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Philip Ziegler. *Legacy: Cecil Rhodes, the Rhodes Trust and Rhodes Scholarships.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008. 388 S. $45.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-300-11835-3.

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The Diamond Scholars

Over the last forty-five years, Philip Ziegler has written close to a dozen biographies, many of them "authorised" and mostly of British establishment figures and royalty. He has edited the diaries of Lord Mountbatten, told the story of merchant bank Barings, and written popular histories of the Black Death and of Londoners' experience of World War Two. He was editorial director at William Collins publishing house for fifteen years and before that worked for the British Foreign Office. He is not an educational historian by any means. But his commissioned history of the Rhodes scholarships will be of interest to readers curious about transnational educational networks in the context of the waning of the British Empire and the effects of social and political change over the twentieth century on higher education, in particular, on the University of Oxford.

Writing a history of the Rhodes scholarships is no straightforward task. It is transnational history par excellence, reaching from Oxford down through Africa, across the Indian Ocean to Australia and New Zealand, and then over the Pacific to North America and the Caribbean. Ziegler has had to grapple with the scholarships' controversial creator, diamond miner and empire loyalist Cecil Rhodes; the restrictive terms of his will; the personalities of and differences between Rhodes trustees, Rhodes House wardens, and secretaries, who administered the scheme across three continents; and the infinite variety and changing makeup of the scholars themselves. In his prologue, he acknowledges the difficulty in making a readable book out of the "labyrinth of plots and sub-plots" and the "multitude of significant and colourful players" in the scheme's history (p. x).

There are moments when the reader–particularly one with only an elementary grasp of British and southern African political history–might wish that the appendix listing trustees and principal officeholders be expanded and moved to the front of the book, with a pithy description beside each name, in the fashion of hefty nineteenth-century novels. There is a huge cast of characters, some of whom only appear very briefly, and because Ziegler has chosen a primarily thematic organization, he moves back and forth in time, which causes occasional confusion. But his lightness of touch and the easy confidence in his writing make this shortcoming easier to bear. And, he has been able to carve out engaging stories from what must have been voluminous archives of correspondence, minutes, reports, and press. He has also benefited from other works on the Rhodes scholarships, including former warden of Rhodes House Anthony Kenny's edited *History of the Rhodes Trust, 1902-1999* (2001) and Thomas and Kathleen Schaeper's *Rhodes Scholars, Oxford, and the Creation of an American Elite* (2004).

Rhodes, who made his fortune from pillaging southern Africa, devised the scholarships at the end of the nineteenth century explicitly as a means of furthering the expansion of the British Empire. He had been an undergraduate student at Oxford himself, and although "he conducted himself … in a way almost entirely contrary to what would be expected of the Rhodes Scholars who were to enjoy his bounty in later years," Rhodes came to the conclusion that by sending bright, "manly" types from the colonies, dominions, and a handful of other countries, including the United States and Germany, to residential colleges at Oxford, he would contribute to the development of an interconnected elite of English-speaking empire loyalists spread across the globe (p. 6).

The first scholars to turn up at Oxford, in 1903, were three German men in top hats and frock coats. Much was to change over the decades to come: two world wars, the decline of the British Empire, the rise of the United States as a global power, civil rights and women's rights movements, the Vietnam War, and the end of apartheid. The trustees, who set up the scheme according to Rhodes's late nineteenth-century master plan, had to adapt the

scholarships to changing political, social, and educational conditions, and much of Ziegler's book concerns this ongoing endeavor. He charts political and personal differences among the trustees, and occasional flare-ups between scholars and trustees, as well as between trustees and the Oxford colleges who were expected to accommodate the scholars. Most often the difficulties lay with the interpretation and exercise of scholarship selection policies.

Rhodes had been quite specific about his selection criteria for scholars and even suggested weightings for each. In his will, he described his ideal scholar as a young, unmarried man, academically bright (though "no bookworm") and athletic, showing "qualities of manhood truth and courage devotion to duty sympathy for and protection of the weak kindliness unselfishness and fellowship" (Rhodes was no fan of punctuation). The scholar should demonstrate "moral force of character"; and hold "the performance of public duties as his highest aim" (p. 341). Ziegler considers, in detail, the difficulties in applying these criteria to applicants and how the criteria would come to be interpreted and weighted differently, and even overridden, as the times changed, in different countries. In 1968, Bill Williams, Oxford secretary and Rhodes House warden, told the trustees: "We are seeking in our Rhodes Scholars outstanding ability married to unselfishness.... It is a tall order: to discover an elite with a conscience–with compassion and without arrogance" (p. 239).

The selection policies, even when followed to the letter, did not always produce the kind of scholar Rhodes might have wished for. Ziegler suggests that over time, Rhodes scholars may have done more to dismantle the empire than to promote its unity. In 1936, Carleton Allen, the trust's Oxford secretary, wrote to Lord Lothian, a trustee: "We cannot help it if Rhodes Scholars become Communists, and it is perfectly certain in the present state of affairs that an increasing number of them will do so.... [I]t is not a circumstance which is very palatable to oneself, but clearly we can do nothing and ought to do nothing about it" (p. 130). It appears that, on the whole, once selected, scholars' political views and activism, regardless of their tenor, were rarely considered the business of the trustees.

Rhodes had, in his will, explicitly ruled out any bias on grounds of race or religion in the selection of scholars–a surprising fact–but less surprisingly, he did not even conceive the possibility of women applying. It took more than seventy years before women were admitted to the scheme–a change forced through, in the end, by the passage of sex discrimination laws in the United Kingdom in 1975. Breaking down barriers to the participation of black students took slightly less time, but these barriers were built very solidly into the educational systems of many source countries. When an African American student was selected in 1907, a group of white southerner Rhodes scholars protested. Although that particular protest was in vain, and though some black Jamaicans won scholarships in the decades between, it was not until 1962 that the next African American would win a scholarship.

The trustees' relationship with South Africa was particularly complicated, the terms of the will creating restrictions against which some trustees chafed, particularly once apartheid was made official. The scholarships continued to operate under apartheid, and although Ziegler claims that the trustees (if not the South African selection committees) demonstrated "resolute colour-blindness" over this period, he also acknowledges that for many decades, they did little to counter black students' extreme educational disadvantage (p. 295). However, in the late 1990s, the trustees agreed to Warden John Rowett's proposal that funds be diverted from bolstering Oxford colleges to the creation of a new Rhodes Centenary Trust to benefit South African students. In 2001, with the agreement of Nelson Mandela, the Mandela-Rhodes Foundation was established, funded by the trust to the tune of one million pounds per year for ten years. It would pay for selected African students to attend South African universities, opening up the possibility of their later applying for a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford. Some of Mandela's supporters considered this linking of names a "blasphemy," but Mandela responded: "Combining our name with that of Cecil John Rhodes in this initiative is to sign the closing of the circle and the coming together of two strands of our history" (p. 325). What would Rhodes have made of this? One thing is certain: his name at that moment was probably as clean as it would ever get.

Ziegler wrestles with the question of how historians might measure the success of the Rhodes scholarships over the decades. Although the scheme certainly helped to refresh its founder's name, it did not fulfill Rhodes's dream of extending the life and reach of the British Empire. Many alumni did move on to positions of power in their own countries, including President Bill Clinton and several prime ministers–Bob Hawke (Australia), John Turner (Canada), Norman Manley (Jamaica), and Dom Mintoff (Malta). There have been two U.S. secretaries of state and a director of the Central Intelligence Agency, a couple of Nobel Prize winners, ambassadors, chief justices, and delegates to the United Nations. The White

House, under President John F. Kennedy was, Ziegler reports, bursting with Rhodes alumni. And earlier, in 1946, Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas, inspired in part by his 1929 Rhodes scholarship experience, devised the Fulbright exchange scheme, which continues today between the United States and some 140-odd countries.

Then again, Ziegler argues, "a roll-call of celebrities is not what the Rhodes Scholarships are about," and he quotes a U.S. Rhodes secretary, who, in the mid 1980s, asked whether selectors ought to prefer a "wonderfully generous, unselfish, magnificent person who may, for example, spend the rest of his or her life working with the mentally retarded in a small community," or someone who might be less morally upright but "was going to make a difference in the world for a lot of people?" (pp. 241, 332). For Ziegler, the proof of the scheme's success lies in the large number of alumni who have demonstrated a serious commitment to community or public service, a commitment not always recognized or remunerated.

After decades of official biography writing, Ziegler has honed the art of navigating quite thorny territory with delicate footwork, gently exposing the vainglorious and disappointing, the mean-spirited and short-sighted, alongside the expected Rhodes scholar success stories. There are moments when this reader feels Ziegler is fence sitting. However, the effect, in the end, is to throw the ethical dilemmas our way, and make us grapple with them ourselves.

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