagements with other historians or historiographies" (p. xiv), *Making Empire* does not appear in an intellectual vacuum. We South African historians also have an interest in the Empire, and we too require to engage with a work of this calibre.

Much as one appreciates Price's account of the evolution of missionary thought, more especially his useful discussion of the key figure of Henry Calderwood, one cannot concur with the neat chronological distinction implied in his chapter, "The Closing of the Missionary Mind". A conservative reaction manifested among the London Missionary Society as early as 1817, as Elbourne has shown, whereas liberal missionaries like William Greenstock had to be crushed by officialdom as late as 1860.

Moreover, many factors more significant than missionary thinking impacted on the imperial mind. Keegan, for example, has demonstrated Sir Harry Smith's alignment to settler interests, and the extent to which the Smith regime provided for land speculation

and labour coercion. Price presents Smith's government in British Kaffraria as an early example of indirect rule, yet Smith proclaimed the abolition of all Xhosa laws relating to witchcraft, bride-wealth, and land, leading even so inacute an observer as A.E. du Toit to remark, way back in 1954, that Smith's policies were "subversive of the whole framework of Kaffir society". Either Price does not understand Smith, or else he does not understand indirect rule.

A second major shortcoming of *Making Empire* is its casual dismissal of the Mfengu as "British mercenaries". Despite his acknowledging that "there is some historical controversy around their real identity" (p. 228n), Price unreservedly espouses an extreme view, which precludes him from appreciating the intellectual challenge which the Mfengu presence posed to imperial and colonial thinking. Whereas the Xhosa never offered themselves as candidates for membership of colonial society, the Mfengu swore a great oath in 1835 to accept Christianity, educate their children and obey the Government. They willingly gave of their labour, and willingly occupied land which the colonists did not want. The very same Governor D'Urban who condemned the Xhosa as "irreclaimable savages", praised the Mfengu as "industrious, gentle and well-disposed". When and how did imperial and colonial minds reduce all black people to the same racial stereotype? And why, with an affirmative model in full view, did they select the negative?

Making Empire is beautifully produced, as one would expect of Cambridge University Press, and priced accordingly. It is sad to report therefore that the quota of minor errors far exceeds what is reasonable. Charles Henry was a circumcised Xhosa not a Khoi convert; it is Burnshill not Burnside, Gcaleka not Gceleka, Kama not Khama, James Weir not John Weir, and James Read Junior or Joseph Read not John Reid. The indexer alone should have noticed Thymie alternating with Tyhumie, and Kie with Kei. The photograph in Figure 7 is Dilima not Xhoxho, and the chief sitting next to Xhoxho in Figure 16 is Siyolo not Mhala. Worst of all, we have a Note on Sources but no Bibliography. One might be inspired to check the unpublished diary of the Revd Cummings, but we are not told where it is.

Be all of that as it may, Richard Price has something to say and he says it well. Now read the book.

Jeff Peires

RETISH, AARON B. *Russia's Peasants in Revolution and Civil War. Citizenship, Identity, and the Creation of the Soviet State, 1914–1922*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge [etc.] 2008. xiv, 294 pp. Ill. £55.00; \$110.00; doi:10.1017/S0020859010000118

This ambitious book provides a new lynchpin for studies of the revolutionary period and of Russia's rural population. Its key contributions to the field are firstly, a re-conceptualization of the problem of peasant national identity and the peasantry's relationship to the state; secondly, a reassessment of the revolutionary transformation to include the whole period 1914–1922; thirdly, expanding the geographic scope of study of revolutionary processes; and finally, an integration of the history of peasant revolution in Russian into the contexts of peasant studies elsewhere.

Retish's work draws on an impressive source base, drawing on Kirov's regional archives alongside central archives in Russia and the States, newspapers and periodicals, and the most recent literature in Russian and English. His enthusiasm to engage with interdisciplinary and comparative approaches is notable, and sets him apart from the often myopic approach of other specialists in the field. His close reading of local sources enables him to personalize, complicate, and explain day-to-day peasant relationships and politics.