

Southern Africa bibliography

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Southern Africa bibliography encompasses ten countries of the African subcontinent, namely Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The combined bibliography contains over 4 000 entries for books and monographs about these countries, published worldwide from 1945 to early 1995. It starts with a section listing 79 items for the Southern African subregion in general, continues with separate sections for each of the ten countries, and ends with an author index to these eleven sections.

Reuben and Naomi Musiker, with their broad experience in bibliographic work, are both exceptionally well qualified to write an area bibliography such as this one. The authors consulted a vast number of sources in order to compile *Southern Africa bibliography*: these bibliographies (such as library catalogues, publishers' lists, trade bibliographies, and published general and subject bibliographies for the African continent, the subcontinent and the ten separate countries) are thoroughly described in the twelve-page introduction to the book.

Within each of the eleven sections of *Southern Africa bibliography* there are main subject categories, many with subdivisions: these headings are arranged alphabetically for each country. On the whole, subject descriptors are well chosen and appropriate. Broad subject categories like Biographies, Economics, Education, Fauna, Health, History and Religion are common to most country sections, and this consistency in scheme enables simple comparative searches. More specific subdivision headings differ for each country, depending on the type of subject access one might require for the uniqueness of that country (e.g. its colonial history). In this manner, subject access to a country's political or warfare history, for example, is expedited. This can be illustrated by using the subject category of History as an example. For South Africa there is a multitude of subdivisions here, including those for the Anglo-Boer War, Anglo-Boer War: Campaigns 1900–1902, Anglo-Boer War: International Diplomacy, Anglo-Boer War: Peace Settlement 1902–1910, British Colonial Policy, various subdivisions for the Cape Province (including one for the 1820 Settlers), various subdivisions for Natal (including the Zulu War 1879 and Its Aftermath), Twentieth Century, World Wars, and so on. Along similar lines, the History section for Mozambique has subdivisions for Colonial Period, and Revolution. Sub-

divisions for Namibia include Colonial Period: German Empire, South African Occupation and Civil War to 1984, and United Nations and International Issues; and for Zimbabwe the History section has subdivisions for Precolonial Period, Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Rhodesian Period, and Zimbabwe Independence.

There are some inconsistencies in the use of subject descriptors for the different countries. For example Mozambique or Travel and Description, whereas Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe each have a similar (transposed) subject category for Description and Travel. Another category for Transport and Travel under South Africa, and two separate categories for Transport and Railways under some of the other countries, could make specific subject searching rather confusing at times.

The bibliography numbers items consecutively from the beginning of the first section (Southern Africa) through to the last country section (Zimbabwe) listing 4 081 books and monographs in total. The entries are not annotated. Each entry, alongside its item number, consists of a basic bibliographic description (author, title, editor, place of publication, publisher, date, edition, volumes, series, explanatory notes where relevant). There is an alphabetical arrangement of entries (by author, or by title when there is an editor) within the subject categories and subdivisions.

The author index lists primary and joint authors and editors. This index refers one to the item numbers in the main bibliography. A subject index would undoubtedly improve access to *Southern Africa bibliography*. Although there is a detailed single table of contents at the front of the book and a fairly consistent alphabetical subject approach within each country section, a subject search could necessitate skimming through the ten pages of the table of contents to fathom where a sought topic might have been categorized. This is especially problematic in the section on South Africa, which has the most extensive listings. For example, a search for references on Forced Removals which some users might expect to be a main subject category or possibly a subdivision under Politics requires browsing until it is located as a subdivision of Social Issues in the section for South Africa (accompanying other subdivisions like Homosexuality and Illegitimacy). Subject access could also be improved simply by using running subject headings at the top of the pages in the main body of the bibliography, for example by indicating the name of the country on the left-hand page and the running subject on the facing page. This would be especially useful for the South Africa section, where entries for some subjects extend over several pages. However, these difficulties may be due to editorial policy for the series as a whole.

Although *Southern Africa bibliography* is a select bibliography, its comprehensiveness of coverage is unique. Having ten countries covered in one volume and some quite extensively is an immense bibliographic achievement. The number of entries for each country depends naturally on the availability of documents and bibliographies, which in turn depends on many diverse issues such as the efficacy of biblio-

graphic control in the country and subregion, the extent of local publishing and even the amount of international interest in the country. The number of items is understandably by far the largest for South Africa (2 728 entries), followed by Zimbabwe (342), Namibia (238), Zambia (148), Mozambique (123), Botswana (111), Angola (105), Malawi (104); trailing behind are Lesotho (59 entries) and Swaziland (44).

Since Clio Press also has a series of bibliographies similar to the Scarecrow area bibliographies series – namely the World bibliographic series (with over 185 separate volumes) – it may seem apparent that the reviewer should compare the two series. All ten of the above-mentioned Southern African countries each have their own volume in the World bibliographic series. Clio's *South Africa*, for example, has 1 252 items, compared with the 2 728 items pertaining to South Africa in the Musikers' bibliography under review. However, it would be senseless to merely draw comparisons between the number of entries for each country in these two admirable series, since their bibliographic approach differs considerably. The Clio series has informative annotated entries, and the books have author, title and subject indexes. These are considerable advantages, but they could be outweighed by cost factors. As inferred in a review of *South Africa*, 2nd edition 1994 (published in this journal, Volume 63(2) 1995: 95–96), it would be too expensive for most South African libraries to purchase all ten relevant volumes in the World bibliographic series.

Southern Africa bibliography is highly recommended for its broad and also specific subject coverage of the ten Southern African countries embraced in the volume. The bibliography will provide a perfect springboard for researchers from virtually any basic discipline, simply by its listing of the most significant books and monographs for each country. The price of \$52. 00 is not steep if one considers the value-for-money angle: it purchases an excellent basic bibliography for ten countries. The presentation and binding are of Scarecrow's usual high standards. *Southern Africa bibliography* is therefore recommended for all larger libraries in South Africa and the other nine countries of the subregion and all college and research libraries worldwide. Politico-historians of the African subcontinent especially should find the bibliography indispensable.

(*Southern Africa bibliography* should not be confused with Reuben Musiker's *South Africa bibliography*, a completely different work which was reviewed in Volume 65[2] 1997: 137–138 of this journal).

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